

See "AN ATTRACTIVE OFFER," first page

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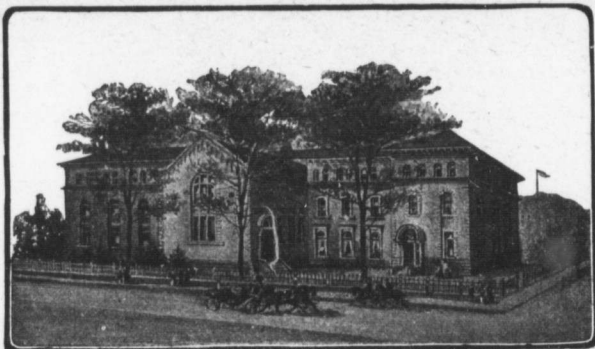
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Sabbath School Publications
Presbyterian Church in Canada

Rev. R. Douglas Fraser
Editor & Business Manager
Confederation Life Building Toronto

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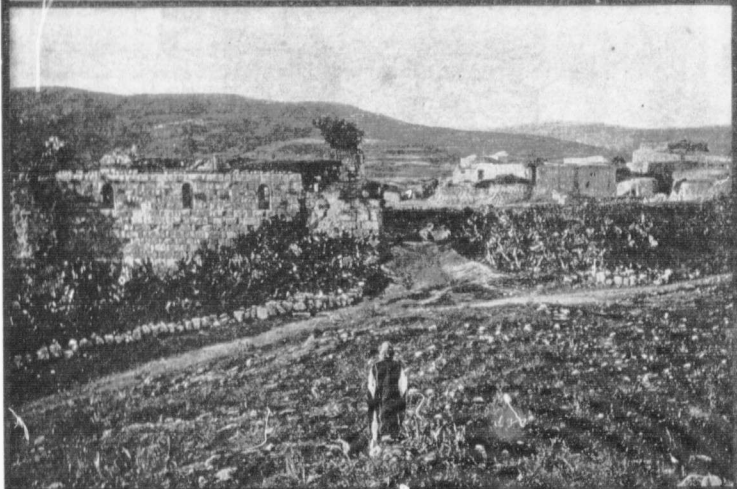
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The Teachers Monthly

Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, M.A., Editor
Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D., Associate Editor

Vol. X.

October, 1904

No. 10

TO OUR READERS

Sd The TEACHERS MONTHLY will shortly complete its tenth year of publication.

STANDING

It early gained, and has always kept the confidence of the Sabbath School teachers and of the church; and its present large circulation and wide popularity are the result. The treatment of the Lessons has been recognized as "true to the truth", bright, strong, clear, untechnical, and helpful; and "in touch with the teacher", may be truly said of the contributions to its editorial columns. Not often have more valuable expert articles appeared than the series by the late Principal MacVicar, by Professor Walter C. Murray and by Dr. Frederick Tracy.

SIZE

The TEACHERS MONTHLY began with 32 pages per month. The number has been increased from time to time. It has for the past four years been never less than 40, often 44 or more. Nor is there yet sufficient room. Further space is required, especially for the materials for the new Supplemental Course, and for the discussion of methods and of the great problems of the Sunday School field. We want our teachers to know what others are thinking about and doing, in order that they may themselves be the more thoroughly masters of their work.

This increase of space we propose to make, beginning with the November issue.

PRICE

With its 32 pages per month, the subscription price of the TEACHERS MONTHLY was set at 40c. a year in clubs of 5 or more (50c. to single subscribers). The price has remained

the same, notwithstanding the increase in the number of the pages, and the heavy advances in the cost of paper, printing, postage and labor. It is now proposed to increase the price by 10c. a year, making it 50c. in clubs of 2 or more (60c. for single copies). It will be noticed that the number necessary to secure the club rate has been reduced from 5 to 2. This will be of advantage to the very small schools and to neighbors who may wish to subscribe. At the new price the TEACHERS MONTHLY is still cheaper than many similar publications, and as cheap as any.

The reasonableness of this increase of price, it is believed, will be at once evident, in consideration of the larger space given, and of the increases in cost of production. The change, it will be understood also, does not apply to any of our other Lesson Helps, or Papers, but to the TEACHERS MONTHLY only. The prices of the others remain the same as before.

TO BEGIN

The new price for the TEACHERS MONTHLY will begin with the November issue. All subscriptions for the November issue and onward will be at the new rate.

We wish our Sabbath Schools to take as full advantage as possible of AN ATTRACTIVE OFFER made in our last issue, and here repeated. Already a large number of Schools have sent in their requests. The offer is as follows:—THE TEACHERS MONTHLY, EAST AND WEST, THE KING'S OWN, and JEWELS, will be sent FREE for any two months before the close of the year, and THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY, PRIMARY QUARTERLY, HOME STUDY LEAFLET, and PRIMARY LEAFLET for

the whole quarter, to any school not now using them and in any quantities required for the classes. Please write promptly, stating which publication or publications you desire and the number required.

THE DIVINE LAW OF HUMILITY

By Rev. John A. Clark, B.A.

It was at a dinner-table. Among the guests were men who were anxious to impress upon others their own social distinction by taking the most honored places at the table. Christ observed them and spoke some plain words about self-exaltation. "Whosoever," He said, "exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

St. Luke calls our Lord's words a parable. One wonders why. They read like a good, common-sense piece of advice as to how to behave at a wedding, or any important social gathering. "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest seat. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." Here surely is good counsel. The fact is, that long-headed men act just in this way, and many a man has greatly honored himself by a judicious humility.

But is this what our Lord meant? Does He say, "The way to get honor is to be modest and self-depreciating?" You and I feel that after all we would rather be the man who was frankly self-seeking, than he who was furtively self-seeking. Our Lord's words do not teach us this, but are a parable and contain something not on the surface.

Our Lord here declares a law of life, a law of God's kingdom, that every one recognizes, that is seen everywhere. The commonest dinner-table reveals it. Children know its meaning and truth as well as adults. Let one child be selfish and grasping and con-

ceited, and the other children feel that he should be humiliated. Let him be hurt or disgraced, and they will say it serves him right. It is their way of saying, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased."

This law cannot be obeyed, however, by a seeming obedience. To choose the lowest seat, to appear to be lowly-minded, just because we are so self-seeking, is not humility. What is required is a real humility. Not merely a sitting-down in the lowest seat, but a sincere recognition of that as our true place. Not a humbling of oneself that one may be exalted, but a self-depreciation that is an honest manifestation of our sense of unworthiness. This is the teaching of our Lord's parable. His advice about behavior at a dinner-table is only the gloss. Through it He shows us the universal law of humility.

"Give me the lowest place; or if for me
That lowest place too high, make one more
low

Where I may sit and see
My God, and love Thee so."
Calgary, Alberta

WRITING HIS NAME

A poor old negro woman, suffering from a painful, incurable disease, longed for release. She resolved to spend the whole of one night, asking the Lord why He did not take her to the heavenly home, where pain and sickness never come. In the morning, she said, with a shining face, that she knew now the reason why she was being left on earth. The Lord had told her that He wanted her to stay and "write His name."

For some time longer she lived, and no complaint about the delay of her home-going crossed her lips. She was busy every day writing her Lord's name in loving words and kindly deeds.

What a different world this would become, if it should see shining through the speech and actions of every disciple, the name, the gracious and loving character of the Master! We cannot estimate how great an impression would thus be made, or how many would be won to Christ by the beauty of these Christian lives.

We can write His name wherever we are

and whatever our calling may be. On the simple, every-day ministries of the home, on the drudgery of the workshop and office, on all our intercourse with others, we can inscribe that holy name.

It may be that our writing of the name is very imperfect. It is like the rude scrawl of children just beginning to use the pen. But all the children need is practice to become skilful penmen. And even so by daily effort we shall learn to write in fair and shapely characters the name of names.

MINUTES FOR MISSIONS

"A Question on Missions, with its Answer, each Sabbath" is one item of the Supplemental Course recommended by our General Assembly, and to begin with the New Year of 1905. The intention is that it shall be dealt with by the teacher in the class, or by the superintendent from the desk, or in both ways. Two or three minutes will suffice. Here is what one school is already doing, and very admirable the method is. The details are given by Rev. Mr. Gracey, the minister, and in response of a request by the Editors of the *TEACHERS MONTHLY* to Mr. Linklater, the superintendent, for an account of his method:—

Gananoque, Ont.

DEAR EDITORS,—I understand that you wish some account of the method pursued in St. Andrew's Sabbath School here with reference to Foreign Missions.

Our superintendent, Mr. J. C. Linklater, the Principal of the Model School in this town, is himself much interested in the Foreign Mission work of our church, and very well acquainted with it. Some eighteen months ago he began giving short talks to the Sunday School on our mission fields and missionaries. He devotes just five minutes to this subject, as part of the opening exercises. He prepares carefully, and by a judicious use of maps and blackboard, which he can use with great facility, being so familiar with them in his work in the public schools, he gives a great deal of information within the time limit of five minutes. He has also prepared and used diagrams which appeal to the eye, indicating the comparative

numbers of heathen and Christians, in the world and in different heathen countries, such as China and India.

He has asked for answers to such a question as this, "Why should we send missionaries, or the gospel, to the heathen?" The answers handed in by the scholars, prepared largely by themselves, were very interesting, and some of them quite original. These replies are read to the school and prove an interesting and profitable part of our opening program.

As a means also of giving practical effect to the interest thus awakened in the missions of our church, the S. S. collection on the first Sunday of every month is devoted to missions, and this is regularly intimated. Since this plan was adopted, I think the collection on the first Sunday has always been considerably the largest for the month.

I attend our Sunday School regularly myself, and have heard all, or nearly all, Mr. Linklater's talks on the missions of our church. I appreciate them very highly and consider them a very valuable part of our Sunday School program. Without interfering at all with the regular work of the school, they give a great deal of information about this important part of our church's work.

I am yours very truly,

Rev. H. Gracey.

LEARNING AND ITS MOTIVES

By Frederick Tracy, B.A., Ph.D.

The word "motive" is sometimes used in a very broad sense, to mean anything whatever that leads to an action. The feeling of thirst that impels a horse toward the watering trough, is, in this broad sense, a motive; as is also the sight of any simple movement, that leads a little child to imitate that movement. In the more accurate sense, a motive is always the thought of an end or purpose which the person has in view, and which he is trying to realize in his action. In other words, a true motive is not merely the cause, but the reason; not merely the force that impels, but the end that invites, to action. Hence a genuine motive is always conceived by the mind, and carried out freely by the will.

Handwritten: M A
Gananoque
Feb

We must remember that
 THE ACTIONS OF LITTLE CHILDREN
 are controlled more by causes than by reasons; more by feelings that impel than by ends that invite. We must remember that real progress is marked by a constant increase in the influence exerted by reasons over conduct. And again we must remember that even among reasons, there are some that are more worthy than others. It is the teacher's business, therefore, to seek to secure in his pupil the dominance of reasons over causes, and the dominance of the more worthy reasons over the less worthy ones.

If a child applies himself to the learning of a lesson, there is always some cause, or some reason, or combination of

CAUSES AND REASONS

for that application. These causes and reasons, taken together, may be arranged in five groups, as follows:—(1) Imitation, (2) Interest, (3) Approbation, (4) Utility, (5) Character.

In the first place, every child tends to do what he sees done by others. The infant who sits gravely holding a newspaper before his face, furnishes a good illustration. This

TENDENCY TO IMITATE

others is a powerful factor in all education. At first it is reflex in its nature; the child simply doing what he sees done, without any special intention to do so. Later on he imitates on purpose; and then his imitation arises from a real motive, though the model he copies may or may not be a good one. Most children are extremely indiscriminating in their imitations. They copy the thing that happens to be presented, without any scrutiny of its worth. Hence the importance of presenting only good models for their imitation. As their intelligence develops, we may add precept to example, and give positive instruction regarding the sort of models they ought to imitate.

In the second place, every child

IS INTERESTED

in something. Without native interests, he would be below the level of the beasts and incapable of education. Moreover, in

spite of the variety of individual interests, there are some things in which practically all children are interested. A story well told scarcely ever fails to interest the average child. These native interests of the pupil should be made the point of departure for his instruction, and should be used as the first lever by which to move his will and secure diligent application.

In the third place, very few children are indifferent to the opinions of others. Like adults, they appreciate applause and dislike censure; especially when it comes from persons for whom they entertain deep respect. The

APPROVAL

of parents and teachers, therefore, makes one of the strongest motive-forces to study, and can be used, within proper limits, as a wholesome incentive to diligence in intellectual work.

In the fourth place, few persons can live in an age like the present, and fail to become impressed with

THE USEFULNESS OF LEARNING.

It is not easy, even for the teacher himself, to prevent this motive from occupying more than its legitimate place in his thought and life. In fact, a large part of the problems that confronts every Christian teacher, is precisely this, to convince himself and his pupils, that life is more than getting a living; or, in the Master's words, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

This brings us to the fifth and final motive, that of

CHARACTER.

I say "final" because there can be no higher or more worthy motive in learning, than to attain to the highest form of character. In the fullness of its meaning it will not be easily comprehended by the child, nor indeed by the teacher; yet it must be before us as the aim of all our efforts, if we are to do our work in the Master's spirit, and according to the Master's plan. That all our teaching and all our learning, as well as everything else that we do, is perfectly done only when it is done in this spirit, and with this final end in view, is a conviction that must take possession of our

minds, if we are ever to become master-workmen in our high calling.
University of Toronto

Now is the time to form classes for the Teacher Training Course. The third year is just beginning. The Course has been good from the first; it is now better than ever. The opening Lessons in the Department of Scripture will be found on pages 441 to 443 of the present issue, and in that of Doctrine under the heading of the Catechism in connection with each Sabbath School Lesson. In *The Art of Teaching*, Professor Murray's Handbook, *From One to Twenty-One*, (now ready) and *Dr. Tracy's, Sabbath School Methods* (ready in December) will be used; price 10c. each. Order from this Office.

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The Supplemental Course will be given in the Quarterlies and Leaflets beginning with 1905.

Illustrated Papers

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Bible Dictionary for Fourth Quarter, 1904

Aa'-ron. The elder brother of Moses, and the first high priest of Israel.

A-ba'-na. Probably the more important of the two rivers of Damascus, being mentioned first by Naaman.

A'-haz. King of Judah, 742 to 726 B.C.; an idolater, 2 Kgs. 16; 3, 4.

A'-haz-i'-ah. King of Israel for two years, beginning to reign 885 B.C.

A'-moz. The father of Isaiah the prophet, Isa. 1: 1.

A'-saph. A Levite of David's time, to whom are attributed Psalms 50 and 73 to 83.

As-sy'-ria. A country on the Tigris. For 700 years after 1300 B.C. it was the leading power in the East.

Ath'-al-i'-ah. The wife of Joram, king of Judah, a daughter of Ahab.

Ba'-al. A sun-god, the centre of whose worship was in Phœnicia. When Ahab married Jezebel, a princess of Sidon, his worship almost supplanted that of Jehovah in Israel.

Car'-mel. A range of hills terminating in the promontory which juts out into the Mediterranean, and forms the southern boundary of the Bay of Acre.

Dam-as'-cus. A very ancient city in Syria. It has always been a great trade centre, and is famous in Bible history.

Da'-vid. Son of Jesse, and second king of Israel.

Do'-than. A town not far from Shechem and Samaria, where Elisha was besieged by the Syrians and miraculously delivered.

E'-gypt. The famous country in the valley of the Nile where the Israelites were in bondage.

El-i'-jah. One of the greatest of the prophets, born perhaps at Tishbeh in Galilee, but a dweller in Gilead.

El-i'-sha. The successor of Elijah in the prophetic office.

Eph'-ra-im. The chief tribe of the Northern Kingdom, descended from the younger son of Joseph. Its name is sometimes given to the whole kingdom.

Gad. A prophet and historian of David's time.

Gal'-il-ee. The northern-most portion of Palestine; also the name of a lake in that region.

Ge-ha'-zi. The servant of Elisha.

Go-mor'-rah. One of the cities of the plain destroyed in the days of Abraham, Gen. 19: 24, 25.

Go'-zan. A town and district in Mesopotamia whither the Israelites were carried captive.

Ha'-bor. The present river Khabor, a branch of the Euphrates from the north.

Ha'-lah. A district on the Euphrates in northern Mesopotamia.

Hez'-ek-i'-ah. Son of Ahaz. He was king of Judah from 726 to 697 B.C.

Ho-she'-a. The last king of the Northern Kingdom: from 730 to 722 B.C.

I-sai'-ah. A prophet of Judah, from about 740 to 700 B.C.

Is'-ra-el. The name given to all the descendants of Jacob, and also confined to the tribes which acted independently of Judah.

Je-hoi'-a-da. The high priest who planned and successfully executed the revolt against Athaliah which placed Joash on the throne.

Je-hosh'-e-ba. The wife of Jehoiada, and aunt of Joash, whose life she saved from Athaliah.

Jer'-ich-o. An important city in the Jordan valley, not far from the Dead Sea.

Je-ru'-sa-lem. The capital of Judah.

Jo'-ash or **Je-ho'-ash.** King of Judah 878 to 842 B.C. See under Jehoida.

Jo'-ram. Or **Jehoram**, son of Ahab, and king of Israel 897 to 884 B.C.

Jor'-dan. The well-known river flowing from the north of Palestine to the Dead Sea.

Jo'-tham. One of the four kings of Judah in whose reigns Isaiah prophesied.

Ju'-dah. At first the descendants of Jacob's fourth son; then the kingdom formed of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, which remained loyal to Rehoboam.

Le'-vites. The descendants of Levi, son of Jacob. They were charged with the care of the sanctuary.

Medes. The inhabitants of Media, a country lying south of the Caspian Sea.

Mid'-ian. A son of Abraham by Keturah, and the tribe descended from him.

Na'-am-an. The Syrian general who was a leper and was healed by Elisha.

Naph'-tal-i. The tribe descended from Jacob's sixth son. Their territory lay in northern Galilee.

Na'-than. A noted prophet in the reigns of David and Solomon.

Pha'-raoh. A general title for the sovereign of Egypt.

Phar'-par. Probably the less important of the two rivers of Damascus. See Abana.

Sa-ma'-ri-a. A city built by Omri, king of Israel; the capital of Israel.

Shu'-nam-mite. A woman of Shunem, whose son Elisha raised from the dead.

Sod'-om. One of the cities of the plain destroyed in the days of Abraham.

Syr'-i-a. A country along the east coast of the Mediterranean, extending far inland.

Uzz-i'-ah. King of Judah 811 to 758 B.C. In his reign Isaiah began to prophesy.

Zeb'-u-lun. The tribe descended from Jacob's tenth son. Their territory was on the sea coast.

Zi'-on. One of the hills on which Jerusalem was built, but often used as a name for the whole city.

