

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 25.]

APRIL, 1891.

[No. 4.

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## The Sunday-School Banner

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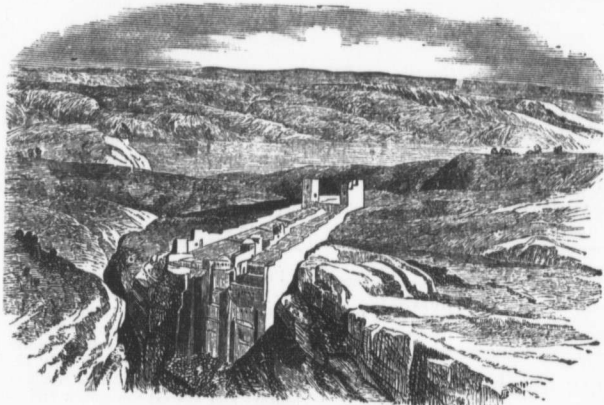
# SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for  
TEACHERS  
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YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXV.]

APRIL, 1891.

[No. 4.



CONVENT OF MAR SABA.

## Mar Saba.

BY THE REV. GEO. J. BOND, B.A.

AFTER a farewell look at Bethlehem, we rode on over the wilderness of Judea, toward the Convent of Mar Saba, and camped in its neighborhood. Our path lay over a region of utter desolation. Great bare rounded hills, separated by deep gorges, extended for miles and miles in every direction, and as we crossed the table-land we could see over them to the right the Dead Sea and the hills of Moab, and, at one point, catch a glimpse of the white tower on the summit of the Mount of Olives, far away to the left.

As we left the table-land and began to descend toward the Dead Sea, our path was rough and steep in the extreme. There was one bit which I shall never forget. The path skirted a deep ravine, and was a simple track among

loose stones and over uneven rocks, worn in some places perilously smooth and slippery. A single false step, a single slip or stumble, and horse and rider would probably roll together far down the mountain side. It was a ride to test the nerves of an accomplished horseman, and, be it remembered, it was my first day in the saddle.

As we rode down the last bit of steep hill we caught sight of the Convent of Mar Saba, which we were to visit before camping. It is a most extraordinary place, its massive buildings, erected on the edge of one of the wildest and most desolate ravines in the world, far away from any other human habitation, save the black tent of the wandering Bedouin. Mar Saba, or St. Saba, is a saint held in high honor by the Greek Church, who came here in the latter part of the fifth century, and dwelt thus apart from his fellows, until his reputation for sanctity gathered round him a number of fol-

lowers. From that day to the present, an unbroken succession of monks have made these wilds their home, their only companions the wild birds that fly about the ravine. The place must be seen to be realized; no pen can give an impression of its weirdness, of the awful ravine over which it hangs, or of the solitude which surrounds its terraced walls. The evening was rapidly gathering as we wound down from the convent to our camp in the valley of the Kidron, and right glad were we, after the novel experiences of the day, to see the white tents pitched ready for our reception, and to partake of the excellent dinner that our cooks had provided for us.

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## Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, APRIL, 1891.

### Centennial Notes.

"Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."  
—Joel 1:3.

We hope that a great deal of attention will be given to the prize competition announced in another column for the best essay on the influence of Methodism. The Rev. Dr. Potts, writes: "I fear the young people of Canadian Methodism do not know as much of the life and work of John Wesley as they should, nor of the position, extent and influence of their own Church. I write, indulging the hope that you will call the attention of Sunday-school superintendents and Epworth League officers to the im-

portant duty of making suitable arrangements to honor the event, and to impress the youth of our Church with the importance of studying the life of Wesley and the history of Methodism."

It is highly important that all young Methodists should know as much as possible about their own Church and the Church of their fathers. It has a history of remarkable progress and heroic memories of which its sons and daughters may deservedly feel proud. We are endeavoring at this Centennial time, in our various publications, to give special prominence to matters of Centennial importance. Thus, we have two special Centennial numbers of *Pleasant Hours*, four of *Onward*, sent post-free for 10 cents, and three of the *Methodist Magazine*, sent post-free for 50 cents. These, with the Centennial Volume, post-free, \$1.25, specially prepared by order of the General Conference, will be a mine of information on the hundred years of Methodism in this land and of Methodism in general, from which our young people and teachers may learn the chief facts of their own Church and the Church of their fathers. There are many lives of John Wesley advertised by the Book Steward, but the cheapest of them all is Ward & Locke's three-cent life of John Wesley, by post four cents. The Editor counts himself happy to have secured the friendly and sympathetic greetings of so many distinguished leaders of thought in other Churches as appear in the Symposium on Methodism in the March and April numbers of the *Methodist Magazine*.