Lesson Calendar: Fourth Quarter

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT FROM ELIJAH TO ISAIAH

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. October 2 | Elisha Succeeds Elijah. | 2 Kings 2: 12-22. |
| 2. October 9 | The Widow's Oil Increased. | 2 Kings 4: 1-7. |
| 3. October 16 | Elisha and the Shunammite. | 2 Kings 4: 25-37. |
| 4. October 23 | Elisha and Naaman. | 2 Kings 5: 1-14. |
| 5. October 30 | Elisha at Dothan. | 2 Kings 6: 8-23. |
| 6. November 6 | Joash the Boy King. | 2 Kings 11: 1-16. |
| 7. November 13 | Joash Repairs the Temple. | 2 Kings 12: 4-15. |
| 8. November 20 | Isaiah's Message to Judah. | Isaiah 1: 1-4, 16-20. |
| 9. November 27 | World's Temperance Sunday. | Isaiah 28: 1-13. |
| 10. December 4 | Hezekiah Reopens the Temple. | 2 Chronicles 29: 18-31. |
| 11. December 11 | Captivity of the Ten Tribes. | 2 Kings 17: 6-18. |
| 12. December 18 | REVIEW. | |
| 13. December 25 | The Prince of Peace. | Isaiah 9: 1-7. |

Lesson I.

ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH

October 2, 1904

2 Kings 2 : 12-22. Commit to memory vs. 12-14. Read the chapter.

GOLDEN TEXT—Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.—2 Kings 2 : 9.

12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, 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 Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan:

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast

Revised Version—¹chariots; ²were divided; ³were at Jericho over against him; ⁴spirit (small s); ⁵Omit him; ⁶back to him; ⁷while he tarried at Jericho; and he said; ⁸we; ⁹land miscarried; ¹⁰word.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Elisha succeeds Elijah, 2 Kgs. 2: 12-22. T.—Joshua succeeds Moses, Josh. 1: 1-9. W.—The people's promise, Josh. 1: 10-18. Th.—Bitter waters healed, Ex. 15: 20-27. F.—Christ's parting promise, John 14: 8-17. S.—The Spirit of the Lord, Isa. 11: 1-9.

S.—Let us follow! Heb. ch. 11: 22 to 12: 2.
Shorter Catechism—*Ques.* 43. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?* A. The preface to the ten

him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth, but the water is nought, and the ground barren.

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters and cast salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

LESSON PLAN

I. The New Prophet, 12-15.

II. The Doubting Scholars, 16-18.

III. The Confirming Miracle, 19-22.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 303: 320-34 (Ps. Sel.); 290: 551 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 302.

EXPOSITION

By Rev. James Wallace, B.D., Lindsay, Ont.

Time and Place—About 897 B.C.; near Jericho, in the Jordan valley, not far from the Dead Sea.

Connecting Links—Elisha had just seen (Lesson XI., Third Quarter) his master, Elijah, swept up to heaven in a chariot of fire. In the present Lesson he appears as the true successor of Elijah.

I. The New Prophet, 12-15.

V. 12. *Elisha.* After his vision at Horeb (1 Kgs. 19: 9-18), Elijah found Elisha, and cast his mantle upon him as he was ploughing in the field, as a sign that he was to leave his work and home to follow Elijah, 1 Kgs. 19: 19-21. The two were close companions as master and disciple for ten years. *Saw it*; the glorious ascension of Elijah. This was the condition of the promise in v. 10. *My father, my father.* Elijah, the stern and outspoken prophet, had been a father to him in spiritual things, as well as in the care and love he had shown toward him. "It is the cry of orphanhood." *The chariots . . . and the horsemen* (Rev. Ver.) Elijah and men of like character to him were "the strength of Israel against both home and

foreign foes." The vision of v. 11 suggests the bold figure. *Saw him no more.* Like Enoch (Gen. 5: 24), and Jesus (Acts 1: 9), he had disappeared from mortal ken. *Rent them.* The throwing of dust or ashes upon the head, and the rending of the garments were common signs of sorrow.

Vs. 13, 14. *Mantle of Elijah*; a garment of skin with the hair outside, the distinctive garb of a prophet, Zech. 13: 4; Matt. 3: 4. Elijah's mantle would be to Elisha a priceless relic and a pledge of the promise of v. 10. Besides, it was a symbol of office, and Elijah's leaving it behind meant that whoever would take it up would be his successor. This mantle had already wrought a striking miracle, v. 8. *Stood by the bank of Jordan*; almost afraid to try his power. "It appears that he could perform no miracle previous to this." (Benzinger.) *Took the mantle*; rolling it up so that it resembled a rod or staff (see v. 8). *Smote the waters*; believing and acting on his belief, that, like Elijah, he would receive power from God. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* The question does not express doubt of God's presence

and readiness to help; it is an emphatic way of asking Him to show the same power He had shown through Elijah. None other than Jehovah will Elisha have, and he needs no other. *The waters . . . parted*; a not unusual form of miracle in the Old Testament (see Ex. 14 : 21; Josh. 3 : 16); here, a divine testimony that the spirit of Elijah had been given to Elisha.

V. 15. *Sons of the prophets*; young men, "members of prophetic guilds, living together with a master as their head, whose pupils they were." (Benzinger.) *Bowed themselves to the ground*; thus acknowledging him as their head and the successor of Elijah. Something in Elisha's face and bearing showed them that a new power had taken possession of him. They saw that what makes a man great is the motive, the aims, the spirit which animates him.

II. The Doubting Scholars, 16-18.

V. 16. *Fifty strong men*; and therefore equal to the toilsome search they proposed. (See ch. 6 : 1-4, where, like the monks of the middle ages, they work at various kinds of manual labor.) *Let them . . . seek thy* (Elisha stood closer to Elijah than the rest) *master*. Elijah always seemed to be swept along by such a mysterious power, that the young men think he may have been carried off to some lone place and have difficulty in finding his way back (see 1 Kgs. 18 : 12). Some think it was Elijah's body that the young men wished to search for, since they had a premonition (v. 5), that the great leader was to be taken away that day, and hence they would not expect to find him alive. *The Spirit of the Lord hath . . . cast him upon some mountain*; as He afterwards caught away Philip from the sight of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8 : 39, 40. *Ye shall not send*. Elisha first refuses the request, knowing that a search would be fruitless.

Vs. 17, 18. *Urged him*; a strong word, denoting persistent harping. They refused to be convinced on hearsay. *Till he was ashamed*; at a loss for reasons to give for refusing, and finding it hard to resist the request of so many. *He said, Send*. Even though he knew he was right, he knew when to yield, a fine trait in his character. *Fifty*

men . . . three days. The search was thorough. *Found him not*. Some people learn only by experience, and we must let them tramp the ground before they are convinced. *Came again to him*. Elisha had tarried at Jericho. *Did I not say . . . Go not?* They would be more ready to believe him in the future, since his word had come true.

III. The Confirming Miracle, 19-22.

Vs. 19, 20. *The men of the city*; the inhabitants of Jericho. Having learned from the "sons of the prophets," that a powerful prophet was amongst them, they sought him, for they had need of him. *Situation . . . is pleasant*. "Jericho was a part of that country which in Gen. 13 : 10 is compared to 'the garden of the Lord.'" (Cambridge Bible.) *The water is naught*; that is, "bad," "good for nothing." *And the land miscarrieth* (Rev. Ver.). "The deleterious springs caused diseases among the inhabitants, and caused the trees to cast their fruit." (Far- rar.) *Bring me a new cruse*; new, to show that there was no virtue in the vessel itself, and perhaps to typify the purification to be wrought. *Put salt therein*; salt being significant of preservation and purity. Salt in itself would not help the water.

Vs. 21, 22. *Went forth to the spring of the waters*; from which the city obtained its water supply. Elisha went to the source of the trouble. *Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters*. Elisha was great enough to put himself in the background and bring Jehovah before the people, as the One who had relieved their distress. The miracle is Jehovah's doing. *Unto this day*. At the time of writing the stream was still supplying the city with pure, wholesome water. (See Light from the East as to its present quality.)

Light from the East

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London, Ont.

SPRING—This copious fountain-head is still flowing near the site of ancient Jericho, and is called by Christians, Elisha's Spring, and by the Arabs, the Fountain of the Sultan. Nearly all the land around it, like a good deal of the Jordan valley, has become the Sultan's private property, and is tilled by his agents. The water flows from the earth

at the foot of a hill into a large reservoir, built of massive masonry. It is the clearest and purest water in Palestine, but I was intensely disappointed when I hastily plunged my travelling cup into the reservoir, to find it quite warm, about eighty degrees Fahrenheit, and, contrary to our usual custom, we had to go down the stream to find cooler water. Part of the stream from the spring is carried along the edge of the plain for the purpose of irrigation, in an ancient stone

channel which crosses the Wady Kelt on a beautifully built aqueduct of hewn stone with elegant arches, perfect as the day they were built, and which form a striking contrast to the surrounding ruin and decay. The Russians have secured a few acres for a convent and school near the fountain, and they cultivate by irrigation an enormous mass of vegetation, which gives one an idea of the vast possibilities of the climate and soil where water is available.

APPLICATION

By Rev. W. J. Clark, London, Ont.

My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof, v. 12. The strength of a people is in the personality, the character of its leaders. What were all the armies of Israel, unless there was one who could stir up and strengthen the national spirit? Elijah had been pre-eminent in this. Therefore his disciple might feel as though the very strength of the nation had departed. And he might well display signs of great grief. So we have seen in the departure of great leaders in church and state, how great a part of the whole strength they have been, and the pity of it is that too often it is not clearly seen until they are taken from this world.

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? v. 14. It is always wise to turn to God. He never fails to answer our challenge. Our faith is made strong by the remembrance that the God on whom we call was the confidence of some earthly friend. "Our fathers trusted in thee, . . . and were not confounded." We may with good right argue, that, since God has made himself known and has helped our friend, we, too, may call upon Him and have confidence that He will hear and answer us. Nor is it to be forgotten, that this blessing which we have obtained from those who have preceded us, it is our duty to pass on to succeeding generations.

The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha, v. 15. There are many who complain because they think they are not honored as they should be. But if there is power, it will be recognized. There is always a place

for the strong man, the wise man, the spiritual man. Pretentious imitations may cheat for a season, but will by and by be brought to confusion; but men will not refuse to bow down, when there is evidence of power.

Fifty strong men . . . let them seek thy master, v. 16. If Elijah could be found, surely these young men with their muscles hardened by a simple, toilsome life, their alert eyes, their intimate knowledge of all the hills and valleys, would discover his whereabouts. But there is a whole world lying open before God's eye which is hidden from human sight. And when He puts forth His hand to withdraw His servants from earth, who can hinder? Before Him it befits the strongest and wisest of men to bow in lowly reverence.

And when they urged him, v. 17. How sure they were! This positiveness is common in the case of those whose knowledge is small. The one who knows a little is apt to be very sure. He has knowledge only of a narrow domain, and because he has had success within its limits, he fancies he will be always successful. He does not know that there is an unseen realm, of which he knows nothing, and where all his knowledge has neither place nor bearing. There are always such people in the world, and often the only thing to do to enlighten them is to give them their own way. Let experience teach them, for nothing else will.

The situation of this city is pleasant . . . but the water is naught, v. 19. It often happens that, though there be many pleasant elements in one's life and work, there is some

A Nation's
Strength

Our Fathers'
God Ours

The Proof of
Deeds

God's Eye and
Hand

The School of
Experience

lack that spoils all the good. Beautiful the outlook, but what satisfaction could there be found in that, if one were thirsty? If the lack is of something essential, as in this case, then we must not cease endeavoring to have it made good, and if that is impossible, to get away from the place. If it be something that can be endured, then seek to cultivate patience and the spirit of quietness.

Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters, v. 21. To God alone he gives the glory. Frequently, in the history of the church, those who had been **Strong in God** greatly used are despoiled of their influence, because they come to think of what has been done as their work, without rendering due honor for it

to God. Always is it well to remember that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." So remembering, we are kept from the folly of vanity, and are still instruments, upon which the divine Hand may play and bring forth sweet music.

So the waters were healed, v. 22. The sun shining in the strength of spring changes the winter ice into rippling springs. So wherever Christianity has made its power felt, its effects appear in the transformed lives of men. And when it has reached its rightful supremacy, we shall see "a society as pure as the Sermon on the Mount, as radiant as the whiteness of the transfigured robe, as supreme against evil as the Lord in whom the religion was incarnated."

**Healing for
the World**

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

By Rev. Principal Patrick, D.D., Winnipeg
Read the life of Elisha as recorded in the Scriptures. Note especially the points of contrast between him and Elijah. Read also any article on Elisha to which you may have access.

Direct the attention of your scholars to the title of the Lesson, and bid them keep steadily before their minds the fact that Elisha was Elijah's successor. The reforms which were begun by Elijah were carried out by Elisha.

Recall briefly by questions the relations between the two prophets. Refer to Lesson XI. of the previous Quarter, Elijah Taken up into Heaven. Elisha witnessed that translation. What is the force of the words, "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"? A question regarding the appearance and use of a chariot will add to the vividness of this part of the lesson. Use a picture if you can. Why did Elisha rend his clothes? Ask for other instances of this act.

Is there any significance in the fact that the mantle of Elijah fell from him. Why did Elisha take up the mantle? Did he think it possessed magical virtues? Or, was it a mere symbol in his eyes? Why

did he smite the waters of the Jordan with the mantle? What incident does this act recall? Did Elisha expect that the waters would cease to flow and allow him to pass over dryshod? What reason had he for this expectation? What words of the lesson set forth the aim with which he smote the waters? What led the prophetic guild at Jericho to acknowledge Elisha as the successor of Elijah? What proof do they give of the reverence they entertained for him?

Did Elisha recount to the prophets the ascension of Elijah? Is it possible that they disbelieved the tale? What other explanation can be given of their proposal? Why did Elisha refuse at first, and then consent? Use this refusal and consent as a lesson in discipline. Wise teachers and parents sometimes find it best to yield to the importunities of those they love, even though they are aware that nothing but pain and disappointment will be the result.

The healing of the waters forms a new section. Notice this. Call for a summary of the section. Then proceed with separate questions. Ask for information regarding the situation of Jericho. What is meant by the land miscarrying? Were the crops poor? Did the fruits fail? Was any injury done to man? Quote a passage from the Lesson which could bear this meaning. Why did the prophet ask for a "new cruse"?

Why would an old one not do? Explain the symbolism. Do the same with the "salt." Can salt heal waters? If not, why was it used on this occasion? What does salt stand for here? Do not fail to dwell on the words, "Thus saith the Lord." The miracle is Jehovah's, not Elisha's. The prophet, the minister, the teacher, the friend, are all servants or agents of God. The glory of all goodness is ultimately God's. He inspires all acts and words of love.

It will be easy to learn from the scholars, what effect this miracle would have on the citizens of Jericho.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

By Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, M.A.

A new figure on the scene! We have had glimpses of him. Recall these: the young farmer ploughing in the field, his call to be a prophet, the servant of the great Elijah, his distress at the prospect of the parting, his eager cry for a parting blessing. Elisha is evidently a great man in the making. To-day we shall see how great he has become.

Make the translation scene very vivid, v. 11; dwell upon it,—God's wonderful regard for that great servant of His, and the glory of it all. Which was uppermost in Elisha's mind, sorrow, or triumph? We shall perhaps see.

How did Elisha take the parting? (a) With exultant wonder, touched with tenderness, "My father," etc., v. 12. Recall the mourning for our Queen—we loved her because she was so good. There were tears; but there was praise to God as well. We can imagine Elisha gazing long, long, as one does at a glorious sunset, till "he saw him no more." (b) Then came the chill of personal bereavement, he rent his clothes in grief. These great souls are but men, after all. It is not wrong to weep for our lost

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

It is those who live nearest to God who can do most for men. v. 12.

So long as we are faithful to our respon-

ones. (c) Here is the climax: hold the scholars close to it. He wondered and admired; he wept; *but he took up his work again*, vs. 13, 14. Elijah was gone; all the more for Elisha to do. The best tribute of respect to those who have been taken from us, is to do the work that they did, and that now falls to us. (There will be found no better leverage than Elisha's conduct affords, to press upon the young their coming responsibilities, and the importance of getting ready for them, and assuming them when they come.) Verse 15 shows how truly people measure us, and how generously they yield respect to real worth. Genuine workers will not fail of recognition.

A silly search is the rather unexpected sequel to the solemn scene of the translation and the splendid conduct of the bereaved Elisha. Vs. 16-18 tell the story. Go over it in detail. It is a striking example of the folly of superstition. These people had some belief in God, and in what the "Spirit of the Lord" could do. There cannot be superstition without some belief. They would believe small things, but not the great. Elijah could be carried off, but not up, to some mountain or valley, but not to heaven. True belief in God finds the hardest things easy.

It seems a long call from being witness of a translation, to providing wholesome water for a city. Yet it is the same man of God whom we see in each. The true servant of God is a practical helper of men. Take up the miracle in detail, and show how people naturally turn to good men in their difficulties, how ready these are to help, where there is need, how God works through His servants for the bettering of the conditions of common life, and how God's true servants always give Him the glory.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

sibilities we need have no fear as to our reward. v. 13.

Our richest inheritance is not material, but spiritual. v. 14.

It is a noble soul that most quickly sees nobility in others. v. 15.

A fruitless search may teach useful lessons. v. 16.

The time comes when the pupil must test for himself the truth of his teaching. v. 17.

Doubts removed, a stronger faith remains. v. 18.

No earthly source can fully satisfy the soul made with a thirst for heaven's joys. v. 19.

The instruments must be clean that are to do the work of a holy God. v. 20.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the great purifier of human life. v. 21.

God never sends His servants to their work without giving them tokens of His presence. v. 22.

From the Library

As he, whose wrongs

The bears avenged, at its departure saw
Elijah's chariot, when the steeds erect
Raised their steep flight for heaven; his
eyes meanwhile,

Straining, pursued them, till the flame,
Alone, upsoaring like a misty speck, he
kenn'd.—Dante.

How true an heir is Elisha of his master, not in his graces only, but in his actions. Both of them divided the waters of Jordan, the one as his last act, the other as his first. Elijah's curse was the death of the captains and their troops, Elisha's curse was the death of the children. Elijah rebuked Ahab to his face, Elisha, Jehoram. Elijah supplied the drought of Israel by rain from heaven; Elisha supplied the drought of the three kings by waters gushing from the earth; Elijah increased the oil of the Sareptan, Elisha increased the oil of the prophet's widow; Elijah raised from death the Sareptan's son, Elisha the Shunammite's; both of them had one mantle, one spirit; both of them climbed up one Carmel, one heaven.—Bishop Hall.

Jericho was the gateway of a province, the emporium of a large trade, the mistress of a great palm forest, woods of balsam, and very rich gardens. To earliest Israel she was the City of Palms; to the latest Jewish historian, "a divine region," "fattest of Judea." The year is one long summer; she can soak herself in water, and the chemicals with which her soil is charged seem to favor her peculiar products.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

To see the earnest of that vast result Christianity is destined to work out for the nations, we must look in the common walks of life, its every-day trials; in the sweet charities of the fire-side and the street; in the self-denial that shares its loaf with the distressful; the honest heart that respects others as itself.—Theodore Parker.

Topics for Brief Papers

(To be ready on the day of the Lesson)

1. Good men the real strength of a nation.
2. The power of the gospel to purify.

Prove from Scripture

That we should be filled with the Spirit.

Lesson Questions

[From the HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—Near what river was Jericho? What sea not far away?

12, 13 Whose place did Elisha take? What great sight did he behold? By what name did Elisha call Elijah? Why was Elijah like an army? Whither did he go? How did Elisha show his grief?

14, 15 With whose mantle did Elisha smite the waters? What did he say? What happened? What is meant by "the sons of the prophets"? How did they receive Elisha?

16-18 What did they think had happened Elijah? What did they propose? Why did Elisha oppose this? What did they do? With what success? Whither had Elijah been taken?

19-22 Where had Elisha waited? Who came to him? What did they say of the city? Of what did they complain? How did Elisha purify the waters?

Seniors and the Home Department—Give the date of the Lesson. Describe the situation of Jericho. On what events does the Lesson follow?

12-15 Give an account of Elisha's selection as Elijah's successor. What promise had he received? For what were our Lord's disciples to wait after His resurrection? (Acts 1:4-8.) By whose power is God's work to be done? (Zech. 4:6.)

16-18 What proposal was made to Elisha? Why did he know this to be useless? Why did he consent? How long did the search

last? Who searched for the body of the risen Saviour? (John 20:11.)

19-22 What miracle wrought by Elisha? By whose power? Of what was the salt a symbol? Where is water used as a symbol of gospel blessings? (Rev. 22:17.)

Seek-Further Questions—By what great servant of God were bitter waters made sweet? What New Testament miracle was wrought at Jericho?

Answers to Seek-Further Questions—

(1) About 60 years: Amos prophesied about 780 B.C., and the Captivity was in 722 or 721 B.C. (2) Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, Am. chs. 1, 2.

The Catchism

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course]

Ques. 43. *The Preface to the Ten Commandments.* A "preface" is a statement "uttered before" to prepare the way for what follows.

Before the commandments are given, the attention of the Israelites is directed to their source. God speaks of Himself and of what He has done for His people before He speaks of what they ought to do.

Every word of what God says concerning Himself is full of precious meaning, as only the words of God can be. In this brief but

weighty preface, God tells His people three things—(1) What He is; (2) What He is to His people; (3) What He had done for His people.

"I am Jehovah." This is what God says of His own nature. The use of the pronoun "I" indicates that God is a person who can love and can be loved by us, and with whom we can have fellowship. Jehovah is a title which denotes that God's existence is independent of any other being or cause, and has neither beginning nor end. It conveys the same idea as I AM in Ex. 3:13, 14. "I am Jehovah thy God." Thus the great self-existent, eternal Person declares what He is to His people. He is to them all that the word God means—the object of supreme love, adoration, gratitude, confidence and submission.

More than this, when He says to His people as a nation and as individuals, "I am thy God," He means that He has entered into covenant with them.

"Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"—redeemed thee from slavery and oppression. And this God is the same, for He never changes. He will be to us even more than He promised to be to ancient Israel, if we accept the greater deliverance from sin which He has provided for us in Christ.

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

By Mrs. Jessie Munro Johnston, North Bay, Ont.

Subject for the Quarter—God training His people by His dealings with them. His power and love are shown, and we must acknowledge Him to be the Lord our God, and Him only must we serve.

Golden Text for the Quarter—Repeat Luke 4:8.

Lesson Subject—God training His people by imparting power.

Introduction—Recall some of the times that God's brightness and glory shone around His people, although He Himself could not be seen. (Burning bush, pillar of fire, etc.) Recall the wonderful appearance like a chariot of fire, when God came and took Elijah up to heaven. What was the name of the man who was walking



with Elijah, and saw him carried up in the whirlwind?

Print **ELIJAH**
ELISHA—As Elijah is carried up, see! something falls from his shoulder down at the feet of Elisha. What is it? This means that Elisha is to “take the place of Elijah,” in fact to be Elijah, to wear his mantle. Elisha stoops and picks it up (the children may make the motion). Will wearing the mantle give Elisha the power of Elijah? If you put on your teacher’s coat, would that make you as wise as he? (Vs. 12-14.) Elisha knew that all Elijah’s power came from God. He knows that he will have no power, unless the “Lord God of Elijah” gives it to him. He did as he had seen Elijah do, and God gave him the same power.

Elisha the Helper—Outline the Jordan. Where was Jericho? Here were gathered Elijah’s scholars (“sons of the prophets,” young men who attended the Bible schools established by Samuel). They had seen their great teacher disappear, and had seen Elisha divide the Jordan; and they knew that God was the Helper of Elisha, as He had been of Elijah. They ran to welcome

their new teacher, v. 15. Tell of the search for Elijah. Tell why this search was made.

The Healing of the Waters—Let us print **ELISHA THE HELPER**, for we shall see the wonderful power God gave him to help people. Show a glass of water. What a blessing to us is water! How many are its uses! No matter how beautiful our farm, or village, or town is, we cannot do without good water. Jericho is a beautiful city; but alas! there is one great drawback, the water is bad. Tell of the healing of the water by the power of God given to Elisha. Elisha began his work by doing a good deed for others. He got the power from God.

Golden Text—Repeat Elisha’s words to Elijah. We may ask God to give us His Spirit and power to do good. Even very little people may have it and may be helpers.

Prayer—“Jesus, hear us when we pray, Make us helpful every day.”

Repeat also—Ps. 30 : 10; Isa. 41 : 13.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a glass of water, and print **ELISHA THE HELPER**.

Something to Remember at Home—I may have God’s Holy Spirit.

Something to Ask at Home—What does Jesus say about the Holy Spirit?

SUPERINTENDENT’S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

By James Watt Raine

Our last lesson about **ELIJAH** showed us the culmination of his life, his **SUCCESS** in the great work of a prophet, inspiring people to noble living. To-day we study about Elijah’s **successOR**. Elisha was very **DIFFERENT** from his great teacher; he **HAD** a dif-

ferent **MANNER** of preaching, different methods of working; but when the old prophet asked his young successor to name his one great desire, Elisha asked that he might grow more and more like Elijah. While he had a different manner, he had (erase **DIFFERENT**, and **-NER**) the **SAME** man-**HOOD**. Grandeur of manhood depends now, as it did then, on God, what you give **To God** and what you get **From God**. Elijah and Elisha had the same **LOYALTY** to

ELIJAH'S
SUCCESSOR
HAD SAME
GOD

God, and the same **POWER** from God. Whatever differences there may be among us, let us be sure we have the same manhood, complete loyalty to God, that we may have power from God. The power is given in answer to earnest, believing prayer.

ELIJAH'S
SUCCESSOR
HAD SAME
LOYALTY TO
POWER FROM GOD

ELIJAH'S
SUCCESSOR
HAD SAME
MANHOOD

with the
Boiler

Lesson II.

THE WIDOW'S OIL INCREASED

October 9, 1904

2 Kings 4: 1-7. Commit to memory vs. 5-7. Read 2 Kings, ch. 3.

GOLDEN TEXT—Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.—Ps. 37: 3.

1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the

door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all these vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Revised Version.—1 children; 2 thou shalt go in, and shut; 3 they; 4 sons.

DAILY READINGS

M.—The widow's oil increased, 2 Kings 4: 1-7. T.—Bondage forbidden, Lev. 25: 35-42. W.—The food multiplied, Mark 6: 34-44. Th.—Not forsaken, Ps. 37: 16-25. F.—The hungry fed, Ps. 107: 1-9. S.—Power out of weakness, 1 Cor. 1: 18-29.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us? A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, That be-

cause God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

LESSON PLAN

- I. The Widow's Appeal, 1, 2.
- II. The Prophet's Command, 3, 4.
- III. The Miraculous Supply, 5-7.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 301; 293; 25 (Ps. Sel.); 313; 514 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 488.

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—Reign of Jehoram, 897-884, B.C.; place unknown, perhaps Gilgal, Bethel, or Jericho, where there were schools of the prophets.

Connecting Links—On Elisha's homeward journey from Jericho to Samaria, occurred the incident of the mocking "children," ch. 2: 23-25. Chapter 3 tells the story of a campaign against the Moabites by Jehoram, King of Israel, with Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, and the king of Edom, as his allies. Elisha saved the allied army from destruction by thirst, and gave them a promise of victory, which was fulfilled. (The famous Moabite stone discovered in Moab, east of the Jordan, contains an inscription by Mesha, King of Moab, a part of which refers to the events of ch. 3.)

I. The Widow's Appeal, 1, 2.

V. 1. *There cried a certain woman . . . unto Elisha.* Remembering the miracles already wrought by the prophet (see chs. 2: 13, 14; 2: 21; 3: 17, 20), she appeals to him in her distress. A tradition in the time of Josephus identified her husband with Obadiah. (See 1 Kgs. 18: 7-16 for his history.) This would give his widow a special claim upon the prophet. *Of the wives of the sons of the prophets.* It appears that not all these prophets in training were unmarried

and had withdrawn themselves from home life, though, perhaps, most were single men, and lodged together like our students for the ministry. *Thy servant my husband;* a respectful way of addressing the great prophet in reference to her husband, who had been merely a prophet in training. *Is dead;* leaving, like many a minister, nothing to his family but a good name and the memory of a life spent for God and his fellow-men. *The creditor is come;* to enforce his right over the sons as his slaves according to ancient law. (Read Lev. 25: 39-46; Matt. 18: 25; see also Light from the East.) *To take . . . my two sons to be bondmen;* a sore trial, although the law of Moses provided (Lev. 25: 43-46) that the service, when those thus taken were Jews, should not be severe and should end with the next jubilee, which came every fiftieth year, Lev. 25: 40, 41.

V. 2. *What shall I do for thee?* The prophet is ready to help her, partly at least, because she is a widow, and therefore an object of God's special care, Ex. 22: 22-24; Deut. 10: 18; Ps. 68: 5; 146: 9; Jas. 1: 27. *What hast thou?* Prophets were never wealthy, so Elisha could not discharge her debt, but he could use the little she had to gain more. *Not anything . . . save a pot of oil;* that is, a pot of the common oil used

The Widow's Oil Increased

in the East for anointing the body after the bath (see *Light from the East*), a very coarse and cheap quality of oil. This reveals her extreme poverty.

II. The Prophet's Command, 3, 4.

Vs. 3, 4. *Borrow thee vessels*; Why fill the house with empty vessels? Her faith was being tested and would grow by exercise. *Borrow not a few*. She must expect great things from God, who always gives generously. *Thou shalt shut the door*. The giving and receiving of the oil was to be a transaction between God and the needy family, and no curious, flippant crowd may witness it. (Compare Matt. 6:6; Mark 5:40, 41.) *Pour out into all those vessels*. It required no little faith to believe that from one "small anointing pot, such as might stand on a lady's dressing table," a stream would flow sufficiently large to fill all the vessels. God honors such faith as this woman showed. *Shalt set aside that which is full*. So that there be no waste, each vessel, as it becomes full, must be replaced by an empty one. Those who work with God should plan wisely, that the best use may be made of His gifts. The prophet's action illustrates the truth taught by our Lord. Spiritual progress is made by obedience, John 7:17.

III. The Miraculous Supply, 5-7.

Vs. 5, 6. *She went from him*. The prophet was not present when the miraculous supply came. This brings out her faith in the strongest light. *Shut the door*; obeying her directions to the letter, as we must, if God is to bless us. *Sons . . . brought the vessels to her*. Obedient sons they were, and, like their mother, had faith in God. *Said unto her son*; likely the one whose turn it would be to bring forward the next vessel. *Bring me yet a vessel*. She had given herself so entirely to her work, that she had not taken time to look at the result. Her eager effort proved the reality of her faith. *There is not a vessel more*. No work which God begins is left unfinished. There was no complaint because more was not given, but only thankfulness for the bountiful supply. (Compare Elijah's supply of the needs of the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kgs. 17:10-16.)

And the oil stayed. Three lessons are taught us: (1) God works no unnecessary miracle; (2) He will not have waste; (3) He bestows only the gifts we can rightly use. The story of the empty ditches in ch. 3:16-20 is an interesting parallel to this part of the Lesson.

V. 7. *She came and told the man of God*; her heart overflowing with gladness, and feeling her need, too, of counsel and advice, for this oil she could not regard as her own. What was she to do with it? She realized that she was only God's steward, and that it was His to direct the use of His own gift. *Pay thy debt*; not simply that the sons might be freed from the fear of slavery, but because the debt ought to be paid. (See Rom. 13:8.) *Live thou and thy sons* (Rev. Ver.) *of the rest*. Note the order of the prophet's directions: first the debt must be paid; then the family must be supported, until they can earn their own living. The miracle of the Lesson, along with the others recorded in the same chapter, "may be called Elisha's private miracles—miracles of which individuals not named were the object." (Bible Commentary.)

Light from the East

BONDMEN—Slavery was the basis of many commercial and industrial usages of ancient civilization. Wherever it prevailed a man's person was the final security for his debts. The value of the man's person to the creditor consisted in the labor he could perform, and the man's person was secured in order that the labor might be secured. The obligation to discharge debt by servitude extended not only to the man himself, but also to his wife and children, whose persons were considered his property, and might become the property of his creditors. While there was a basis of right in the custom, it was often terribly abused, and people were sold for a paltry debt, Amos 2:6.

OIL—Corn, wine and oil were the principal products of Palestine. Olive oil, which is exclusively meant, is the type of fertility and plenty in the Old Testament, and at the present time is one of the chief sources of income to the inhabitants, notwithstanding the heavy tax on olive trees. In ancient

as in modern times oil was used for cosmetic and medicinal purposes, for illuminating dwellings, in religious ceremonies, and as an article of food. It has therefore always

been an important article of commerce both for home trade and for export, and was one of the items of tribute levied on a conquered nation which produced it.

APPLICATION

There cried a certain woman . . . unto Elisha, v. 1. How soon a position of prominence brings heavy burdens upon the one that occupies it! We are apt to

The Burdens of Leaders envy those who hold high place and great power, and to think that their lives must be overflowing with happiness. But we forget that these leaders have to carry not only the golden crown of distinction, but that many burdens are laid upon them of which the looker-on is quite ignorant. When Elisha was ploughing in his father's field, all he had to concern himself with was to see that the ploughing was well done, but when he was the prophet of the Lord, then many, of whom this one woman is an instance, came to him for his help.

Thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord, v. 1. Here is the old puzzle. This man had been a genuine servant of Jehovah, and yet his wife was left in

The Old Puzzle poverty, and his two sons were like to be sold as bondmen. Need we wonder that the woman called on God's prophet to settle in some way this problem that was too great for her poor mind? And she could not consider it with a philosopher's coolness, for the distress was at the very door. The same problem comes up again and again in the experience of God's servants. Nor can we assert that invariably there is deliverance in this life, although oftentimes there is. But we do believe that, when we look back upon the way we have traversed from the shore of eternity, we shall see that God never did forget.

Not anything . . . save a pot of oil, v. 2. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." This is a truth of larger meaning than we are apt to think. It was the fact

The Whip of Need that she had come to the last provision that drove her to the prophet of God for help, and it is when we feel that our own provision and devices

have failed us, that we call upon God. "Hard luck" is, in truth, good luck, if it turns our faces Godward.

Go, borrow thee vessels . . . of all thy neighbors, v. 3. The commands of God are never intended to mock us. Every one of them is full of blessed meaning, which unfolds itself to the obedient heart. To the soul wrapped up in sense, what He bids may appear as useless as the gathering of empty vessels,—how they seemed only to emphasize the widow's need!—but once we have heard the voice of God, we can go forward, sure that He has some rich blessing in store for us.

There is not a vessel more, v. 6. The woman's willingness and God's, how wonderfully they met! But God's exceeded; and exceeded just because the woman's faith had made her so ready to receive. We never honor God more than when we expect great things of him; and never is His delight greater than in doing for us "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think." It is the every-day wonder of the child paying homage by loving trust, and the parent glowing with the delight of caring for the child's needs.

And the oil stayed, v. 6. God gives what we need, and then leaves it to us to make use of what He has provided. There is no gift

Not Ready Made of God that is meant to take the place of what we ourselves can do. This is true in regard to all our necessities. He bestows the material which we cannot frame, but we must ourselves make use of it. Throughout the ages He stored fuel in the bowels of the earth, but man must toilfully give himself to mining it. He makes great forest trees to grow, but only as the result of hard labor can man use them so that they will warm him.

Then she came and told the man of God, v. 7. It is a good thing if we are driven to

God by our needs. Far better is it if we are drawn into His presence by our gratitude for His countless mercies. Our prayers should not be all petition; thanksgiving

The Place of
Thanksgiving

should have a large place in them. And the truly grateful heart will not be content with words. It will seek expression in using the gifts of God in such a way as to please Him, who is the great Giver of them all.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

Before entering on the lesson, form as vivid a conception as you can of this widow and her household. Have some distressed widow in your mind, if you know any such, to give point and precision to your presentation of the lesson.

Bear in mind, too, that the laws of debt among the Jews in the days of Elisha were very different from what they are in our country. Tell the scholars that even in Great Britain imprisonment for debt has not been long abolished. There is no imprisonment for debt now in Great Britain or Canada.

Help the scholars to realize the scene depicted in the first verse. Picture the widow, her husband, an eager student for the prophet's work, her grief at his loss, the sad prospect of seeing them made slaves. In her anguish she appeals to Elisha for relief. Observe how confidently she speaks of her husband's character. Good men have a special pleasure in acknowledging the claims of the relatives of the good.

Elisha's heart went out to the widow in her sorrow, poverty and fear, and he at once asked what he could do for her. His own resources may have been scanty, or, if ample, they may have been exhausted at this time by his charities. But whatever help he could give, would not be withholden. So he asked what she had in the house.

What was the oil used for? Why was the widow bidden to borrow as many vessels as she could get? Why was she told to observe secrecy? Why was the pouring out to be done by her? Why were the sons to help? How was it that the oil ceased as soon as there were no more vessels to fill? Did the widow anticipate the direction Elisha gave her to sell the oil, for the paying

of the debt and the support of herself and her sons?

Use the lesson to enforce the evils of debt and the duty of paying debts. Allow that sometimes debt is unavoidable: it may have been so in this case; but warn against it. Insist on the duty of paying promptly for anything we buy. Dwell also on the pain and shame of debt and the loss of influence to which it leads. Declare that debts should be paid at once. Ask for proof of this from the Lesson. Mention that perhaps the noblest chapter in the life of Sir Walter Scott is that relating to his exertions to pay off his debts.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The Lesson of last Sabbath was full of Elisha (run over the various items); truly, like his master Elijah, a mighty prophet and miracle worker. He looked to God, and God wrought in him and by him marvellously.

He is in the Lesson of to-day also, as close to God as ever, and therefore as strong to do wonders. But it is a sorrowful widow woman and her sons that are the central figures, and the scene, their desolated, poverty-stricken home.

It is always darkest just before dawn, is the old saying. How black that home was for this woman,—her beloved husband dead, a man who "did fear the Lord"; a heavy unpaid debt, perhaps incurred by a long illness before he died; nothing to pay with: "prophets," like most ministers, were not over rich; the creditor actually "come" to carry off her two sons, her only comfort and hope, into bondage as was his right (see Exposition). The bravest spirit must have been crushed.

But this woman was not crushed, "perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Cor. 4:8) was her condition. She was a woman of God, and those who know God, need never know defeat.

To whom shall she go? To whom can she go, since every door seems shut? Verse 1 of Hymn 377, Book of Praise, gives answer.

And so, to God's servant and messenger she comes and tells her sad plight, v. 1. Go over the points again one by one; it will deepen the impression; and then make the whole directions and proceedings of vs. 2-6 clear and vivid, item by item, bringing out these three practical points: (a) In helping us, God has us do all we ourselves can; (b)

The wonderfully simple and strong faith of the woman—and of her boys; (c) The richness of God's giving; and this fourth point, (d) His giving is in the measure of our faith, Matt. 9:29.