Prof. Goldwin Smith writes:

"Methodism was born, not like the Reformation Churches, of controversy and ecclesiastical conflict, but of spiritual reusucitation. It was in its origin not a revolt or a secession, but a revival. It was a revolt only against the scepticism, deadness and vice of the eighteenth century and against the torpor and corruption of the State Church."

The Hon. O. Mowat, Premier of the Province of Ontario, writes:

"I do not know that I could express to you my appreciation more strongly than by saying I wish a union were practicable and at hand between the Methodists and Presbyterians (as has occasionally been suggested of late) by which these great branches of the Church of Christ should form one ecclesiastical body, on the basis of mutual toleration and forbearance in regard to the doctrinal matters now in difference between them."

Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley, C.B., K.C.M.G., Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, writes:

"The spiritual results, great as they certainly have been, cannot be stated, but may be estimated in part by the visible results referred to. The Methodist Church has, in every respect, been one of the most successful in Canada."

The Rev. John Burton, M.A., pastor of Northern Congregational Church, Toronto, writes:

"Canada has great cause for being grateful to Methodism. Outside the centres of population, the earlier years of English-speaking settlement in the Old Canadas would have been, so far as the Gospel is concerned, almost a desolation, had it not been for the Methodist preacher."

### Prize Essays on Methodism.

We are authorized to announce the following prizes for the six best essays on "The Influence of Methodism, especially in Canada." The essays must contain between 1,500 and 2,000 words, and must be written by Methodist Sunday-school scholars or teachers of either sex, in Canada, Newfoundland, or Bermuda, under twenty-one years of age. They must be sent to the Rev. Dr. Withrow, Wesley Buildings, Toronto, before the first of May, with certificate of the Methodist minister superintendent on the circuit, station or mission, as to the age and Sunday-school relationship of the writer. The essays are not expected to give a history of Methodism; but reflections on its influence, religiously, socially, educationally, and other-

wise. The prizes will be as follows: First prize, \$30; second prize, \$25; third prize, \$20; fourth prize, \$15; fifth prize, \$10; sixth prize, \$5.

Essays must be written on one side of paper only, and must be folded, not rolled. Awards will be given by first of June. All prize essays will be the property of the committee. Competitors must take copies, as the essays cannot be returned.

The pages must be numbered and fastened together at the upper left-hand corner, and must be legibly signed with the name and address of writer.

The Rev. John Philp, M.A., the Rev. William Galbraith, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D., and Rev. Geo. Bishop will act as adjudicators.

The best sources of information will be the "Centennial Volume on Canadian Methodism," price \$1.25; and the numbers of the *Methodist Magazine* for January, February and March. Price fifty cents for the three. These may be ordered through the Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

Please do not write for any additional information. The above contains all that can be given.

Names of donors will be announced later.

W. H. WITHROW, Sec'y of Committee.

## OPENING AND CLOSING SERVICES.

### OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES (Psa. 19, 7-14).
  - SUPT. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
  - SCHOOL. The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
  - SUPT. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
  - SCHOOL. The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
  - SUPT. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
  - SCHOOL. The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
  - SUPT. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;
  - SCHOOL. Sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.
  - SUPT. Moreover by them is thy servant warned;
  - SCHOOL. And in keeping of them there is great reward.
  - SUPT. Who can understand his errors?
  - SCHOOL. Cleanse thou me from secret faults.
  - SUPT. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me;
  - SCHOOL. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.
- ALL. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, or the Apostles' Creed.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. READING SCRIPTURE LESSON.
- VII. SINGING.

### LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, OUTLINE, AND DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.\*
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

### CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES (all standing).
  - SUPT. Saviour, again to thy dear name we raise,
  - SCHOOL. With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
  - SUPT. We stand to bless thee here our worship cease,
  - SCHOOL. Then, with bowed heads, await thy word of peace.
  - SUPT. Grant us thy peace upon our homeward way;
  - SCHOOL. With thee begun, with thee shall end, the day.
  - SUPT. Guard thou the lips from sin, the heart from shame,
  - SCHOOL. That in this house have called upon thy name.
- III. DISMISSION.

\* Special lessons in the Church Catechism should here be introduced.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER: STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

B. C. 892.]

LESSON I. SAVED FROM FAMINE.

[April 5.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Psa. 107. 8.

## Authorized Version.

2 Kings 7. 1-16. [Commit to memory vs. 8, 9.]

1 Then E-li'sha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Sa-ma'ri-a.

2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shall not eat thereof.

3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syr'i-ans: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syr'i-ans: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syr'i-a, behold, there was no man there.