Verse 7 is in delightful contrast to v. 1. The dawn has come. The woman trusted in God's help. Now she lives rejoicingly on God's bounty. Psalm 34:1-9 forms a fitting close. Such confidence as the psalmist proclaims we all may have.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

The service of God makes close akin. v. 1. Our help should be wise as well as willing. v. 2.

We need to pray, not for more willingness in God to give, but for greater capacity in ourselves to receive. v. 3.

We must hold communion with heaven if we are to receive gifts from heaven. v. 4. Dependence on divine help does not excuse any want of diligence. v. 5.

Many come empty to God; He sends none empty away. v. 6.

God sets us an example of economy. v. 6. Honesty is part of piety. v. 7.

From the Library

Pour forth the oil, pour boldly forth,
It will not fail until
Thou fairest vessels to provide,
Which it may freely fill.

But if at any time thou cease
Such channels to provide,
The very springs of Love for thee
Will soon be parched and dried.

For we must share, if we would keep
That good thing from above;
Ceasing to give, we cease to have
Such is the law of Love.—R. C. Trench.

Topics for Brief Papers

(To be ready on the day of the Lesson)

1. The law of creditor and debtor among the Hebrews.
2. Faith growing by the exercise of it.

Prove from Scripture

That the righteous shall not lack.

Lesson Questions

[From the HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—In whose reign is the Lesson? Whither had Elisha gone?

1, 2 Who made an appeal to Elisha? What had she to say about her husband? What sort of man had he been? What was her trouble now? What is meant by "the creditor"? by "bondmen"? Why did she think that Elisha might help her? What wonderful things had he done? What questions did Elisha ask? Why did he ask them? What was the woman's answer? For what was oil used in Palestine?

3, 4 What did Elisha tell her to do? Why was she to shut the door? From what were the vessels to be filled?

5, 6 How did the woman show her trust in Elisha and in God? What part did her sons take? How great was the supply? What is promised to those who believe? (Mark 9:23.) What does the Lesson teach about waste? Who was asked about the use of the oil? Why? What directions did he give?

Seniors and the Home Department—Mention possible places for the events of the Lesson.

1, 2 What do we here learn regarding "the sons of the prophets"? What was the Hebrew law concerning debt? How was slavery regulated? Which of our Lord's parables refers to this law? (Matt. 18:23-35.) What special promise made to widows? Wherefore the prophet's questions?

3, 4 How was the faith of the widow and her sons tested? Of whom is oil an emblem? (Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20.) What promise

regarding this Person? (Luke 11 : 13.)
When did He descend upon Jesus? (Luke
3 : 22.) On the disciples? (Acts 2 : 3, 2.)

5, 6 What is the condition of blessing?
Which miracle of Jesus teaches that waste is
wrong? (John 6 : 12.) From whom do all
our possessions come? How should they be
used?

Seek-Further Questions—Where did our
Lord raise a widow's son from the dead?
What does Paul say about paying our debts?

Answers to Seek-Further Questions—
(1) Moses, Ex. 15 : 25. (2) Restoring the sight
of Bartimeus, Mark 10 : 46-52.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assem-
bly's Teacher Training Course]

Ques. 44. *The Preface—what it teaches.*
“The Commandments were given originally
as the basis of the covenant into which
Jehovah entered with Israel.” (Salmond.)
See Ex. 34 : 27, 28 ; Deut. 4 : 13.

In this, as in every covenant, there were
two parts, God's part and the people's part.
He gave them many great promises ; they
were required to fulfil the condition of
obedience.

The words of introduction set forth the
reasons for the obedience required. They
are still binding. We have here a statement
of the threefold ground on which God claims
obedience :

We ought to obey, first, “because God is
the Lord.” The name Lord is equivalent
to Jehovah. It is the name which signifies
that God has entered into covenant with His
people. It is the name by which He made
Himself known to Moses when He was about
to accomplish His redeeming work on behalf
of Israel, Ex. ch. 3. All God's promises
are suggested by this name, and bind us to
loving obedience.

The second reason why we should obey
is that the Lord is “our God.” He has
entered into fellowship with us, taking us
for His own people, and giving us Himself
as our richest inheritance.

The third reason is a climax : God's claim
upon our obedience has its strongest founda-
tion in the fact that He is “our Redeemer.”
In the Old Testament, this title is applied
to Jehovah occasionally in the Psalms
(19 : 14 ; 78 : 35) and elsewhere, but most
frequently in Isaiah (41 : 14 ; 43 : 14 ;
44 : 6, etc.). The New Testament brings
out the full and final meaning of the name,
when it shows us Christ as the One through
whom Jehovah redeems us from the curse
of the law (Gal. 3 : 13), the bondage of the
law (Gal. 4 : 5), the power of sin (Rom.
6 : 18), a “vain conversation” (1 Pet. 1 :
18, 19), all iniquity (Tit. 2 : 14), from all
that is meant by “this present evil world,”
Gal. 1 : 4.

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God training His people by providing for the needy.

Introduction—Recall last Lesson. Show some money. What is its use? Is it right
to buy food and clothing, and
not pay for them? (Explain
debt, owe, creditor.) Sometimes,
through the sickness and death
of those who earn the money,
even honest people may be in
debt and have nothing to pay
with.



Lesson—In our Lesson to-day
we are going to hear about a
poor woman who came to Elisha,
the helper, and told him her
trouble. She had two sons. Her
husband was dead. He was a
good man. He had become poor,
perhaps through sickness. He got

some things from a man, and had no money to pay for them. When he was dead, the man (creditor) came to the house of the poor widow and told her if she could not pay the money, he would take her two sons as his slaves or servants to repay himself the debt. Elisha had no money to give her. "What shall I do for you?" he says, "what have you in the house?" "Nothing but a pot of oil" (the common oil that was used for food). She has nothing she can sell to get money. What will she do? She obeys Elisha.

The Need Supplied—Picture the woman running to all her neighbors, borrowing all the empty pots and cruses (explain) she can get, v. 3. She takes them into her house, and closes the door, as Elisha commanded, v. 5. (Show a jar cut out of paper.) Watch her as she pours the oil from her one pot into another and another, as her sons bring them to her. Still the first pot is not empty. When all the pots are full, then the oil stayed. She opens her door! See! the room is full of pots of oil of all sorts and sizes! Elisha says, "Go, sell the oil, and pay the debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." So God helped the needy woman through Elisha.

Golden Text—Repeat. God always helps those who trust Him. He always wants us to help ourselves all we can, to make use of all that we have; and then He does the rest. He lets us plant the seed, and He sends the showers and the sunshine to bring forth the grain, etc. God gives us everything we have. How we should love and obey and serve Him! We should help those in need. God helps others through us.

God's Care of Us—Let us think of some of the good things that God provides for us. (As you name them, put silver stars on the board.) When we look up into the starry sky, let us remember all the kindness and love of God in giving us everything we need.

Repeat—

"Poor and needy though I be,
God Almighty cares for me;
Gives me clothing, shelter, food,
Gives me all I have of good."

Hymn—Sing verse 1, Hymn 518, Book of Praise.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a picture of a piece of money and a pot of oil.

Something to Remember at Home—God provides for me.

Something to Ask at Home—What does Jesus say about God's kindness to us?

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

DO GOOD

Our lesson is about a poor widow, whose husband had been a prophet, or preacher of God's word. Instead of looking for chances to get rich, he had tried to Do Good; so his sickness and death left the widow in debt, with no means of earning money

TRUST GOD
AND
DO GOOD

to pay. The central thought in the lesson is that we should TRUST GOD. But had not this woman and her husband been doing good AND trusting God? And now that has brought the family into trouble. Let us not be too hasty: starvation and slavery seem to threaten them, but they are safe so far. And God's command even in this emergency is still to trust God and do good; and to all that so trust Him, He promises DAILY FOOD. To trust God

TRUST GOD
FOR
DAILY FOOD
AND
DO GOOD

For food and help in an emergency develops faith, and to do good, (erase Do Good) that is, to HELP OTHERS while you yourself are in need of help, tests faith, but also strengthens it, just as the muscles of the arm become strong by exercise.

TRUST GOD
FOR
DAILY FOOD
AND
HELP OTHERS

Lesson III.

ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMMITE

October 16, 1904

2 Kings 4 : 25-37. Study vs. 8-37. Commit to memory vs. 32-35. Read 2 Kings 4 ; 8 : 1-6 ; Luke 7 : 11-17.

GOLDEN TEXT—The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom 6 : 23

25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite:

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.*

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi 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 Gehazi, 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 Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the

Revised Version—1 *the*; 2 *Run, I pray thee, now*; 3 *him*; 4 *once*; 5 *she*.

DAILY READINGS

M.—“Given to hospitality,” 2 Kings 4 : 8-24. T.—Elisha and the Shunammite, 2 Kings 4 : 25-37. W.—Another trial and deliverance, 2 Kings 8 : 1-6. Th.—A widow’s son raised, Luke 7 : 11-17. F.—A daughter restored, Luke 8 : 41-56. S.—Praise for deliverance, Ps. 116. S.—Christ our life, John 11 : 18-27.

Shorter Catechism—*Ques. 45. Which is the first commandment? A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—Exact date unknown. Elisha was prophet for at least fifty years, between 897 B.C. and 841 B.C.; Shunem, a town three miles north of Jezreel, and sixteen or seventeen from Mount Carmel.

Connecting Links—Read in vs. 8-24 the beautiful story (and compare 1 Kgs. 17 : 17-24) of Elisha’s intercourse with the family at Shunem.

I. The Sorrowing Mother, 25-28.

V. 25. *So she . . . came*; the woman of Shunem, whose child lay dead. *Unto the man of God*; a common name for the prophets. Elisha was a friend of poor and rich. In the last Lesson he helped a poor widow; to-day we see him as a comforter to those who had more of this world’s goods, for these have their sorrows as well as the poor. *To Mount Carmel*; not Elisha’s permanent dwelling place, but, as the woman knew, a favorite place with him for fellowship with God. *Saw her afar off*. From the elevation he could see a great distance. *To Gehazi his servant*. This man, as his subsequent

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 Elisha was come unto 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 Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. 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.

Revised Version—1 *caught hold of his feet*; 4 *And*; 5 *but*; 6 *returned*;

Ques. 46. What is required in the first commandment? A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

LESSON PLAN

I. The Sorrowing Mother, 25-28.

II. The Helpless Servant, 32-31.

III. The Powerful Prophet, 32-36.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 148; 319; 8 (Ps. Scl.); 191; 576 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 338.

history reveals, is an example of how people may have to do with God’s business and be, nevertheless, little godlike. *Yonder is that Shunammite*; riding on an ass, a servant with her, v. 24. Elisha, knowing her well, readily recognized her at a distance.

V. 26. *Run . . . to meet her*. Elisha thinks there must be something wrong when he sees the woman (women travelled little in those days) making such haste. *Is it well with thee . . . thy husband . . . thy child?* literally, “Is there peace to thee, etc.?” *It is well*. She simply answers, “Peace.” She would not waste words with Gehazi. Perhaps she may by womanly instinct have had some inkling of the kind of man he was. She would go directly to the one source of help, God’s prophet.

V. 27. *Caught him by the feet*; an attitude of humblest and most earnest supplication, still seen in the East. (Compare Matt. 18 : 29.) *Gehazi came . . . to thrust her away*; thinking she was not sufficiently regarding the dignity of his master. (Compare Matt.

19 : 13-15 ; 26 : 7-10.) *Let her alone ; . . . her soul is vexed* (troubled). Formalities may well be dispensed with in the presence of great sorrow. *The Lord hath hid it*. Elisha had not been supernaturally informed of what had occurred. The Lord made special revelations to His prophets only when needed, leaving them at other times to learn about events just as other people did.

V. 28. *Did I desire a son ?* Compare vs. 16, 17. Her words are almost a reproach, and imply that it would have been better never to have had a son than to have him and lose him. *Did I not say, Do not deceive me ?* It seems to the woman that the prophet has broken his promise by allowing the child given to her to be taken away.

II. The Helpless Servant, 29-31.

V. 29. *Gird up thy loins ;* fasten up at the waist the flowing garments, such as were worn in the East, so that you may run with all speed. *Salute him not*. Salutations in the East, even at the present day, take up a great deal of time (see *Light from the East*). *Lay my staff on the face of the child*. With quick sympathy Elisha divines the cause of the mother's trouble, though she has not declared it. There is no ground for supposing that Elisha expected Gehazi to bring the child to life. He may have wished to teach that the power to do this is in God only, v. 33. Or he may have intended merely to comfort and cheer the mother, by letting her see that something was being done, and to awaken in her an expectation of the restoration he himself would bring about.

Vs. 30, 31. *I will not leave thee ;* with the emphasis on "thee." Gehazi and the prophet's staff were well enough, but the mother heart takes no chances. Verse 21 shows it at work. It was a true instinct as well as faith, that led her to cling to the man of God in her sore need. *He arose, and followed her*. Such faith, combined with such perseverance, cannot possibly fail. *There was neither voice, nor hearing*. Elisha's staff in the hands of Gehazi was only a stick. It was no substitute for the prophet himself. Certain churches talk of "apostolic succession"; but grant (which is not according to history) that there is direct succession

in ordination, "apostolic orders are of no avail without apostolic power." *Went again to meet*. He was on the return journey before Elisha and the woman reached Shunem. *Is not awaked ;* from death, represented by the figure of sleep. (Compare Job 14 : 12 ; Ps. 13 : 3 ; Acts 7 : 60.)

III. The Powerful Prophet, 32-36.

Vs. 32-34. *When Elisha was come*. Only he could bring back the departed life. *The child was dead ;* implied, though not asserted in v. 28. *Laid upon his bed ;* in the little chamber built for the prophet, vs. 10, 21. *Shut the door*. There is to be no parade ; he must be alone with God (compare Matt. 9 : 25 ; Acts 9 : 40). *Prayed unto the Lord*. Compare 1 Kgs. 17 : 17-23. We do not read of Gehazi having prayed. (See James 5 : 16.) *He went up*. The guest chamber was an upper room. (See illustration, HOME STUDY QUARTERLY.) *Lay upon the child, etc.* ; practically a repetition of Elijah's action when restoring the widow's son, 1 Kgs. 17 : 19-21. The "action seems to say, 'Either let me share death with him, or let him share life with me.'"

Vs. 35-37. *Walked . . . to and fro ;* wrestling in earnest prayer to God. *The child sneezed*. The power of breathing had returned. *Opened his eyes*. The second effort succeeds. The prophet's faith in God has triumphed. *Take up thy son*. Compare Luke 7 : 15. With what anxiety the woman had waited ; but now her faith was rewarded. How great her joy ! *Fell at his feet*. The power was of God, but Elisha was the instrument of that power, and in token of her gratitude to God she falls at the prophet's feet, even before she takes up her son. Contrast the nine lepers, Luke 17 : 18.

Light from the East

SALUTE—Orientals, to whom time is ordinarily of little value, are much more dignified and leisurely in their intercourse than the busy, matter-of-fact people of the West. Every enquiry made of a laborer, or of a beggar by the wayside must be preceded by some formal salutation or pious wish for his welfare. If you dismiss a beggar without alms you must give him a

benediction. In a casual meeting with a friend, elaborate and repeated enquiries are made for each other's health and for the health of every member of the two families. There are set answers or a choice of two or three answers to every question, and it is accounted rude to depart from the form which custom prescribes. "Peace be on you," is the most common form of salutation among Moslems, and the conventional reply is, "And on you be the peace of God and His blessings." If one is asked how he is,

he replies, "Praise be to God," and it is only from the tone of his voice that you can tell whether he is well or ill. An acquaintance meeting another after a brief absence will say, "Thou hast made us desolate by thine absence from us"; and he is usually answered, "May God not make us desolate by thy absence!" And all this is accompanied by elaborate motions of the body and of the hands. On the rare occasions when he is in a hurry, he never sees or hears his friends on the street.

APPLICATION

So she went and came unto the man of God, v. 25. Not more readily do the steel filings seek the magnet, than does the soul that knows God turn to Him in times of sorrow and distress. But we must have found the road to Him in days of quietness and peace. Else our very sorrow will blind our eyes and prevent us from seeing the way clearly. It is only well-trodden paths into which we turn when a great grief has come into our lives.

Is it well with thee? v. 26. This is the common greeting. We say to our friend when we meet him, "Are you well?" How much of our happiness or misery is wrapped up in the good or ill health of a few people in the world! If our cherished ones are well, then there are few things besides that can happen which will altogether overwhelm us. How thankful we should be when there is no sickness upon any of our loved ones!

She caught him by the feet, v. 27. There is nothing to be ashamed of in earnestness. And we should be specially in earnest about the welfare of those linked to us by the ties of kindred. Our earnestness, if it be real, will find expression in efforts and prayers for their good. It may bring upon us sometimes the ridicule of the thoughtless and light-headed. This we can well afford to endure, if only we reach the end for which we strive.

If thou meet any man, salute him not, v. 29. Not in its letter but in its spirit, we do well

to heed this command. True it is, that we owe to each other the little kindnesses and courtesies of life. But these must not be suffered to distract us from our pressing duties, or prevent our giving to these our full attention and energy. Each moment brings to the worker some one task, and to this his whole strength and power and time is to be given, without thought of anything else. It is only thus that we can do our best work.

And the mother of the child said . . . I will not leave thee, v. 30. It is remarkable how many there are who learn to trust in God through some human person. Very often it is through trust in some human friend that we

draw near to God Himself. Many a student in Edinburgh was drawn to God by what he saw in that rare soul, Henry Drummond. What nobler ambition can there be for any of us, than to possess and use such a power for the good of others! It is then that we stand nearest to that lofty level upon which the Man of Nazareth moves, who is the great Mediator, through whom we draw near to the holiest of all.

He . . . shut the door upon them twain, v. 33. Upon himself and the dead child. When the door opens, there will still be a dead child:—so says everyone but one woman, who has eyes to see marvellously, even through her tears. It is a reversal of the old saying, "seeing is believing." Believing, here, is seeing, and faith's sight is never at fault, as, in this case, we discover.

Well Worn
Paths

The Blessing
of Health

Dead in
Earnest

The Right
of Way

Leading
Godward

Believing
is Seeing

"The door is shut, but God is there,
The living God who answers prayer:
What will the answer be?

A glorious answer comes ere long,
A prayer is quenched in endless song:
'Where, death, thy victory?'"

He . . . prayed unto the Lord, v. 33. The greatest of all deeds are wrought by those who thus absolutely and confidently cast themselves upon the divine strength. This is just as true to-day as ever it was. Such faith nerves men to the highest exercise of their powers, and the thing that would otherwise seem impossible is accomplished. Such prayer is an outgoing of the whole nature to God, and is never left unanswered.

And the child opened his eyes, v. 35. How unworthy of the great gifts of life and sight the child would have been, had he used them to walk in ways of sin! In no way less to blame are we, whose life and powers God has given and preserves, if we do not yield them to

Doing the
Impossible

The Right Use
of God's Gifts

His service. Common gratitude should keep us in the path of obedience.

And . . . he said . . . Take up thy son, v. 36. With her son before her eyes, this woman could never doubt God's power over death.

A More Convincing Proof We have a far more convincing proof. For Jesus came forth from the grave never more to taste death, and as the living Saviour, is showing His power every day in the world. How firm a confidence should be ours!

She . . . took up her son, and went out, v. 37. A lesson that should not be overlooked is that the blessing of a son given to her and

restored, when he had come under the power of death, was the result of her own kindness of heart and readiness to provide for the comfort of the prophet of God. Good deeds are not always rewarded in the same fashion, but we may say that no good deed is done without some profit coming to the doer of it, and there is no better work to be engaged in than the blessing of others. Not he who gets but he who gives is happiest.

The Profit
of Kindness

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

It will be necessary for you to tell the story of the lady of Shunem from verse 8 onwards. Mention her social rank, her kindness to the prophet, his desire to recompense her in some way for her attentions, the birth of her son, his illness and death due to sunstroke, her confidence in the prophet, shown by v. 21, and her hastening to Elisha.

Employ a map, if possible, to indicate the relation of Shunem and Carmel. Notice the proximity of Shunem to one or two places familiar in the New Testament.

The scholars are already acquainted with Mount Carmel. Picture the lady, as she rides toward the place of Elisha's sojourn; mention her thoughts, or, still better, get the class to mention them. What were the thoughts of the prophet when he saw her? Discover these from the command he addressed to his servant Gehazi. What did the lady mean by the answer, "It is well"? Did she speak the truth? Or have the

words a sense which does not occur at once to an ordinary reader?

Why did she lay hold of the feet of the prophet? Why did Gehazi seek to remove her? What enabled the prophet to discern that her soul was vexed? What kept her from saying plainly, "My son is dead"? Speak gently and softly, and the scholars will feel the mood which will enable them to grasp the situation. Why did Elisha send Gehazi to place his staff on the face of the child? Had the lady no faith in the mission of Gehazi? Is this the import of her words, "I will not leave thee"? Why did Elisha accompany the lady home? Was it because of her solemn assurance that she would not leave him? Was it because he doubted the success of Gehazi's mission? Was it because he wished to share in her joy when her son should be given her again? Or, was it simply because he felt that it was the will of God that he should go, and that he went not knowing what was before him?

Picture the return of Gehazi, and his message. Follow Elisha into the room, which was practically his own. What boy

is that on his bed? Inquire why he acted as he did? What is the idea conveyed by his mode of action? Why was the action repeated? Can we answer these and similar questions which occur to us? Who was the real agent in the restoration of the child? Why was Elisha alone while the miracle was being wrought? Sketch vividly the rest of the scene, dwelling especially on the mother's gratitude and joy.

Ask the class for the lessons of the incident. Make use of all relevant answers. Speak of bereavement in the home; the pain and sorrow it causes; the blessedness of sympathy; the duty of our doing all we can at such times to show our fellow-feeling and friendliness. Add more purely Christian considerations: mention that the aspect of death is changed to the Christian. We grieve not for the dead, as was the case under the Old Testament dispensation, for we know they are with Jesus. Touch finally on death as coming to all, even the young, and then apply the words, "It is well with the child," to the death of all who belong to Jesus; they "do immediately pass into glory."

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The lesson centres upon a boy, and may be taken up under these headings:—How the boy came; How the boy went; How the boy came back again.

I. HOW THE BOY CAME. It was all through his mother's kindness to one of God's servants, a minister or missionary, as we should say. The class will be charmed with the quaint story of vs. 8-10. The home was the richer because of the expenditure for the prophet's comfort. It secured a guest who brought God's presence with him. There was one shadow over this household, and especially on the mother's heart; there was no child. Through Elisha's prayers God sent a baby boy. This was a thousand times reward for the kindness shown.

II. HOW THE BOY WENT. Says Dr. Thomson in "The Land and the Book":—"I know by experience that this valley of Shunem glows like a furnace in the harvest time." This explains the sad tale—where will you find a sadder one as simply told?

—of vs. 18-20. Not many words, the fewer, indeed, the better, are needed to describe the mother's sudden sorrow.

III. HOW THE BOY CAME BACK AGAIN. Any boy might be proud to have such a mother. True, her actions, at first sight, seem strange, but when we get the key to them, there is no praise too strong.

She does not sit down and cry. There is a time to weep: but it is not when anything can be done to save or restore life.

Can the class explain the wherefore of v. 21? If they can, they are "warm" upon the finding of the key.

The man of God's bed may be good for the restoring of the child, but the man of God himself is better. Is not this the explanation of the woman's journey to Elisha? vs. 22-25. (Make it very vivid)—her promptness, her determination, her eagerness. And was it not worth while? The man of God might bring him back to life.

The scholars will be interested in seeing how her eagerness brushed aside Gehazi, vs. 25-26, (perhaps with a woman's quick insight, she saw through that doubtful character); and in Elisha's tender solicitude as to the cause of her grief, v. 27, and his prompt understanding of how it was with the boy, and his equally prompt sending of the servant and the staff, vs. 28, 29 (see Exposition as to why Gehazi was sent). Love feeds importunity, and importunity is apt to triumph, v. 30.

The mother has done all that she can; she believed that God could give her back her child (is not this the key?); and now God's servant and the dead child are shut up alone with God, v. 33.

What will the outcome be? Who can doubt? The detail of the miracle will hold the attention of the class. The pith of it is, that God wrought through a man who came in close touch with those he would help, and who looked to God alone for the power. Glad as was her mother heart her sense of God's goodness was stronger still.

Imagine the mother's joy, vs. 36, 37. But note that her first thought, as it should be in even our highest joys, was of God. She fell at the feet of God's servant, even before she took up her son.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under several headings.

Lesson Points

It is well with us when grief drives us to God. v. 25.

A kindly greeting hinders no errand. v. 26.
Work is well done only when done with all our might. v. 29.

The closer to God, the nearer to the source of power. v. 30.

It is heart to heart work that tells. v. 34.

When God borrows our blessings it is only to restore them with generous interest. v. 36.

Gratitude is the human response to heaven's grace. v. 37.

From the Library

Woman, of pure and heaven-born fame,
Though Scripture's hallowed page
Hath made no mention of thy name,
Thou livest on from age to age.

For ne'er was brighter lustre thrown
On path by woman trod,
Than hers, who "dwelt among her own"
And cared for those of God.

—Bernard Barton.

The good Shunammite had lost her son ;
her faith she lost not.—Bishop Hall.

A Western woman can hardly realize how great a sorrow such misfortunes are to her Eastern sister. A son is affection, support, position.—Geikie.

Some commentators see a difficulty here, as if a prophet were bound to know everything supernaturally. But in reality the revelation of past facts, capable of being learnt in the ordinary way, was reserved for rare occasions.—Cook.

It is an honor and a help to abide in the company of a great man, but in proportion to the privilege is the responsibility. Gehazi the servant of Elisha cannot rise to the opportunity ; he goes out from his master's presence a thief carrying a curse instead of a blessing.—Professor W. G. Jordan.

The man of God came forth, and led the child
Unto his mother, and went on his way.
And he was there—her beautiful—her own—

Living and smiling on her—with his arms
Folded about her neck, and his warm breath
Breathing upon her lips, and in her ear
The music of his gentle voice once more !

—N. P. Willis.

No shattered box of ointment

We need ever regret,

For out of disappointment

Flow sweetest odors yet.

The discord that involveth

Some startling change of key

The Master's hand resolveth

In richest harmony.

—Quoted in Pulpit Commentary.

Topics for Brief Papers

(To be ready on the day of the Lesson)

1. Tell the whole story of Elisha and the family at Shunem.
2. A mother's love.

Prove from Scripture

That the dead shall rise.

Lesson Questions

[FROM THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—For how long was Elisha prophet?
Of what family do we read in the Lesson chapter ?

25, 26 Who came to Elisha ? Where was he ? What sad thing had happened ? Whom did Elisha send to meet the woman ? His question ? Her answer ?

27, 28 How did the woman show her earnestness ? Who was Gehazi ? What did he wish to do ? What did Elisha say ?

29-31 Whither was Gehazi sent ? How did he prepare for the journey ? What commands given to him for the journey ? What was he to do with the staff ? Had this any effect ? What had Elisha done ?

32-37 To whom did Elisha pray ? What did he then do ? The first signs of life in the child ? How did the mother show her gratitude to Elisha for restoring her child ?

Seniors and the Home Department—Where is Shunem ? What kindness had the Shunammite woman shown to Elisha ?

25-28 What errand sent her now to Elisha ? To what offer does she refer ? Of what does she complain ? What did David say when his child died ? (2 Sam. 12 : 23.)

29-31 Explain Elisha's purpose in his command to Gehazi? Where did the disciples of Jesus fail to effect a cure? Why? (Matt. 17 : 16, 19, 20.)

32-37 By whose power was the child raised to life? What means used? Where does our Lord claim the power to give life? (John 5 : 21.)

Seek-Further Questions—What three persons did Jesus raise from the dead? What disciples of Jesus were commanded to "salute no man by the way"?

Answers to Seek-Further Questions—(1) At Nain, Luke 7 : 11-15. (2) Rom. 13 : 8.

The Catechism

For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course]

Ques. 45, 46. *The First Commandment, and what it requires.* The First Commandment assumes that men will worship some being or beings. It does not present a choice between the true God and no god, but between the true God and false gods. Similarly, Joshua called the people to choose whom they would serve (Josh. 24 : 15), and Elijah summoned his nation to follow God or Baal, 1 Kgs. 18 : 21. So Jesus also said to His disciples, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," taking for granted that they would serve one or other.

The duty here laid down is to recognize Jehovah as the true God. This recognition

includes (a) the knowledge of who or what Jehovah is. We must know Him as Creator, Preserver, Governor and Redeemer. (b) It also includes faith. We must believe that God exists and that He is what He reveals Himself to be. We must believe that we are his creatures and children. (c) Again confession is included in the recognition of God. Confession is made, not only by accepting a creed, but also by acts of worship, such as praise, prayer and thanksgiving in public and private. All this is required in the First Commandment, and failure in any of these particulars is condemned by it.

The duty enjoined in this Commandment is man's highest duty. Christ declared it, and the kindred Commandments of the first table, to be the "great Commandment in the law," Matt. 22 : 37, 38. Reason teaches that love and reverence to the highest and best Being in the universe are the highest duty of all rational creatures. Nothing can ennoble and elevate the soul like fellowship with the Holiest.

Obedience to this Commandment is the foundation of morality. Experience teaches that where people forget God and the claims of religion, the moral law is trampled under foot. The inspired apostle (Rom. ch. 1) declares that when men, although they "knew God," did not glorify Him as God, He gave them up to vile affections.

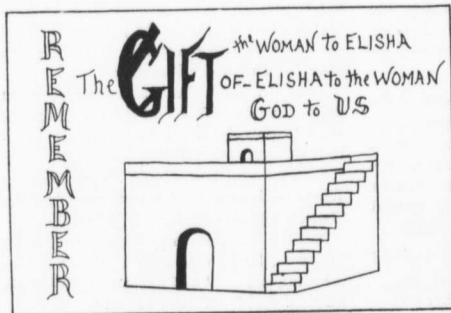
FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God training His people by restoring life.

Introduction—Recall last Lesson. Elisha the helper showed kindness to a poor woman.

To-day we are to hear about his kindness to a rich woman. Here is Elisha at the little village of Shunem (where?). Here lived a wealthy lady whose husband owned the land around Shunem (a farmer). They had often asked Elisha to come in and rest and have something to eat, when he was passing through Shunem.

The Woman's Gift to Elisha—Describe, and build with blocks (or outline on the board), an Eastern house, square halls, flat roof, stairs outside. This



lady of Shunem said to her husband, "Let us build for this good man Elisha a little room on the flat roof of the house, where he can make his home whenever he comes this way." (Build the room in clear outline, on the roof of the house.) Describe it, with its bed, divan to sit upon, table and lamp.

Elisha's servant, Gehazi, had found out that the lady of Shunem had no little boys or girls, and she wished very much to have a baby boy. Elisha promised that she should have a little son, and prayed God to give her one, and God did so. She held the dear little baby boy in her arms, and was so happy. The little fellow grew and grew, and soon he was big enough to go out alone to see his father and the men cutting the grain in the harvest field. One day he was playing in the field in the heat of the sun, and he had a sunstroke. He cried out to his father, "Oh my head, my head!" The father, not knowing how ill the little fellow was, told one of the men to carry the boy home to his mother. She nursed him very tenderly, but at noon he died.

The Mother's Faith—Tell the story, vs. 20-24. (What reason has she to think Elisha can help her?) With all haste she makes the journey to Mount Carmel. (Continue the story, vs. 28-37.) Elisha sees her coming and sends Gehazi to meet her.

Elisha's Gift to the Woman—Elisha was able, through power from God, to give back

the little boy alive to his mother. Describe her joy and thankfulness.

God's Gift to Us—The gift of God is eternal life.

Golden Text—It is God who gives life; it is God who takes away life. God gives us everlasting life in heaven through Jesus Christ. We only live in this world a few years at most. When we are preparing to go for a visit how much we plan and talk about it! We should think and talk a great deal about the beautiful home in heaven, where we shall live forever with Jesus, if we love and obey Him.

Inasmuch—The lady of Shunem expected no reward for her kindness to Elisha, but what wonderful blessings came to her! Teach the children that kindness shewn to any one is not without reward. (Repeat Matt. 25:40.) It brings joy to our own hearts. Like Elisha and like Jesus, be kind to both poor and rich.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw an Eastern house with Elisha's room on the roof, and remember—

The Woman's
Elisha's
God's

GIFT

to Elisha.
to the Woman.
to Us.

Something to Remember at Home—"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. 6:23.

Something to Ask at Home—What did Jesus say about eternal life?

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

THE
POWER OF GOD

GIVES LIFE

Our Lesson to-day shows wonderful Power. We stand in awe before the unspeakable power OF God. As soon as the mother knows that her son is dead she wants the prophet of God. The husband sees no connection between the boy's death and God,

but the mother feels dimly perhaps at first, what later she sees gloriously, that LIFE is not an accident, or chance, but that the power of God GIVES life. And so, groping towards God, she seeks Elisha the MAN of God. The power of God comes to us in our need WORKING THROUGH man. He uses men to work out His purposes. Will you let God use (erase MAN) YOU? DOES THE power of God working through you (erase S) GIVE life and strength to others? It matters not how weak we are in ourselves, in God's strength we can do great things for those about us.

THE
POWER OF GOD
WORKING
THROUGH MAN
GIVES LIFE

DOES THE
POWER OF GOD
WORKING
THROUGH YOU
GIVE LIFE?

October 23, 1904

Lesson IV.

ELISHA AND NAAMAN

2 Kings 5: 1-14. Study vs. 1-19. Commit to memory vs. 10-14. Read the chapter, and Luke 4: 16-30.

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

1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid: and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! 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 Israel.

5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. 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 Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel 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.

Revised Version—1 victory; 2 of; 3 in bands; 4 then would he; 5 And now; 6 but; 7 Omil had; 8 chariots; 9 wave; 10 the rivers.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Elisha and Naaman, 2 Kings 5: 1-14. T.—Gehazi's punishment, 2 Kings 5: 15-27. W.—The ten lepers, Luke 17: 11-19. Th.—Christ's touch, Mark 1: 35-45. F.—"I went and washed," John 9: 1-11. S.—Prayer for cleansing, Ps. 51: 1-13. **S.**—Promise of cleansing, Jer. 33: 1-9.

Shorter Catechism—*Ques. 47.*—What is forbidden in the first commandment? A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping

8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel 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 Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman 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 not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? 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, wouldst 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 Jordan, 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.

and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

LESSON PLAN

I. Naaman at Home, 1-4

II. Before Israel's King, 5-7.

III. Before Israel's Prophet, 8-10.

IV. At the Jordan, 11-14.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 152; 151; 38 (Ps. Sel.); 122; 551 (From PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 126.

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—About 889 B.C.; Damascus, the capital of Syria, a kingdom northwest of Israel.

Connecting Links—The raising from the dead of the woman of Shunem's child is followed by the two miracles of rendering harmless the unwholesome food and feeding of a hundred prophets ch. 4: 38-44. Then comes the present incident.

I. Naaman at Home, 1-4.

V. 1. *Naaman*. The name means "pleasantness." *Captain of the host*; commander-in-chief of the Syrian army. *King of Syria*; Benhadad II. *A great man with his master*; meriting and enjoying the king's confidence. *Honourable*; highly esteemed by all on account of his ability, strength of character and public services. *The Lord had given victory* (Rev. Ver.). Perhaps the rising power of Assyria was the one Naaman had

defeated. The Hebrew writer ascribes his success to the Lord. God rules amongst the nations. *Mighty man in valour*; conspicuous for personal bravery. *But he was a leper*; and this one bitter drop poisoned his overflowing cup of happiness. (See Light from the East.) The laws of separation of lepers enforced by the Jews do not seem to have existed among the Syrians.

Vs. 2-4. *Syrians . . . by companies* (Rev. Ver., "bands"). Official peace between the countries did not prevent roving bands of marauders from sallying forth. *Little maid*. As in African wars to-day, captives were a chief part of the spoil. *Would God*; a strong expression of desire. *My lord* (Naaman) *were with the prophet*; Elisha, whose fame was spread throughout Israel. Note the absence of bitterness in the little girl against her captors, and the love felt

for Naaman by those under him, as well as by those over him. *In Samaria*; where Elisha was at this time residing: whether in his own house or not, we do not know. *He would recover him*; cure him of his incurable disease. *And one* (perhaps Naaman himself) . . . *told his lord*; the king.

II. Before Israel's King, 5-7.

V. 5. *Go to, go.* This expresses immediate action. No time must be lost. Naaman was such a valued servant that anything possible must be done for him. *A letter unto the king of Israel.* Such a demand "is a clear proof that Israel was a vassal-state to Syria." (Benzinger.) The king was likely Ahab's son, Jehoram. *Ten talents of silver . . . six thousand pieces of gold.* According to one reckoning a talent of silver was worth \$1,940, and a "piece" of gold was worth about \$10. Thus Naaman's gift would be nearly \$20,000 in silver and \$60,000 in gold. In those days money was in bars, and was reckoned by weight. *Ten changes of raiment*; commonly presented in the East as gifts of honor. Compare Gen. 45:22; 2 Chron. 9:24.

Vs. 6, 7. *Brought the letter to the king*; thinking, as his sovereign did, that Jehoram could control the prophet's services. *That thou mayest recover.* Apparently no express mention was made of the prophet in the letter. *Rent his clothes*; as a sign of alarm. *To kill and to make alive.* Leprosy could be cured only by divine power. To cure it meant to give new life (v. 14), and none but the Author of life Himself could do that (see Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6). *He seeketh a quarrel against me.* Jehoram thought Benhadad was seeking an excuse for a raid upon Israel by giving him an impossible task. He seems to have forgotten about Elisha and what he had previously done for Israel (see chs. 3:14-27).

III. Before Israel's Prophet, 8-10.

V. 8, 9. *Elisha . . . heard . . . let him come now to me.* The prophet, clothed with divine might, can do what the king is powerless to accomplish. *That there is a prophet*; a prophet in deed and in truth (compare Luke 7:16). *Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots* (Rev. Ver.). He came

as a great man demanding rather than asking a favor. He must be taught his utter dependence upon God.