6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syr'i-ans to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Is-ra-el hath hired against us the kings of the Hit'tites, and the kings of the E-gyp'tians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.

9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syr'i-ans, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.

11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.

12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syr'i-

## Revised Version.

1 And E-li'sha said, hear ye the word of the Lord: thus saith the Lord, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel,

2 in the gate of Sa-ma'ri-a. Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 Now there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another,

4 Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syr'i-ans: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us,

5 we shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syr'i-ans: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of the Syr'i-ans, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syr'i-ans to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host:

6 and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Is-ra-el hath hired against us the kings of the Hit'tites, and the kings of the E-gyp'tians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled

7 in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. And when these lepers

8 came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and they came back, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also,

9 and went and hid it. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, punishment will overtake us: now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's

10 household. So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syr'i-ans, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but the horses tied, and the asses tied, and

11 the tents as they were. And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's household

12 within. And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what

ans have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Is'ra-el that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Is'ra-el-ites that are consumed;) and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syr'i-ans, saying, Go and see.

15 And they went after them unto Jer'dan; and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syr'i-ans had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syr'i-ans. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

the Syr'i-ans have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall take

13 them alive, and get into the city. And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Is'ra-el that are left in it: behold, they are as all the multitude of Is'ra-el that are consumed;) and let us send and see. They took therefore two chariots with horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syr'i-ans, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jer'dan; and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syr'i-ans had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the camp of the Syr'i-ans. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

**TIME.**—D. C. 892. **PLACES.**—The city of Samaria and the surrounding country. **RULER.**—Jehoram, King of Israel. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—God's fulfillment of promise.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* Saved from famine. 2 Kings 7. 1-11.  
*Tu.* Saved from famine. 2 Kings 7. 12-17.  
*W.* Not by night. 2 Chron. 20. 14-24.  
*Th.* Famine brings repentance. Luke 15. 11-19.  
*F.* Saved by God alone. Exod. 15. 1-12.  
*S.* The mighty God. Psa. 76.  
*S.* Praise for deliverance. Psa. 107. 1-9.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 47, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Jesus, refuge of the weary.
- No. 55, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 All my doubts I give to Jesus.
- No. 53, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Thou my everlasting portion.

#### DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 44, 73, 34.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **The Lord's Promise**, v. 1, 2.  
 To whom did Elisha make this prophecy? (See chap. 6. 80-83.)  
 What crime had Jehoram determined to commit?  
 What had led him to this condition of exasperation?

To what degree had the famine prevailed? (See chap. 6. 25-29.)

What proportion would the promised plenty hold to the present famine? (Compare chap. 7. 1, with 6. 25.)

Why were these things to be sold "in the gate?"

What scoffing remark was made by an Israelite nobleman?

What grim prophecy did Elisha make to him?

#### 2. The Deserted Camp, v. 3-11.

Why did leprous men remain at the gate?  
 What dilemma was presented to these starving wretches?

Why did they wait until twilight?  
 Who sent the noise that frightened the Syrians?  
 Who were the Hittites?  
 Were mercenary soldiers often used in ancient days?

Why is it easy to alarm guilty men?  
 How was it that such great wealth was found in this camp?

Of what were these lepers afraid if they tarried till morning?

What was "the porter of the city?"

#### 3. The Saved City, v. 12-16.

What did the king think that his enemies had done?

What colloquial meaning was attached to the phrase "five?"

What did the servant mean by saying, "They are as all the multitude?"

What is here meant by "chariot horses?"

What did Jehoram's soldiers find "all the way" to the Jordan?

What came to pass?

Is God's word always fulfilled?

Find how remarkably it was fulfilled in this case.

(See verses 17-20.)

#### Practical Teachings.

Wherein does this lesson teach or suggest—

1. That "blind unbelief is sure to err!"
2. That self-effort is a step toward salvation?
3. That fuller knowledge of God's providence disperses fears?
4. That God's word is always fulfilled?

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Read, if possible, some article or book on the ancient Hittites; about whom many facts have recently been discovered, strikingly confirming the Scripture record.
2. Read carefully the entire narrative of the famine and its relief, from chap. 6, 24, to the end of the seventh chapter.
3. Find causes in the Hebrew law for much of the peculiar conduct of these lepers.
4. Find the name of a lord on whose hand another king leaned.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **The Lord's Promise**, v. 1, 2.
  - What was the Lord's promise?
  - By whom was this promise sent?
  - What doubt was expressed about the promise?
  - By whom was the doubt uttered?
  - What did Elisha say to the doubter?
  - What says Peter about the Lord's promise? (2 Pet. 3, 9.)
2. **The Deserted Camp**, v. 3-11.
  - What afflicted men were without the city gate?
  - What question did they ask one of another?
  - In what two places did death threaten them?
  - Where did they resolve to go?
  - At what time did they go to the Syrian camp?
  - Whom did they find there?
  - What had caused the Syrians to fly?
  - What shows that they fled in haste?
  - What did the lepers first do in the camp?
  - What did they finally decide to do?
  - What report did they bear to the city?
3. **The Saved City**, v. 12-16.
  - What did the king say when he heard the story?
  - What plan did a servant suggest?
  - What did the king do?
  - How far did the messengers go?
  - What did they find by the way?
  - What did the people do when the messengers returned?
  - What promise was then fulfilled?
  - Of what duty does the GOLDEN TEXT remind us?