V. 10. *Elisha sent a messenger*; likely Gehazi. The prophet wanted the Syrian to know that man had nothing to do with the cure. The prophet's keeping in the background shows his true greatness, and brings God's part in the cure into clear light. *Go and wash in Jordan seven times.* Running water was in ancient times often regarded as a cure for disease, but there was no special power to heal in the Jordan. It was twenty-five miles away. Elisha sends Naaman thither to test his faith and humility, and to teach him that the healing was from Jehovah alone. *Flesh shall come again.* "In leprosy the part affected is covered with an incrustation so that the flesh seems all to have disappeared." (Cambridge Bible.)

IV. At the Jordan, 11-14.

Vs. 11, 12. *Wroth*; because, as he thought, his position and dignity had not been sufficiently respected. *I thought.* Naaman's mistake was in making up his mind what kind of treatment he ought to receive, and demanding it, instead of waiting to learn God's way of curing from God's servant. *Strike his hand* (Rev. Ver. "wave his hand"); Naaman had in mind the methods of the magicians and sorcerers, and thought Elisha was like one of them. *Are not Abana and Pharpar . . . better?* These bright, clear, cold rivers of Damascus were indeed far superior to the turbid, discolored Jordan. *May I not wash in them?* If it was only a matter of water, why not take the best he could get?

Vs. 13, 14. *His servants said . . . My father*; an unusual form of address, but when people wish to plead, they use the most endearing terms. *Some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?* It was more difficult than the servants thought, for pride and prejudice must be overcome. *Went he down.* Naaman wisely overcame his pride, and followed his servants' counsel. *Dipped himself seven times in Jordan.* His faith was put to the test in the repeated washings. *Flesh of a little child.* The power of God, who could kill and make alive, was shown in what was practically a new creation.

Light from the East

LEPROSY—is an incurable constitutional disease of the nerves of the skin and of the outside tissues of the body. Lumps form under the skin, which sometimes break and discharge offensive matter, and these lumps after a time eat down into the joints, so that fingers and toes and even limbs will drop off, and in other cases the arms and legs are twisted out of shape. The appearance of the patient is not so repulsive as might be supposed, for when a joint or a feature does drop off, nature heals over the wound almost as well as in a clean amputation. The cause of the disease is supposed to be eating half-putrid fish. Others think it is caused by a certain bacillus. The one theory does not

necessarily exclude the other. Leprosy is first mentioned on the monuments of Egypt about 1500 B.C., and from that country it spread over the whole world. It was quite prevalent in Europe in the Middle Ages, but began to disappear from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. The last native leper in Britain died about the middle of the eighteenth century. There are communities of lepers in Jerusalem, where there is a hospital for them, in which only a few will stay, and at Nablous, where they will corner up a traveller to extort alms from him. King Robert the Bruce is said to have been a leper. But this, as in Naaman's case, did not prevent his activity in military enterprises, such as his last invasion of England.

APPLICATION

Now Naaman . . . was a great man . . . and honourable, v. 1. How endless the variety we see in human faces! There is not less

True Honor in the characters and reputations of men. We are always ready to turn aside and look upon the man of high place, honorable conduct, and great valor. It is a good thing that one should wish to be great in the estimate of others, provided such reputation rests upon a worthy character. The greatness in the eyes of men that is gained in any unworthy way is not likely to be retained. Some day or other the world will see behind the veil, and where once they honored, will despise. The only reputation that will stand the test of time and the searching light of judgment, human and divine, is the reputation founded on real service and sterling worth.

But he was a leper, v. 1. How often it is true that a life which has been greatly favored, has all the sweetness taken out of

One Bitter Drop it by some one disease or trouble! Here was a man of splendid position, with a glorious record of valiant deeds, but these could not make him forget that he was a leper, and in the home where all might have been joy, gloom rested. How much those whose cup of happiness seems filled to the brim may need our sympathy, because of a single great grief that has come into their life!

Would God my lord were with the prophet, v. 3. Whatever her own sorrows were, this little maid still had a kindly thought towards

Master and Servant those with whom she came in contact. Surely this is a lesson for us all. Wherever we are there are people whom we may help. The master has a claim on the servant's kindly thought, and the servant has a claim on the master; and just as we learn this and put it into practice will we be helping to answer the petition, "Thy kingdom come!"

Ten talents of silver . . . six thousand pieces of gold, v. 5. It is a mistake that people very often make that everything can be

What Money Cannot Buy bought with money. The most precious possessions, the greatest blessings, cannot be bought with money. No one ever bought happiness with it, or love, or character, or the grace of God. The wealth of the whole world could not buy them, and yet they are the greatest and most precious blessings that can be obtained.

See how he seeketh a quarrel against me, v. 7. How prone we are to judge motives; and very often we are quite mistaken. We

When it is Good to be Slow should be slow to attribute wrong motives to anyone. Our knowledge is so imperfect, that nine times out of ten we are mistaken when we thus judge. Nor is this the only reason why we should be careful in our judgments.

We know how faulty our own motives often are, and it may be that we are much more deserving of condemnation than those we are inclined to judge harshly. Both our ignorance of others and our knowledge of ourselves should make us charitable.

There is a prophet in Israel, v. 8. How paltry all the grandeur of the world is! The king could do nothing but rend his clothes,

but the man of God could speak with assurance. The dignities of this world and

those of God's kingdom are not based on the same things, but while the former pass away, the latter abide.

Some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? v. 13. How irresistible the logic of this appeal! And does it not apply in its full force to the invitation

Gospel Logic of the gospel? Jesus Christ asks us only to trust Him and obey, while He promises us, if we just do these things, a complete salvation. And yet there are those who hold back, because

the way seems so simple. But God will not have us saved by our doing any great thing, lest we should claim the honor of it.

Dipped himself seven times in Jordan, v. 14. How often has God used the things that men despise to bring about the most glorious results. The most notable example is found in the Cross itself. To the Greeks and

The Triumphant Cross Romans this was the emblem of shame and degradation. The Jews regarded it with even greater horror. For to die on the Cross, so they believed, shut one out from the favor of God now and hereafter. And yet who can recount the triumphs of the Cross! They are written in gold in the history of the world.

And he was clean, v. 14. Yes, and ten thousand times has the precious blood of Jesus proved its power to cleanse the vilest heart and life from the stains of sin. Through the shedding of that blood we have peace with God, and by it we are constrained to forsake sin, and seek after holiness.

A Fountain of Cleansing

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

Approach the lesson with a distinct conception of the character of Naaman, and show the scholars how that character is revealed in the different parts of the narrative. Intimate in starting, that you will ask, when the lesson has been gone through, for an estimate of Naaman's character.

Ask for an explanation of the terms "captain of the host," "king of Syria," "mighty man of valor," "leper." Would a leper have been allowed to lead the armies of Israel? Try to get the class to sketch the kind of foray referred to in v. 1. Call for a description of the Israelitish maid. Did she love her mistress? her master? Had she forgotten her native land? Dwell on what she says regarding the prophet, as the key to all that follows.

The words of the girl are reported to the king of Syria. Notice his action. What does this prove regarding his sentiments towards Naaman? It confirms the words

of v. 1, "a great man with his master." The magnificent presents have their lesson too. What is that lesson? For whom were the presents designed? Why was the king of Israel suspicious of the motives of the king of Syria? Comment on the king's rending of his clothes.

Elisha hears of what had taken place. Gehazi may have witnessed the cavalcade entering the city. The action of the prophet shows his authority with the king, as well as his own confidence in God. Dwell on these words, "he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel," and bring out their significance. Get one of the scholars to describe the appearance of Naaman and his horses and chariots, as they passed through the city to the door of Elisha's home. Why did the prophet send a messenger to Naaman? Was it pride? Timidity? Modesty? Or, did he wish to teach Naaman that he was no respecter of persons? Go over the details of Elisha's message. What parts in it were offensive to the Syrian general? What should have filled him with joy?

Why was Naaman angered by the mes-

sage? What light does his indignation throw on his temper? Study v. 11 with the same question before you? Why had Naaman expected to be treated in this way? Explain the comparison between the rivers of Damascus and those of Israel.

Naaman's servants witness his resentment. Notice how they act. Commend their wisdom. They entreat their master, whom they love and honor, and whom they wish to see cured of his leprosy, to obey the command he has received. Speak of their common sense. How obvious it is! Yes, but the obvious is often forgotten. The advisers of the great are not always their best friends. What an advantage to have judicious counsellors of any rank! Masters and servants can learn much from one another. The remonstrance of his servants prevailed. Naaman perceived how foolish it was to disobey a command which might mean his freedom from an incurable malady. He carried out the injunction, and, to his astonishment and gratitude, the words of the prophet were fulfilled.

The Lesson ends here; but you should follow on briefly with the account of Naaman's thankfulness and his confession of Elisha's God.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

Elisha is the helpful prophet. He makes one think of Barnabas, the "son of consolation," Acts 4:36. In the Lesson of two weeks ago, it was a poor widow to whom he gives money's worth; in that of last week, a rich lady to whom he restores her child; in to-day's, a great lord on whom he bestows healing; in that of next Sabbath, a king, whose army and people he saves.

The present incident is one of the best known of the Bible stories. It is the girl's innings to-day, with that gracious little maiden; and a golden opportunity to the teacher to show the simplicity and easiness of the way of life through Christ Jesus.

The *dramatis personæ*—the "characters"—may be named one by one by the class—a great lord; a lady, his wife; a little captive maid; two kings; soldiers; the prophet; the prophet's messenger; the servants of the great lord. And as to

places, Damascus, the Syrian capital; Samaria, the capital of Israel, Elisha's home; the lonely banks of the Jordan; and the journeyings back and home again of the man who sought healing and found it.

Possibly these five headings may serve as a framework for the lesson:—

1. *A man who had everything, and yet so little.* Bring out from v. 1, his name, his occupation, character, and title, his honors. Could great officer of state be more to be envied? But. What is lacking? Leprosy was an incurable disease, not to speak of its loathsomeness: the leper was already under sentence of death. The richest leper is really a pauper. Show how like sin is to this deadly disease.

2. *A girl who had nothing, but who made a rich gift.* Who could have less than a slave girl? Not a penny of money, nor an ounce of influence; and yet she was the means of bringing to Naaman the most precious thing that great general ever got—healing of his disease. Go into the details of vs. 2-4. One falls in love with this young girl, whom even captivity and bond service cannot sour; this sweet flower blooming in darkness. One envies her, with a holy envy. Her virtues are none too common. They are very precious.

3. *Two kings who forgot*—(vs. 5-7): The king of Syria, who remembered to write a letter, and to send rich presents (how much?); and the king of Israel, who remembered how easily the king of Syria could crush him; but both of whom forgot that there was a God, whose power and whose grace are without measure.

4. *A helper, who first hurts.* The details of vs. 8-12 will hold the class. Make very clear that it was not to exalt himself, or to hurt Naaman for the sake of hurting him, but to humble that proud man and to exalt God, that Elisha acted as he did.

5. *A simple act, with a wonderful result.* Wise servants those, v. 13; and wise leper, v. 14; and an instantaneous and perfect cure. It was taking God's way of it, that did it!

Hymn 161, Book of Praise, sings itself through the whole lesson. Let each of four scholars recite a verse of it.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

The human instrument of good is worthy of honor, but the real power is from heaven. v. 1.

Helpfulness is a good cure for hopelessness. v. 2.

Money cannot purchase salvation, but it can spread the knowledge of it. v. 5.

Sovereigns and subjects must alike own the sway of the Almighty. v. 6.

A kingly soul does not willingly harbor suspicion. v. 7.

Christ alone can procure salvation, but every Christian can proclaim it. v. 8.

He who works the cure has the right to prescribe the method. vs. 10, 11.

We cannot afford to sacrifice our souls to our prejudices. v. 13.

All things are possible to him that believeth. v. 14.

From the Library

One naturally asks, how Syria came to need deliverance (see 1 Kgs. 22 : 1-36). To this question Scripture gives no reply ; but the Assyrian inscriptions furnish a satisfactory one. An Assyrian monarch had pushed his conquests as far as Syria exactly at this period, bringing into subjection all the kings of these parts.—Cook.

The Abana and Pharpar both rise in the mountains east of Damascus, one passing through it and the other a little below, until they lose themselves in the desert on the east. They are prominent streams of great beauty and fulness that have ever made that region like a fertile oasis.—McGregor.

Easier to smite with Peter's sword

Than "watch one hour" in humbling prayer.

Life's "great things" like the Syrian lord,
Our hearts can do and dare.

But oh! we shrink from Jordan's side,

From waters which alone can save ;

And murmur for Abana's banks

And Pharpar's brighter wave.—Whittier.

The healing of Naaman is alluded to by our Lord (Luke 4 : 27) to illustrate the truth

that the love of God extended farther than the limits of the chosen race ; that His Fatherhood is co-extensive with the whole family of mankind.—Farrar.

And lo ! the scales fell from him, and his blood

Coursed with delicious coolness through his veins,

And his dry palms grew moist, and his lips
The dewy softness of an infant's stole.

His leprosy was cleansed, and he fell down
Prostrate at Jesus' feet and worshipped Him.

—N. P. Willis.

Topics for Brief Papers

(To be ready on the day of the Lesson)

1. What a child may do.
2. How sin is cleansed.

Prove from Scripture

That we need cleansing from sin.

Lesson Questions

[FROM THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—Where was Syria ? What its capital ?

1-4 Who was Naaman ? From what disease did he suffer ? What sort of disease is this ? What captive in his home ? Of whom did she tell her mistress ? What could he do ? Who told the king ?

5-7 To whom was Naaman sent ? What did he take with him ? What did the king of Israel think ?

8-10 Who sent for Naaman ? What did he tell him to do ? What promise did he give ?

11-14 How did Naaman feel ? Whither did he intend to go ? What did his servants persuade him to do ? What was the result ?

Seniors and the Home Department—Where was Damascus ? What stories between the last Lesson and to-day's ?

1-4 What had Naaman done for his country ? What cause of unhappiness had he ? How does Isaiah describe the loathsomeness of sin ? (Isa. 1 : 5, 6.) Through whom did Naaman learn of a healer ? How had she been brought to Syria ?

5-7 Why was Naaman sent to the king of Israel ? From whom did David seek cleansing from sin ? (Ps. 51 : 2.)

8-10 Describe the purpose of Elisha's command. Answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16 : 31.)

11-14 Who induced Naaman to do the prophet's bidding? What is God's promise about cleansing from sin? (Isa. 1 : 8.) What prophet speaks of a fountain for sin and for uncleanness? (Zech. 13 : 1.)

Seek-Further Questions—When did lepers announce the deliverance of Samaria? Where do we read of our Lord's healing ten lepers?

Answers to Seek-Further Questions—

- (1) The daughter of Jairus (Mark 5 : 41); the son of a widow of Nain (Luke 7 : 11-15); and Lazarus, John 11 : 43, 44. (2) The Seventy, Luke 10 : 4.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course]

Ques. 47. What the First Commandment forbids. This question shows how much is included in the First Commandment, how it touches the religious life at every point, and in how many ways it is apt to be broken.

Breaches of this commandment fall, broadly, into two classes, negative and positive. Of these the negative offences are dealt with first. It is forbidden to deny that there is a God, whether the denial be made in so many words or consist in living as if there were no God. That is to say,

all atheism, whether in thought or practice, is condemned. It is a sin, also, to withhold from God the worship and glory which belong to Him as at once the true God and our God.

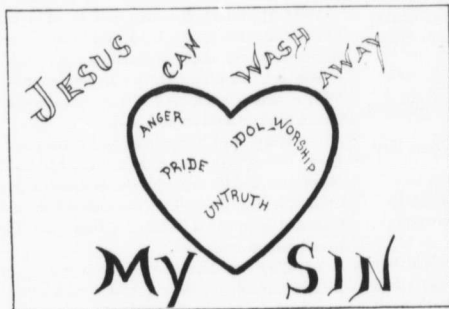
The positive transgression of this law consists in giving to others what is due to God alone. This is even a more grievous wrong than denying the existence of God or withholding from Him rightful worship. We have a condemnation of the sin of honoring false gods who were no gods, which prevailed among the heathen nations surrounding Israel, and of the combination of the worship of Jehovah and idols which was the form of idolatry peculiar to Israel, and was common among the colonists of Samaria, 2 Kgs. 17 : 28-41. The law tells also against the Roman Catholic practice of offering prayers to saints and angels and paying divine honor to the Virgin Mary. It is true that the Roman Catholic church seeks to justify such practices, by saying that the honor paid to saints and angels and the Virgin is of a lower kind than that paid to God, but the mark by which the two kinds of honor are distinguished is not satisfactory. Hodge says: "The important principle is this: Any homage, internal or external, which involves the ascription of divine attributes to its object, if that object be a creature, is idolatrous."

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God training His people by healing disease.

Introduction—Talk about sickness, and medicine, and healing. Recall Elisha's kindness to the lady of Shunem. We

are to hear to-day about his kindness to a great soldier, Naaman. Outline a map, and make a number of strokes to represent the Syrians making raids into the land of the Israelites. They often carried away captives. (Explain.) Here we see them marching back to their own land, taking with them a little captive maid of Israel. Let us see what becomes of her! Here at the head of the army is the great captain Naaman, a brave soldier, a rich man, a



favorite with the King of Syria, Benhadad. What a happy man he must be! Ah, no, there is something that makes him a very unhappy man. He has a very bad disease, leprosy (describe), which no doctor can cure.

The Little Captive Maid—See, Mrs. Naaman is talking to the little girl! We have seen her before. It is the little captive maid brought from the land of Israel. She lives in Naaman's house and waits on his wife. Captain Naaman is very kind to the little girl. She remembers Elisha, the great prophet of her land. She says to Mrs. Naaman, v. 3. Mrs. Naaman tells her husband this, and it is told to the king of Syria. The king is so glad. He sends a letter to the king of Israel. This king is puzzled.

Elisha's Help—Elisha hears of it. "Send Naaman to me," he says. Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. The great soldier expected that Elisha would pay him great respect. (Picture v. 11.) Elisha does not even come out to speak to him. He wants Naaman to know that healing is the gift of God. Elisha does not want to have the credit of it. He wants Naaman to have faith in God.

Gehazi takes a strange message to Naaman, v. 11. He is angry at Elisha, v. 12. The idea! The great Naaman to be treated so! Told to wash in the muddy water of Jordan! No! he will not! His servants coax him, v. 13. He consents, and now God heals him, v. 14.

Golden Text—Repeat. Let us print the name of a disease of the soul that is even worse than leprosy of the body—

SIN SICKNESS.

Here is the cure. (Open a paper folded like a powder paper, on which is printed BELIEVE AND OBEY GOD.) Speak of medical missions as a means of curing both body and soul.

Faith in God—The little captive maid believed in God's power to cure and she told others. We can do the same.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw some sin-spots in a heart. Print—JESUS CAN WASH AWAY MY SIN.

Something to Remember at Home—I should have faith in God.

Something to Ask at Home—What does Jesus say about

SIN SICKNESS?

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

NAAMAN
WAS GREAT

This lesson is about a Syrian general called NAAMAN. We are told that he WAS a GREAT man, a favorite with the king, a valiant man, and a conqueror, BUT (and that word spoils everything) he was A LEPER. The main thing after all was not that he was

NAAMAN
WAS GREAT
BUT
A LEPER

great, and honored, and mighty in battle, but deeper than all, more important than all, (erase GREAT and WAS) Naaman was a leper. Would you be willing at the close of your life to have this record as yours:—This man was rich, honored, influential, famous, but a sinner. All his wealth, and power, and beautiful robes could not change the one great fact, Naaman was a leper. But our lesson does not leave him till he was SAVED. Naaman was saved (erase A LEPER) By putting away his pride and Trust-ing God. AND OBEDIENCE was the proof of his trust.

NAAMAN
WAS
A LEPER

NAAMAN
WAS SAVED

NAAMAN
WAS SAVED
BY TRUST
AND OBEDIENCE

Lesson V.

ELISHA AT DOTHAN

October 30, 1904

2 Kings 6 : 8-23. Commit to memory vs. 15-17. Read 2 Kings, ch. 6 to 9 ; 13 : 14-21.

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

8 ¶ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall he my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place ; for thither the Syrians will come down.

10 And the king of Israel 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 Syria 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 Israel ?

12 And one of his servants said, ¶ None, my lord, O king ; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel 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 Dothan.

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, an 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.

Revised Version—1 Now ; 2 are coming ; 3 And ; 4 Nay ; 5 see ; 6 with horses and chariots was round the city ; 7 And.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Elisha at Dothan, 2 Kings 6 : 8-23. T.—The circling arm, Ps. 125. W.—Confidence in God, Ps. 27. Th.—A safe refuge, Ps. 91. F.—God with us, 2 Chron. 32 : 1-8. S.—Who against us ? Rom. 8 : 24-32. S.—Fearless trust, Ps. 118 : 1-14.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 48. What are especially taught by these words [before me] in the first commandment ? A. These words [before me] in the first

17 And Elisha 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 horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha 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 Elisha.

19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city : follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. ¶ But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw ; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them ? shall I smite them ?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them : wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow ? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them : and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. ¶ So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

commandment teach us, That God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

LESSON PLAN

- I. The Patriot Prophet, 8-12.
II. The Diamond Servant, 13-15.
III. The Divine Defence, 16-23.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 273 ; 236 ; 65 (Ps. Sel.) ; 278 ; 273 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY) ; 320.

EXPOSITION

. . . my camp. An ambush was to be set for the Israelites.

Vs. 9, 10. *The man of God sent unto the king of Israel.* The king is evidently now on good terms with the prophet (compare chs. 3 : 13, 14 ; 6 : 32), or Elisha, like the true patriot he was, set aside his own personal feelings for the sake of his country. *Beware . . . pass not such a place.* As often as the enemy laid new plans or snares, so often did Elisha warn the king. *Are coming down* (Rev. Ver.). They were in the act of coming down. *Sent to the place ;* either to warn the people in that place, or he sent some one to act as scout and report to him. *Not once nor twice ;* but a number of times. Thus one man of God was of more service to the king than his whole army.

Vs. 11, 12. *The king of Syria was sore troubled.* Finding himself anticipated in every move, he became alarmed and per-

Time and Place—In the latter part of the reign of Jehoram, King of Israel, 897-884 B.C. ; Dothan, about ten miles north of Samaria.

Connecting Links—The king of Syria enters upon another irregular campaign against Israel, but is defeated by the insight of Elisha, the prophet of the Lord.

I. The Patriot Prophet, 8-12.

V. 8. *The king of Syria ;* Benhadad II., Naaman's master. *Warred against Israel ;* conducted marauding expeditions. This was the easier, because there was no natural separation by mountains or river between the neighboring kingdoms of Syria and Israel. Benhadad showed little gratitude for the healing of his dead servant by Israel's prophet (see last Lesson). *Took counsel with his servants ;* planned the campaign with his chief officers. *In such . . . a place*

plexed. *Which of us is for the king of Israel?* He naturally thought there must be a traitor in his own camp. He did not see that success or lack of success is not always determined by the forces which seem to stand nearest and to be most evident. *Elisha, the prophet.* Elisha and his wonderful works must now have been well known in Syria and his power talked of. *Telleth.* If he could cure a leper and raise the dead, he could discern the thoughts of the heart; so the Syrians rightly reasoned.

II. The Dismayed Servant, 13-15.

Vs. 13, 14. *Go and spy where he is.* Benhadad reasoned, that if he could take Elisha prisoner, the source of the trouble would be removed. But what if the prophet discover this plan also? *Dothan.* (See *Light from the East*, and read Gen. ch. 37.) *Sent . . . horses, and chariots, and a great host* (foot-soldiers). So great a force was sent to make sure work. The capture of Elisha was too important to take chances of failure. Besides, it was a task of some danger, Dothan being so near the capital of Israel. *Came by night, and compassed the city about.* The Syrians were shrewd warriors. They planned to take the prophet by surprise, and so beset every way of escape.

V. 15. *His servant;* not Gehazi, who was now a leper (ch. 5 : 27), and therefore, under the law of Israel, had to live apart from others. *How shall we do?* Death, or capture and slavery stared him in the face.

III. The Divine Defence, 16-23.

Vs. 16-18. *Fear not;* for they that be with us, etc. "Elisha speaks as a man whose eyes are opened, and who in consequence is sure of Jehovah's protection, whether he beholds the angelic host about him or not." (Cambridge Bible.) *Lord . . . open his eyes.* The prophet prays that his servant may see what he himself sees, and then his fears will be removed. *The Lord opened.* Elisha has might and power, but the source of it all is Jehovah. *The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire.* "Dothan lay on a hill in a little plain." So, forming an inner circle round about the hill, there were seen these fiery chargers, God's army of defence

taking the same form as the force of the Syrian besiegers. *They came down;* that is, the Syrians, from the rising ground opposite the hill of Dothan. *Blindness;* "The Hebrew is not the usual word for blindness, but signifies, not total loss of sight, but a dazed condition, a visual bewilderment." (Peloubet.)

Vs. 19, 20. *This is not the way;* to find Elisha. "There is a touch of almost joyful humor in the way in which Elisha proceeded to use, in the present emergency, the power of divine deliverance." (Expositor's Bible.) *Led them to Samaria;* where Israel's king and troops were, so that the Syrians suddenly found themselves at the mercy of Israel. In place of trapping Elisha, they themselves were trapped (compare Job 5 : 12 ; Eccl. 10 : 8). *Open the eyes of these men;* that is, remove the illusion and let them see where they are. The expression here has a different meaning from what it has in v. 17, where it refers to spiritual insight. *In the midst of Samaria.* They were getting a dose of their own medicine. Those who endeavor to overthrow God's cause find in the end that they themselves are overthrown.

Vs. 21-23. *My father;* a very natural form of address. It will be remembered that the king was now friendly to the prophet. Besides, was not Elisha actually the savior of the nation? *Shall I smite them?* The king's eagerness to put them to the sword, was quite in keeping with the usual manner in which captives were dealt with in ancient times (see Deut. 20 : 13 ; Num. 31 : 7). *Wouldest thou smite, etc.?* Even if these men had been captives of war, mercy should be shown them. Much more then, when they are not, but are prisoners whom God has delivered into Israel's hand. Even the roughest warrior would see the justice of this. *Set bread and water before them.* This showed the noble spirit of Elisha. Prisoners were not accustomed in those days to receive such attention and kindly treatment (compare Rom. 12 : 20, 21 ; Matt. 6 : 14 ; 7 : 12). *Great provision;* not simply prison fare of bread and water, but abundance. *Bands of Syria.* (See *Light from the East*.) *Came no more.* Such generosity must have had

its effect for a time at least ; but the Syrians, like many others, soon forgot the kindness shown them, and besieged Samaria with a great army, v. 24.

Light from the East

DOTHAN—About ten miles north of Samaria, among the wooded hills of Ephraim, there is a beautiful little plain covered with green grass, which, owing to the moisture in the soil, holds out well in drought. The ruins of the old town form a grass-covered mound on the southern side of the plain, and near it are two large ancient cisterns, into one of which Joseph was possibly lowered. It was and is still on the main trail from Damascus and Gilead to Egypt.

BANDS—In all primitive governments there are chiefs with a large following owing nominal allegiance to the sovereign, but living mainly by plunder. Until recently, bands of Bedouins made incursions into Palestine at certain seasons and robbed the peasantry of part of their harvest. Even yet, travellers going down to the Dead Sea require an escort of the resident tribes, and in the region east of the Jordan, where the authority of the Sultan is only nominal, this escort costs much more. In Morocco very recently a chief kidnapped an American and an Englishman from the suburbs of the capital, and held them for ransom, making their freedom conditional on the Sultan's granting many demands.

APPLICATION

And took counsel with his servants, v. 8. We are reminded that there is always the unseen element, and when we plan forgetting it, we do foolishly. It is not

The Best Counsellor

necessary that we should always say in words, but we should ever have the thought in our hearts as we plan,—“If the Lord will, we shall do this or that.” For it is as our plans are pleasing to God who rules that they will really prosper. It is well to counsel with our friends ; but we should not forget the best Counsellor of all, God Himself.

Beware that thou pass not such a place, v. 10. There is no one who is left altogether without warning as to the course of conduct

Wrecks and Warnings

to be pursued in life as a whole, or in regard to some particular action. He is a wise youth, and not likely to go far astray, who is ready to heed the good advice given by parents, and pastors, and teachers. Many lives that have made wreck of themselves might have been saved, had their possessors only heeded advice given.

Which of us is for the king of Israel ? v. 11. We do not act prudently, if we form our conclusions without having all the facts in the case before us. A decision

Reckoning with the Unseen

resting on imperfect knowledge is almost sure to be wrong. We should have an open mind for all information, whether it come from friend or foe.

What folly, for example, to live as though there were no world but the one we see, forgetful of all those unseen facts and forces which are so real, though we see them not with the outward eye!

Spy where he is, that I may . . . fetch him, v. 13. The world is full of evils that have become strong and boast of their might. It seems to the eye of sense impossible to overthrow them.

Certain Victory Opposed to them may be only a handful of poor and powerless people. Perhaps there is only a single individual standing up for the right. But there is no doubt about the result. The Almighty is on the side of the right. The resources of heaven are at the back of those who fight the evil. Their victory—delayed it may be—is certain in the end. No foe can prevail against them, no weapon prosper.

Alas, my master ! how shall we do ? v. 15. Faith is a great factor in a fight. Despair is a frequent cause of defeat. Hopelessness

is an ally of the enemy. The soldiers who are sure they will win are not likely to be beaten.

It is the faint-hearted who fail. And who have so good a right to banish fear and hold fast their confidence, as those who are on God's side in the battle ? They stand upon the solid rock.

The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha, v. 17. “Angels

came and ministered unto him." That was in the wilderness of the Temptation, Matt. 4 : 11. "There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening Him." That was in Gethsemane, Luke 22 : 43. An angel to open prison doors. That, again, was when one of Christ's followers was in need, Acts 12 : 7-10. They are never far away, these messengers of God. Blessed are those—

"Who like the Seer of old
Can see the helpers God has sent,
And how life's rugged mountain side
Is white with many an angel tent."

And he prepared great provision for them, v. 23. What a picture of the way in which the gracious King of heaven has treated us!

We were rebels against Him.
The Gospel Feast There were weapons in our hands and hatred in our hearts.

And yet, so far from destroying us, He has invited us to partake of the rich and abundant gospel feast. How all our arms should be cast away! How hatred should be driven from our hearts! How eagerly we should accept His loving offer, and receive the priceless blessings He holds out to us! The same voice that has said, Come! will greet us with a most gracious Welcome!

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

Should you begin the Lesson by referring to the war between Russia and Japan? To follow that war intelligently, we must know something about the countries, and we must have a map. So with this war. It might be well to look out Dothan and Samaria on the map at the very outset of the Lesson.

What led the king of Syria to suspect treachery? He was correct in his statement, that the plans he formed were made known to the king of Israel, but wrong in his inference. Observe that the true explanation is furnished him in his own circle. What an evidence of Elisha's reputation!

Ask the scholars what they think of the proposal to arrest Elisha. Invite some scholar to describe the Syrian troops as they set out to seize the prophet. Let him picture the march, the arrival at Dothan, the investment of the city. Ask the class, would they have felt as Elisha's servant did? Dwell on the prophet's words, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." How was this truth made clear to the servant? What is meant by the opening of the eyes? Why are the horses and chariots described as consisting of fire?

At this stage, ask the class to mention the contents of the next paragraph. Why did Elisha ask that those sent to arrest him should be smitten with blindness? Must

we think of a state of actual blindness, or simply of incapacity to judge as to the way they were going? What judgment must we pass on the statement of Elisha in verse 19, "This is not the way?" Why did the prophet lead the Syrian troops to the capital? Show that the purpose of Elisha was generous throughout. He sought that the God of Israel might be magnified. What conclusion as to the character of Elisha can be derived from this narrative? Make use of the Lesson to inculcate the Christian truth, that our enemies must be treated with kindness. Mention the work done after a battle by the workers under the Red Cross.

The great truth of the Lesson is that God protects His own. This does not mean that He always delivers them from danger and death. But the Christian always receives power to enable him to do and bear what he should; and victory is his finally, for he passes into the presence and joy of God.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

It was not a war in which the strength of battalions told. It was ambuscade of veldt and kopje and thicket. So says v. 8. It was to be met, therefore, not by great masses of men in the field, but by wise counsel in the cabinet and tent. And so we have:

1. *Elisha, a king's counsellor.* All wisdom is of God; in the case of Elisha "the man of God" here, it came direct. God showed him, and he showed the king, and the king

saved himself and his people, vs. 9, 10. We may and should seek God's aid in frustrating the designs of our foes, and especially of Satan, the father of lies, our great adversary.

2. *Elisha under siege.* How did they happen to think of him? As well ask, how happen to see a tall spire or mountain top? The king of Syria was puzzled (v. 11), for kings often know less of what is going on than common people; his servants knew v. 12. Elisha's fame as prophet and miracle worker would travel far (see Matt. 5 : 14-16). This king learned slowly, or his experience with Naaman's errand (last Lesson) would have taught him how foolish his conduct in vs. 13, 14. He will find that one breath of Elisha is stronger than his whole army, because he is God's man. Another man who learned slowly is in v. 15. But not more slowly than the disciples of Jesus (recall examples). Do we learn any more

rapidly to trust God? Elisha had learned (v. 16); King Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32 : 7, 8); Paul, Rom. 8 : 31. The school is the school of faith; we should all be scholars in it. We learn most swiftly and surely of all by the eye, v. 17. Note, too, the key—it is the old, well-worn, and yet never worn-out one—with which Elisha opened heaven, "Elisha prayed."

3. *Elisha, a general.* Of what army? That of his foes. How did he get possession? Again by that wonderful talisman, prayer, v. 18. For the sort of "blindness," see Exposition. There is the relish of humiliation and dismay, v. 20. But is it ever otherwise when men try strength with God? The greatness of the prophet comes out in vs. 21, 22; and for the time the king is great, too, because he follows counsel from the Lord. The Syrians also appreciated the generosity shown: they ceased their raids.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

When human plans conflict with the divine purpose, the outcome is not doubtful. v. 8.

The wicked are never allowed to perish without warning. v. 9.

We should be sure of our ground, before we make accusations. v. 11.

No foe can pluck His people out of God's hands. v. 13.

The man of faith is the fearless man. v. 16.

Our pathway is beset with unrecognized angels. v. 17.

Better to suffer from physical blindness than from the blindness of sin. v. 18.

Our eyes cannot be opened to spiritual things too soon; they may be opened too late. v. 21.

"Blessed are the merciful," v. 22.

There is divine provision for every human need. v. 23.

Topics for Brief Papers

(To be ready on the day of the Lesson)

1. Elisha, a true patriot.
2. God's protection of his faithful servants.

Prove from Scripture

That the Lord protects His people.

Lesson Questions

[FROM THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—By whom was the land of Israel invaded?

8-10 What king is mentioned here? Against whom did he make war? Why was this ungrateful? Who discovered the Syrians' plans? To whom did he tell them?

11, 12 Why was the king troubled? What did he ask? The answer?

13-15 Where was Elisha living? Who were sent to capture him? Who was greatly of aid?

16-23 Why was Elisha not afraid? What did he ask for his servant? Tell what the servant saw. Whither was the Syrian army led?

Seniors and the Home Department—Where is Dothan? What event in the life of Joseph occurred at this place? Give the reference to a Syrian invasion in last Lesson.

8-12 Who was king of Israel now? How did Elisha regard him? Why did the prophet send him information? How should we feel toward our country? (Ps. 137 : 5, 6.)

13-15 Why was so large a force sent to capture Elisha? Who were sent to take Jesus prisoner? (Mark 14:43.)

16-18 How were the Syrians brought into the power of Elisha? Explain his promise, v. 19. Describe the treatment of the Syrians. Which disciple did our Lord rebuke for violence? (John 18:11.)

Seek-Further Questions—Where did our Lord refuse to ask for angels to protect Him? What disciples had their eyes "holden" for a time?

Answers to Seek-Further Questions—See 2 Kgs. 7:3-11. (2) Luke 17:11-19.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course]

Ques. 48. *Reasons for obedience to the First Commandment.* Luther asks, "What is it to have a God? or what is God?" and answers, "To have a God is nothing else than to trust him and believe in him with all the heart. . . In what thing soever thou hast thy mind's reliance and thine heart fixed, that is beyond doubt thy God." If we utter the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," and then live as if food depended entirely upon our trade or profession, we mock the true God with merely formal worship, while any real worship we give, is given to our own powers and efforts.

Three reasons are here suggested why we should keep this commandment. The first is that God sees all things, including our deeds and words and even thoughts. In the first six verses of the hundred and thirtieth Psalm, the writer dwells upon the omniscience of God, while in the following six he declares the divine omnipresence. Wherever we go, we are at all times before God.

The second reason is stronger than the first. God takes notice of what we do. It may seem for a time that He is not concerned about our actions. But our record is before Him, and He does not overlook a single item. Some day we shall have to face this record.

The third reason is the strongest of the three. It is that God is displeased with the sin of having any other God. This is not the displeasure of a stern Judge or hard Master, but of a loving Father. The Israelites ought to have been kept back from worshipping idols, by remembering that their sin would displease the God who had delivered them from Egypt. And we should be restrained from giving to any other the love and trust that belong to Him, by the recollection of all He has done for us. "John has given us in a single phrase the key to the keeping of this First Commandment, when he says, 'We love Him, because He first loved us,' 1 John 4:19." (Dykes.)

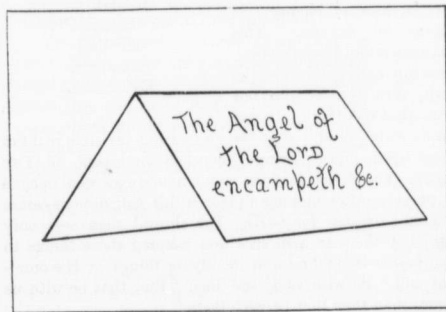
FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God training His people by protecting from enemies.

Introduction—Outline a number of little tents, or better still, have a lot of paper

tents, made by folding oblong pieces of white paper and spreading them out like tents. Let the children form tents by placing the tips of their fingers together. What are tents for? Did you ever see a camp of soldiers? What are soldiers for? What do they do when not in their tents? How do our soldiers fight? (Show pictures.)

Review—Recall the story of the little captive maid and Captain Naaman. The king of Syria was still fighting with the king of Israel. He has heard that



Elisha knows all about his plans for fighting, vs. 8-14. Elisha was able to warn the king of Israel to keep out of his way. He wants to get hold of Elisha and take him a captive, so that he cannot warn the king of Israel.