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That God knows the future!
2. That doubt robs us of blessing!
3. That God's word is sure of fulfillment!

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find why the four lepers were compelled to stay outside the gate.

Find the story of another army of idolaters whom God frightened by a "noise."

Find what became of the "lord" on whose arm the king leaned.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did Elisha live? **In Samaria.**

What army laid siege to Samaria? **The Syrian army.**

What did the long siege cause? **A famine in the city.**

When the famine was the worst, what did Elisha say? **That food would be plenty the next day.**

What did a man say who heard this prophecy? **That it was impossible.**

What did he forget? **That "all things are possible with God."**

Who went that night to the Syrian camp? **Four lepers.**

Why did they go? **They were starving.**  
What did they find? **That the soldiers had fled.**

Why had they fled? **They became frightened.**

What did they leave behind? **Every thing they had.**

What did the lepers do after eating all they wanted? **They came and told the Israelites.**

What did the king fear at first? **That the Syrians were hiding.**

What did he find? **That they had really gone.**

Who had brought this deliverance to Israel? **The Lord.**

What does this lesson teach? **God's care for his people.**

#### Words With Little People.

THINGS TO MAKE US GLAD.

God is our Father.

He is able to give us all we need.

He loves to supply our wants.

Our part is to obey and trust him.

#### Whisper Motto.

"He careth for you."



## General Statement.

For more than a century there was a struggle between Syria and Israel for the supremacy of the lands along the Lebanon range. Ben-hadad, King of Syria, gathered all his forces and besieged the city of Samaria, hoping by one bold stroke to end the long war. The siege was so close that no food could be brought into the city, which suffered all the horrors of famine. The most disgusting food was sold at the price of luxuries, and at last even mothers slew their own children and ate their flesh. Elisha the prophet had counseled resistance to Syria, and he was held responsible for the suffering. At last the king decided to submit, and as a preliminary to surrender ordered Elisha to be put to death. When the king and the prophet met, the man of God foretold that within one day food should be plenty and cheap. This seemed impossible, and a nobleman at the king's side showed his contempt for the prophet's word. He received the ominous answer that though his eyes should see the plenty, his tongue should not taste it. That very evening the strange prediction was accomplished. The besieging host heard, or thought they heard, the sound of a coming army. A panic seized them, and they fled, leaving their camp and equipment, and made their way down the ravine toward the Jordan and the rivers of Damascus. By morning of the next day there was bread enough and to spare, and in the gate of Samaria a famished and hollow-eyed throng crowded together for the welcome food. One man perished in the press—the unbelieving lord who had doubted the word of the prophet. Thus was Samaria rescued and God's word fulfilled.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. Then.** When the city of Samaria was besieged by Syrians, and at the lowest state of starvation. See the closing verses of the last chapter. **Hear ye the word of the Lord.** The solemnity and distinctness with which the prophet addresses the king, the elders, and the others who are present must not be overlooked. **Tomorrow about this time.** Such a change of affairs in so short a time seemed absolutely incredible. (1) *But nothing is impossible with God. A measure of fine flour.* Literally, *a seah*; a little more than a peck in size. **For a shekel.** About fifty-seven cents. A great change this, from the condition in which mothers slew and ate their own children. **In the gate.** The open space around the gate was the public market of the city. (2) *God is often nearer than men think.*

**2. Then a lord.** Revised Version, "the captain." Literally, "the third man," one of the highest officers of state. **On whose hand.** This nobleman was one of the most intimate friends of the king. **Windows in heaven.** Flour must fall like a shower of rain before this prophecy can be fulfilled. **Thou shalt see it . . . but.** So, says Bishop Patrick, will it be hereafter, when unbelievers see others entering into eternal life and themselves shut out. (3) *The scoffer against God suffers special condemnation.* (4) *It is easy for our Lord to bring plenty close upon days of famine.*

**3. Four leprous men.** Just such lepers may be seen around the gates of many Oriental cities at the present time. **At the entering in.** Compelled to herd together as outcasts without the wall. There may have been a leazar-house there. **Why sit we here until we die?** At best they were beggars, dependent upon alms; and now in a starving city receiving nothing. (5) *Self-effort is a step to salvation.*

**4. The famine is in the city.** The siege

had been so long that all the food was consumed, and the people were famished. **If they save us.** There was but a faint hope of this, for the slaughter of the captives was almost universal among Oriental nations. **We shall but die.** As if death were the end of life, while in fact it is but the beginning. To such wretched beings we might suppose death would be welcome; but even the most wretched cling to life.

**5. They rose up.** The hope of saving their lives induced them to cross the intervening space between the city and the Syrian camp. An awful walk these four wretches took in the gathering darkness. They left death by hunger behind them to drag leprous death with them toward death by the sword, which probably awaited them in the Syrian camp. **The uttermost part.** Not the part farthest from the city, but that nearest to it. **There was no man.** Ancient armies were not generally disciplined, and had not the systematic arrangement of sentinels of modern times. There are many instances on record of enemies penetrating to the very center of the camp without detection.

**6. The Lord had made.** Such panics, caused either by distant thunder or imaginary noises, have caused the flight of many armies; but this illusion of the sense of hearing was directly brought about by God. **The kings of the Hittites.** The greatness of the Hittite power has only recently been discovered from Egyptian and Babylonian inscriptions. There were two great Hittite confederacies, and the most southerly was an alliance of four kings who had often assisted the Syrians in their wars. They were now suspected of having swung over in defense of the King of Israel. **Kings of the Egyptians.** Probably half-independent "satraps" on the south-west border of Palestine. (6) *How often are our terrors the creation of our imagination!* (7) *There are fears of coming judgment which are real, and from which*

*sinners should betake themselves to God for safety.* This verse has often been attacked by skeptics; and even reverential scholars, before the most recent discoveries had been made, mistakenly conceded that it was "unhistorical," and that there were no "kings" of the Hittites at this time. But fuller knowledge often dispels our fears. That which leads us to doubt portions of the Scripture narrative becomes, with fuller knowledge, the strongest buttress of its accuracy.

**7. They arose and fled.** It was not a retreat, but a headlong flight, each man caring for himself. **Left their tents.** Not daring to wait long enough to take them down. **Their horses, and their asses.** The noise made by these tied animals made the camp seem inhabited to the approaching lepers. **Fled for their life.** According to Herodotus, Darius, the King of Persia, fled in precisely the same manner from Scythia, leaving all his beasts of burden. (8) *Guilty men are easily alarmed.*

**8. These lepers.** They might be taken as illustrations of those tainted with the leprosy of sin, enjoying the good things of earth, but remaining lepers still, and with all their pleasure only hastening toward a leper's death. **Went and hid it.** To keep for time of need. (9) *How much more careful are men to provide for the temporal life than for the spiritual.*

**9, 10. If we tarry . . . some mischief will come.** Either by the return of the Syrians, who might be in ambush, or by their being found out and punished by the rulers of Samaria for their selfish conduct while the city was starving. **Called unto the porter.** The man or men in charge of the gates. **We came to the camp.** In ancient Eastern encampments the tents were in the center, and the beasts of burden arranged about them.

**11, 12. He called the porters.** The soldier

on guard dared not leave his post, so he shouts out the good news to the next sentry. **The king.** Probably Jehoram. One can easily picture this pathetic scene: the jaded king aroused from his slumbers; the counselors suddenly summoned to the palace; the universal apprehension. Read this in connection with the previous chapter, and note how the king's moods varied from hope to despair, and from kindness to cruelty. Even now, after the promise of Elisha, he was inclined to look on the dark side, and distrust God's help. **I will now show you.** He thought that the Syrians were lying in ambush. (10) *How unwilling are many to see God's hand, even when they possess his promises.*

**13, 14. One of his servants.** He was wiser than his master. **Five of the horses.** "Five" was an indefinite phrase, like our "couple" or "half a dozen." If these men perish, their fate will be no worse than that of the people: besides, the news may prove to be true. **Two chariot horses.** The Revised Version is more correct, "two chariots with horses." Cavalry riders were unknown in the East at that time. The chariots may have had either two or three horses each.

**15. They went after them.** They followed in the track of the flying host, which was marked by the baggage thrown away along the road. The way was north-east from Samaria, crossing the Jordan thirty-five miles away. **Cast away.** (11) *In the race for eternal life, let us count every thing as of small value compared with the soul.*

**16. The people went out.** As soon as the flight of the Syrians was confirmed. **Spoiled the tents.** Helped themselves to whatever was needed out of the abundant plunder. **So a measure, etc.** For the explanation of "measure" and "shekel," see note on verse 1. Carefully read the rest of the chapter, to see how fully Elisha's word was fulfilled.