A Camp of Enemies—Use building blocks to form a wall with blocks inside for houses (or draw outline). This is the city of Dothan. Here is Elisha. One night the king of Syria came with his horses and chariots, etc. Place these with his tents and his soldiers (outlines or objects) all around outside the walls of Dothan, v. 14. When Elisha awakens next morning and goes out of the house this is what he sees. Tell vs. 15, 16.

A Camp of Friends—Was Elisha afraid? Was Elisha's servant afraid? What did Elisha pray? What a strange prayer! Was the servant blind? No! but he could not see heavenly things. He could only see as we see. He could not see the angels and chariots of fire (God's presence with them). Elisha can see these, and he knows the young man will fear nothing if he only could see them too. For this he prayed. Tell the result.

The Enemy Defeated—Tell of the blindness God sent upon the enemy. They cannot fight. They cannot see where to go. Elisha leads them far away from Dothan. Then God gives them back their eyesight. Tell how Elisha treated his enemies, vs. 21-23.

In wonderful ways God takes care of His own people.

Golden Text—Repeat Golden Text. We may open our eyes very wide and look about us, but we cannot see the angels. Our eyes can only see the earthly things, yet. But the Bible tells us that angels are watching over us, guarding, guiding, helping us. (Mention some of the dangers from which we are kept.) It would seem as if there are special angels to guard the little people, Matt. 18:10. Should we ever be afraid? Never! Always do right, and God will take care of you. (Name things that children sometimes fear.)

The Bugle Call—How are soldiers called together? (Bugle.) Show a picture or draw outline. Let the children place hand at mouth to form a bugle. Here is the bugle that will call God's angel soldiers to take care of us—(print) PRAYER. (Clasp hands as in prayer.)

Repeat (Ps. Sel. 26, Book of Praise)—

The angel of the Lord encampeth,
And round encompasseth
All those about that do him fear,
And them delivereth.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a tent. Print Golden Text.

Something to Remember at Home—God takes care of me.

Something to Ask at Home—What does Jesus say about God's care of us?

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

SUCCESS
DEPENDS ON
SEEING

All young men and women desire SUCCESS. Success is no matter of luck or chance. It DEPENDS ON SEEING. This young associate of Elisha's saw—he was up early, and saw the danger. Yes, but he did not see ALL that was there. It was

SUCCESS
DEPENDS ON
SEEING
ALL THE
FACTORS

only when "the eyes of his heart were enlightened," that the eternal but invisible realities dawned upon him. Success depends on seeing all THE

SUCCESS
DEPENDS ON
SEEING
GOD

FACTORS. You notice that the young man's eyes were opened after prayer,—after making a place in his calculations (erase ALL THE FACTORS) for GOD. The shrewd man sees only things; but the wise man sees God shaping those things to His purposes,—moulding and modifying things by His omnipotent will. Be with God, and then "they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Teacher Training Course

Presbyterian Church in Canada

Under the Direction of the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee

DEPARTMENT OF SCRIPTURE—I. The Life of Jesus Christ; II. New Testament Geography and Institutions.

N. B.—It is recommended that the Revised Version be consulted in these studies.

LESSON I.

THE GOSPEL AND THE GOSPELS

The source of our information concerning the Life of Christ is the NEW TESTAMENT. The Gospels set forth the career of Jesus upon earth; the Acts and Epistles treat of His continued life among His followers after His death, the nature of His Person, and the practical application of His principles to conduct. *Jesus Christ is the theme of the New Testament.*

The word "gospel" means either "God-story," that is, God's word, or "good-story." "Evangel" signifies "good-tidings." There is but one gospel which is God's message to the world, and this is summed up in the Person Jesus Christ, Gal. 1 : 6-9 ; Heb. 13 : 8. The *written gospel*—Though most of the epistles were written before our gospels, there was an oral gospel similar to our present gospels preached throughout the world from the earliest years. As those who had been personal disciples of Jesus passed away by death, there arose the necessity of committing the narrative of Christ's life to writing. Our gospels are survivals from many (Luke 1 : 1-4), but there is reason to believe that they contain all of value with regard to Christ known by the early disciples.

TWO TYPES OF WRITTEN GOSPELS—The first three gospels are very like one another in their plan of the life of Christ, the material they use, and often in their words. These are called the Synoptic Gospels (from root meaning "to see together"), because they present a similar view. The Fourth Gospel stands by itself.

The synoptic plan, seen most clearly in Mark, begins the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee after the imprisonment of the Baptist. At first sight it would seem as though the ministry of Jesus lasted only one year and was confined to Galilee. It culminates in the confession of Peter and the

Transfiguration. Then the scene is changed to Jerusalem during the last week of our Lord's life. John's gospel not only omits many of the synoptic details, but involves a ministry of three years, which opens in Judæa, then is transferred to Galilee, but is broken by one or more visits to Jerusalem (chs. 2 : 13 ; 5 : 1). From ch. 7 : 14 the gospel is occupied with the work of Jesus in Jerusalem and Judæa. It also describes in very different language from that of the Synoptic Gospels the substance of our Lord's teaching.

CHARACTERISTICS AND PURPOSES OF THE FOUR GOSPELS—

1. *Mark*. The earliest, written before 70 A.D. ; probably derived from the apostle Peter. It is the vivid and picturesque gospel of action. Jesus appears as the strong Son of God, divine in power, sympathy and suffering, chs. 1 : 40-45 ; 2 : 1-12 ; 2 : 18 to 3 : 6 ; 10 : 45. It has many miracles, but few long discourses or parables.

2. *Matthew* aims to show that Jesus is the Royal Messiah of the true Israel. He fulfils what the prophets foretold, chs. 4 : 14 ; 12 : 17 ; 21 : 5. There are many of the words and parables of Jesus in this gospel, chs. 5 to 7 ; 10 : 13 ; 24 : 25.

3. *Luke* wrote for Gentiles. He was a physician, and depicts Jesus as full of sympathy for the poor and oppressed, the Saviour of the world. He is the *Perfect Man*, and the Son of God.

4. *John* was written probably in Ephesus at the end of the first century. It breathes a spirit of profound love on the part of a personal disciple, whose aim is stated in ch. 20 : 31. As he learned to know Jesus, he discovered the Father. This knowledge of God in Jesus gave him eternal life. So he desires to set before his readers such a picture of Jesus as will do the same for them.

LESSON II.

BIRTH TO BAPTISM

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS—Only Matthew and Luke preserve the account of this period of our Lord's life. Matthew traces His descent back through David to Abraham the Father of Israel (1:1), in order to show the lineage of the Royal Messiah. Luke writes as a historian and describes the origin of the Perfect Man, who sprang from the purest home circle of the people, where the hopes of the prophets were still cherished.

Read especially Matt. 1:21, 22. The Royal Messiah born in Bethlehem, the city of David, gets homage from the wise men (often called "Magi"), who represent a Gentile civilization coming for light to the King of Israel (ch. 2:1-12); but the true King of Israel has to escape even in infancy from the wicked king of the Jews, ch. 2:13-23. Read Luke 1:38, 46-55, for the spirit of Mary, and ch. 1:67-79; 2:29-32, for the flavor of Israel's best piety. Angels worship the Saviour, whose message is peace for men, especially the poor, ch. 2:8-17.

Jesus grows up in Nazareth perfect at every stage—infancy, Jewish youth (Luke 41-51), opening manhood, v. 52.

JOHN THE BAPTIST—A kinsman of Jesus, also of the finest stock, Luke 1:36. The last and greatest of the prophets (Matt. 11:9, 10), he lived a solitary life from childhood, Luke 1:80. His ministry (Mark 1:1-8; Matt. 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18), was spent in the wilderness of Judæa near where the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea. His message is outlined in Mark 1:4. Like the prophets, he preached that the day of the Lord's judgment on corrupt Israel was near at hand; that He who was to execute it was near, and that all classes must prepare for the coming Messiah by turning to God with penitence. This was strange and unpalatable to the self-righteous Pharisees, Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:8; 20:1-5.

The Baptism of John was a symbol of his message. Those who were baptized signified their desire of pardon for their sins, Luke 3:3, 16. His baptism was preparatory.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS (Matt. 3:13-17)—Why does Jesus come to be baptized by John? Matt. 3:15. Because John's baptism is ordained of God, and Jesus, the

Saviour of His people, must share in this great national repentance, even though He has no sins of His own to confess.

What the Baptism did for Jesus. (1) He was more fully endowed with the power and illumination of the Holy Spirit than before. This was the formal inauguration into the Messiahship. (For the promise see Isa. 11:1, 2; 42:1; 61:1.) (2) The words, Matt. 3:17, signify that He is the object of the Father's deepest love and has the most intimate personal relation to Him. Jesus goes forth to His life's work as the Messiah of prophecy, the Servant of the Lord, Ps. 2:6-12; Isa. 42:1.

LESSON III.

BEGINNINGS

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)—Note how brief Mark's account is, ch. 1:12, 13. The Spirit drives Him out in order to test whether He is fully under His Father's will. One great question is decided in the Temptation:—Will Jesus become the Messiah whom His Father desires; or will He become the Messiah whom the people hope for? In the former case He will be the Servant of the Lord with a hard career of suffering; in the latter case He would in the end fall under the control of Satan, who was popularly supposed to be Lord of the world. Throughout, Jesus finds support in the words of Scripture, Matt. 4:4, 7, 10.

The three temptations are in reality different phases of one great temptation: (1) Jesus must live by the will and word of God alone, and must never use His miraculous power to escape from the suffering which His Father sends. (2) He must go only where God sends Him, and never presume upon God's deliverance if He rushes heedlessly into danger. (3) He must live only for the Kingdom of God, and shun any selfish ambitions, which are really a service of Satan. Note that this order of Matthew differs from that of Luke.

THE OPENING OF HIS MINISTRY (Matt. 3:1 to 4:11; Luke 3:1 to 4:13; John 1:19 to 4:42)—Time, A.D. 26, to the spring of A.D. 27, John 2:13.

Jesus remained for a while after His temptation, with the Baptist near Jordan. Read especially John's description of Jesus, John 1:29-37. (Compare Isa. 53:4-11.) His first disciples, a circle of friends, the pick of the Baptist's followers, sent by him to

Jesus, to whom they came hoping that He was the Messiah of Israel, John 1 : 35-51.

The return to Galilee with His few followers was the occasion of *the first miracle* (John 2 : 1-11), but Jesus did not yet come forth publicly, v. 12.

JESUS IN JERUSALEM—Jesus shares with His people in the great national feast (John 2 : 13), and like a prophet He cleanses the temple, vs. 13-22.

The visit of Nicodemus shows that the attention of the ruling classes was early drawn to Him. Jesus teaches the necessity of the new birth. No natural privileges such as the Jews enjoy make men members of the Kingdom of God. Those alone belong to it who have their sins forgiven and possess the Holy Spirit, John 3 : 1-15.

JESUS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA—It was not long until jealousy arose on the part of the followers of John (John 3 : 22-30) ; so Jesus leaves the region of the Jordan. Another reason why He withdrew to Galilee was that soon Herod cast the Baptist into prison, Mark 1 : 14. On His way to Galilee through Samaria, Jesus has a wonderful reception from the half-heathen people of that country, John 4 : 35-42.

To the woman at the well Jesus reveals the highest truth ever yet known concerning God. He is the Father : worship of Him is not confined to any one place : He is to be worshipped in sincerity and in truth, that is, not with outward ritual performance or symbol, but with the sincere devotion of children to a holy Father, John 4 : 20-24.

LESSON IV.

THE HOLY LAND AS A WHOLE

Jesus is not to be explained by the conditions amid which He lived ; but apart from them He cannot be explained. A native and a citizen of Palestine, He drew His parables from its daily scenes, and His ministry never left its narrow limits. Open and sensitive to the influence of country, climate and institutions, the real Jesus cannot be seen without a knowledge of the geography and life of the Holy Land.

SYRIA—The whole, of which Palestine forms a part, is Syria, the northern and most fertile strip of Arabia, and geographically one land, though divided among many tribes.

The highway between Asia and Africa, it was the road of commerce and travel as well as a great battle-field of both ancient and

modern times. Egypt and Assyria invaded each other by this way, and over the same route came Alexander, Pompey and Napoleon. Even the sea, once a barrier, became a path to the nations of Europe.

IMPORTANCE OF SYRIA'S SITUATION—Her seclusion enabled her to preserve the Semitic character due to the influx of Arabian tribes.

From Africa and Asia she received strongly contrasting impressions, and the Mediterranean gave her the opportunity of influencing the nations of the West. To this position of natural isolation God brought a people who should receive and keep His revelation, and when Judaism was fulfilled in Christianity, it was the point from which the gospel could be most easily carried to the world.

THE FORM OF PALESTINE—The lower part of Syria, shut in before by the sea, behind by the desert, on the south by waste lands, and on the north by the Lebanon range, is Palestine.

Four parallel lines running north and south divide it naturally into as many parts. (1) Beginning at the coast there is, first, the maritime plain, across whose great shore road the armies of the nations marched. (2) Overlooking the entire length of the plain is a range of mountains of varying heights. (3) On the east of the mountains lies the Jordan valley, in which the one river of Palestine rushes to the Dead Sea, sinking 1,290 feet below the level of the ocean. (4) Then, on the east side of the Jordan valley, another series of mountains closes the prospect towards Arabia. Besides these general features, there are plains crossing the mountains and gorges from the higher to the lower levels. All together have gone to shape the course of the nation's history.

CLIMATE—The remarkable range of level, and the nearness of the sea and the desert, combine to cause immense differences of climate and fertility.

Within the short distance of a hundred miles, the traveller passes from the snow and ice of the Lebanons, to the tropical region of the Dead Sea, with corresponding contrasts in the animals and plants of these parts. *The great feature of the climate* is a dry and a rainy season. During the latter, which lasts from April to October, scarce ever a cloud is seen in the sky. The winds, too, are important to the life of Palestine, bringing moisture from the sea in winter, tempering the heat of summer, and sometimes carrying destruction from the desert. Palestine is not a land of forests : the woodland is open and scattered, yet abounding in variety and contrast. From the oak and the pine, it is but a few miles to the palm, the fruits, and the flowers of the tropics.

Rev Prof of Ballantyne

*AN ORDER OF SERVICE: Fourth Quarter

OPENING EXERCISES

I. SILENCE.

II. THE LORD'S PRAYER.

III. SINGING.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just ;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who on His succor trust.

Oh, make but trial of His love,
Experience will decide,
How blest are they, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

For God preserves the souls of those
Who on His truth depend,
To them and their posterity
His blessing shall descend.
—Hymn 11, Book of Praise

IV. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

Superintendent. O sing unto the Lord a
new song :

School. Sing unto the Lord, all the earth.

Superintendent. Sing unto the Lord, bless
His name ;

School. Shew forth His salvation from
day to day.

Superintendent. Declare His glory among
the heathen,

School. His wonders among all people.

Superintendent. For the Lord is great, and
greatly to be praised :

School. He is to be feared above all gods.

Superintendent. For all the gods of the
nations are idols :

School. But the Lord made the heavens.

Superintendent. Honor and majesty are
before Him :

School. Strength and beauty are in His
sanctuary.

Superintendent. Give unto the Lord, O ye
kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord
glory and strength.

School. Give unto the Lord the glory due
unto His name : bring an offering, and come
into His courts.

Superintendent. O worship the Lord in the
beauty of holiness :

School. Fear before Him, all the earth.

V. SINGING. Psalm or Hymn selected.

VI. PRAYER.

VII. SINGING. Psalm or Hymn selected.

CLASS WORK

[Let this be entirely undisturbed by Secretary's or
Librarian's distributions, or otherwise.]

I. ROLL CALL.

II. OFFERING, which may be taken in a
class envelope, or class and report envelope.

III. MEMORY VERSES AND CATECHISM.

IV. LESSON STUDY.

CLOSING EXERCISES

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

II. SINGING. Hymn selected.

III. REVIEW FROM SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK ;
which may include recitation in concert of
Catechism, Lesson Title, Golden Text, Mem-
ory Verses and Heads of Lesson Plan.

IV. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

Superintendent. Thy mercy, O Lord, is in
the heavens ;

School. And Thy faithfulness reacheth
unto the clouds.

Superintendent. Thy righteousness is like
the great mountains ;

School. Thy judgments are a great deep :
O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast.

Superintendent. How excellent is Thy lov-
ing kindness, O God !

School. Therefore the children of men
put their trust under the shadow of Thy
wings.

Superintendent. O continue Thy loving-
kindness unto them that know Thee ;

School. And Thy righteousness to the
upright in heart.

V. SINGING.

O Lamb of God ! still keep me

Near to Thy wounded side ;

'Tis only there in safety

And peace I can abide.

What foes and snares surround me !

What lusts and fears within !

The grace that sought and found me

Alone can keep me clean.

Hymn 225, Book of Praise

VI. BENEDICTION OR CLOSING PRAYER.



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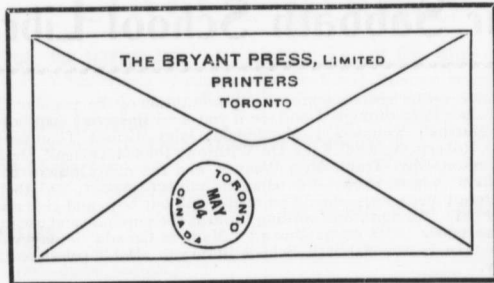
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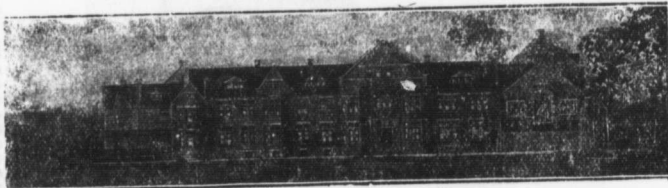
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THE BOOK PAGE

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"The really modern man is the man who knows the past." This sentence from the preface to **The Philippian Gospel**, by Rev. Professor W. G. Jordan, B.A., D.D., of Queen's University, Kingston

(Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto; Upper Canada Tract Society, Toronto, 292 pages, \$1.25 net) explains the purpose of the book. The aim of the writer is to bring home to the hearts of his readers, for the guidance and inspiration of their lives, the utterances of Paul in the exquisite Epistle to the Philippians. This has been done with great power and suggestiveness in a series of brief expositions, thirty-one in number, one for each day in the month. A better devotional book for daily use it would be hard to find.

The titles of the chapters in Rev. G. H. Morrison's Sun Rise: Addresses from a City Pulpit (Hodder & Stoughton, London; U. C. Tract Society, Toronto, 310 pages, \$1.50) are by no means like the goods in the show window with empty shelves behind. They are taking, peculiarly taking, as, for instance: The Home-sickness of the Soul, The Pagan Duty of Disdain, Near-Cuts not God's, Wasted Gains, When the Child-Spirit Dies, A Soul to Let; but the matter corresponds. A fresh point of view; living touch with the life of just to-day; the happy knack of getting the good out of an illustration without mauling it to death; every now and then a short, sharp, shrewd saying that sticks; and withal so broad and sane a view of life, and so vital a hold of the divine, that you read on in spite of yourself, and are the stronger and more courageous for the reading. The preacher who wishes a finer edge to his discourse, and to attain a defter touch, and the general reader who seeks spiritual stimulus and refreshing in the rush and wear

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