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

BY REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A.

The peace between Israel and Syria, resulting from Elisha's magnanimous treatment of his prisoners, was not of long duration, and when Benhadad next took the offensive it was not with mere forays. The horrors of the siege of Samaria—unexperienced then for the last time in that unhappy land (comp. Lam. 2: 20; 4: 10; Ezek. 5: 10, and the fearful description in Josephus of the fall of Jerusalem under Titus)—made even Jehoram's heart sick, and in the first shock of his despair the king sends a messenger of death to the prophet who might, he thought, have averted all this trouble. The son of Naboth's murderer "reverts to type." But Elisha had won great influence over the king, who had seen so many of his mighty works, and the messenger had scarcely started when Jehoram hurried after him to recall his impulsive order. The

prophet was prepared for both, and when the king and his officer in attendance had been admitted, and impotent rage had bowed hopelessly but submissively before the divine will, Elisha pronounced the promise of immediate plenty.

**Verse 1.** The words to which Elisha makes answer are certainly those of the king, a fact which is probably obscured by some corruption of text. They are quite in character from a son of Jezebel, worshipping Jehovah by a kind of compulsion, and unable to preserve a semblance of faith when the pinch of trouble comes. Probably Elisha had been insisting on the duty of holding out, and had promised the help of Jehovah; the king now declares that Jehovah has forsaken them and it is no use to suffer any longer. **A seah** (margin). Supposed to be about a peck. The value of the shekel in our Lord's time

was about half-a-crown, English money, but we can hardly fix it for the age of Elisha. As a "seal" was equal to six cabs (6. 25), we can see what a change was involved; one hundred and twenty shekels would buy to-day the same quantity of some miserable vegetable (?) food as to-morrow one shekel will purchase of the finest flour. Thus the relative cost of food changed so prodigiously that we need hardly feel the objection that the price still seems to have been distinctly high. After all, a beleaguering army would hardly bring so abundant a store as to send prices down below those ruling in time of peace. **Barley.** For provender. **Gate.** The gate of an Eastern town was always the chief place of concourse, and here we find a market established there, as elsewhere we often find the seat of the king dispensing justice.

**2. Captain.** A military escort, presumably of high rank, if the Syrian usage prove anything for Israel (chap. 5. 18). **Windows.** Comp. Mal. 3. 10, and Gen. 7. 11. Possibly there is a sneering reference to the familiar deluge story. The fulfillment of Elisha's judgment comes in verse 20, where this high-placed officer is appointed to keep order among the excited mob surging back from the pillaged camp, and is trampled to death in the crush.

**3. Leprous.** Who of course were not allowed to enter the city (Lev. 13. 46). Ordinarily their wants would be relieved by the kindness of friends or charitable people, but in such a famine they would starve first. Jewish identity-hunters decided that they were Gehazi and his sons. The presence of these wretched lepers at the gate of the city where Elisha lived makes us think again of our Lord's words (Luke 4. 27).

**4. If.** Perhaps we should slightly alter the text so as to understand a petition to be admitted. The gate was of course barred, and they could hardly hope to be allowed entrance. So reminding themselves that their lot would be worse inside, they at once take the desperate alternative. **Fall away!** So the phrase runs elsewhere; that is, desert (chap. 25. 11, etc.). **Die.** As Josephus puts it, "being well rid of our lives."

**5. Twilight.** Verses 9 and 12 show this was evening twilight. They waited till then so as not to be seen by the watchmen, who would take them for spies. **Outermost.** The nearest side to the city.

**6.** Stories of what the Greeks called "panic terror" are familiar to all readers of ancient history. This well known liability of great masses of men to simultaneous impulses rising from mysterious and often trifling causes was used by Israel's Deliverer just when the need was sorest. Similar hallucinations are referred to in the last lesson, in chap. 19. **Hired.** Comp. 2 Sam. 10. 6; 2 Chron. 25. 6. **Hittites.** Frequent allusions in Scripture seem

to show that the Hittites were once an immense and far-extending people, but external records of them have almost entirely disappeared and those which remain are hotly disputed. Their "kings" are mentioned in 1 Kings 10. 29. So scattered were they that we do not know whether tribes from the north or from the south are meant; on the whole, it seems more likely that they were supposed to have joined the Egyptians. **Egyptians.** Perhaps it is best to take plural "kings" as a general expression like "princes" in 2 Chron. 32. 31; but the reference may be to vassal kings ruling certain districts.

**7.** Note how that providence which men call "chance" contrived that the starving city should know as soon as possible of its deliverance. The gathering darkness which made the panic possible gave the lepers their opportunity. And twilight is so short in those latitudes that the lepers must evidently have started from the gate just as the Syrians had fled. **Horses.** These and the asses (used apparently for baggage) were presumably tied up in a separate quarter of the camp, and the panic was so overwhelming that they could not even provide themselves with means of speedier flight. **Life.** Comp. 1 Kings 19. 3; Gen. 19. 17.

**8.** A modern camp would scarcely repay a plunderer's search for silver and gold, still less for gorgeous robes. Orientals have always delighted in taking their ornaments and finery about with them, even on the battle-field.

**9. Punishment.** The same ambiguity occurs in Gen. 4. 13. The parallelism with Num. 32. 23, makes the margin more attractive; the word means "iniquity" in the great majority of cases. This and the kindred phrase bring out the inexorable principle which binds together wrong-doing and its penalty. Here the men feel that morning would reveal at once the deliverance and their own selfishness, for which they were likely enough to get lynched by the hungry people.

**10. Porters** (margin). This seems the more likely reading, as suiting the plural pronoun immediately following. But the LXX. and Vulgate, with a change of vowels, read "called at the gate;" "them" will then describe the watchmen on the walls.

**11. The porters called** (margin). So the LXX. and Vulgate again.

**12.** For such important news they naturally rouse the king from his rest. Without thinking of Elisha's promise, he suspects at once some trick like that by which the Greeks in Virgil's story took Troy; "*suspexit est miseria*," observes Grotius. Joshua had taken Ai in this way.

**13. Five.** Vaguely of a small number. **Behold.** This is explained as meaning that the spies will run no additional risk; if they stayed at home with the starving multitude they would be sure of death. But the text is almost certainly in confusion.

Both LXX. and Vulgate are much shorter, and the latter makes the clause simply state that "five" represents about all the horses that the famine had spared.

14. The two chariots were sent, so that if one should be captured the other might escape with the news.

15. The mountains of Gilead, with the barrier of the Jordan in their rear, would be the safest refuge. If we follow those who think the Hittites of Car-chemish and the upper Euphrates to be meant in verse 6, there is an additional reason for their not fleeing north to Damascus. Notice how many there were who even in such a panic could not flee without their valuables, which they drop one after another as the toil of the flight becomes severer.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 1.** *Is the deliverance of Samaria in 2 Kings 7 to be regarded as miraculous or in accordance with natural law? Is any miracle an interference with law?*

The deliverance of Samaria was certainly the result of divine interposition; but it is difficult to determine whether "the noise of a great host," which the besiegers heard, had any objective reality, or whether it was an illusion of the ear. In either case there was no infringement or violation of natural law. That host of chariots had been seen a few days before by the servant of Elisha; here they were heard, and in accordance with natural law.

A miracle is neither a suspension nor violation of natural law, but a physical effect, in which a law of nature is overcome, or the elements of nature are controlled by a personal Power above nature. We, ourselves, by the action of free will, may modify natural law and arrest sequences. A book is on my table. I will to lift it upward, and gravitation is arrested. I do not violate the law, but I intervene and make the law do my bidding. It must be within the scope of the Infinite Will when he pleases to bring into play a force of will that shall so modify the succession of events without violating his laws of causation as to produce beneficent results.—*Rev. S. F. Upham, D.D., Madison, N. J.*

It was miraculous, yet in accordance with law. It was unnatural that the Syrians should be convinced of the presence of armies not there. "The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a great noise." Noise of what?

Chapter 7, verse 6.

"Host."

"Horses."

"Chariots."

Chapter 6, verse 17.

"Mountain full."

"Horses."

"Chariots."

It may have been that these invisible protectors of God's servant shook themselves, and God's enemies, frightened, fled. If so, it illustrates (1) that God

has superhuman agencies; (2) when these are superimposed upon human affairs effects beyond human power and control are produced; (3) this is not an infraction of law, but the operation of a higher law including and directing the lower. Thus it may be with all miracles. Finally, the expressed will of an absolute monarch is law. God is an absolute monarch. He does nothing which he does not will. Therefore all his miracles are in accordance with law.—*A. B. Riker, D.D., Chattanooga, Tenn.*

In favor of the "miraculous" as against the "natural" deliverance of Samaria may be mentioned: (1) The prophecy of Elisha (verse 1) announced a deliverance that seemed to be beyond human power to effect. Comp. 6, 25, and 7, 1. (2) The famine-stricken besieged evidently believed that no human aid could bring relief (verse 2). (3) Whatever "the noise" may have been (verse 6), natural or supernatural, "The Lord made the host of the Syrians to hear" it. Why assume that God, working upon "the chain of cause and effect, never interferes with natural law?" Finite man interferes frequently with its regular working; so, *a fortiori*, does God, but, be it remembered, without overthrow or violation of law.—*Prof. Edwin Post, Ph.D., Greencastle, Ind.*

There is substantial agreement among commentators that the means by which the Syrians were frightened and Samaria delivered were miraculous. It is impossible to shrive the Scriptures of the supernatural. The book is shot through and through with miracles. Yet there is nothing in context or exegesis which necessitates the affirmation of a miracle in this instance. The approach of Samaritan allies, Hittite and Egyptian, was anticipated with fear by the Syrians. It was the ghostly twilight hour. The rustling of the wind, or other sound, natural or artificial, magnified by an infectious fear, might have produced the desired effect. It was an aural illusion. That in 2 Kings 3, 22, 23, was optical. In either case God could work mediately as well as immediately.—*Rev. Davis W. Clark, A.M., Dayton, O.*

1. Miraculous. The close relation of the prophecy of Elisha—that on the following day the people would have plenty—and its fulfillment leads us to so infer. The direct statement of verse 6 establishes it: "The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots." 2. If a miracle interfere with law, it must be either as a suspension or a violation. If by the term law is understood "the method in which a force or energy is observed to operate," then a miracle neither suspends nor violates that law. In the miraculous a new force or energy is introduced, and the law, according to which formerly a known result was produced from a known cause, is now simply subordinate to this new force.—*Rev. E. S. Typpie, Ph.D., New York City.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline. God's Word Fulfilled.

### I. God's Word.

- In promise.** "*A measure... shekel.*" v. 1.  
"Pour you out a blessing." Mal. 3. 10.  
"I will rain bread." Exod. 16. 4.
- In warning.** "*See... eat not.*" v. 2.  
"Will mock when... fear cometh." Prov. 1. 24-27.

"If we believe not... faithful." 2 Tim. 2. 13.

### II. Its FULFILLMENT.

- In preserving.** "*No man there.*" v. 5.  
"Smitten before thy face." Deut. 28. 7.  
"We are more than conquerors." Rom. 8. 37.
- In satisfying.** "*Did eat and drink.*" v. 8.  
"Satisfied the longing soul." Psa. 107. 9.  
"Giveth you the true bread." John 6. 32.
- In punishing.** "*Trode upon him.*" v. 17.  
"Could not enter in... unbelief." Heb. 3. 19.  
"Believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16. 16.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### The Power of God.

1. "When other helpers fail, and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me." In the hour of deepest distress God's power shines out most clearly. The last portion of the sixth chapter and the lesson this week together furnish a beautiful illustration of this precious truth.

2. "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word." He who lives in communion with God is calm while others are in terror. Only "Hear ye the word of the Lord," and your fears will fly.

3. "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." The power of God is unseen by the worldly minded.

4. "The bruised reed he never breaks, nor scorns the meaneast name." Sometimes the weakest and most despised are those through whom God first shows his power.

5. "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise!" Those who have enjoyed God's mercies should hasten to tell others about them.

6. "Hasten, sinner, to be wise! stay not for the morrow's sun." Those who despise God's word are sure to suffer when God's power is revealed.

## Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

Take a look outside the walls of Samaria! See what a tide of idolatry and hate is poured all about it: Syria's idolatry, Syria's hate, wave upon wave of horsemen, of foot-soldiers, of great war-chariots, of fierce chariot-horses, of bowmen, of spearmen,

all those waves rolling up closer and closer to Samaria's life, threatening to speedily roll over it and drown it out and bury it deep.

Samaria's life! How much life is left? See those people in the street, thin and shrunken, gaunt and wasted, with great hunger-staring eyes, with feeble, famine-nipped voices, limping along with the gait of despair. And if you could look within the houses! In one of these, the other day, two women covenanted to make food of their little boys. One unnatural mother carried out her part of the covenant to its awful limit, and because the other recovered her motherly instinct, and would not repeat the Satanic banquet, the first whined before the king. And the king bowed himself in despair and put on sackcloth. O, that weak, bewildered, starving Samaria!

There is one, though, who is not bowed down, who will not despair, who will have faith in God, who will believe in food, in deliverance, in Samaria's open gates!

What, that Syrian sea of death all about Samaria flow back from the walls, and Samaria have liberty, Samaria have life, and Samaria have food?

To-morrow even? No hunger by night shall be there!

Only Elisha, whom the king hates, would dare to say that.

But how have food?

A man sneered when he heard Elisha.

"If God would open windows in heaven, might it be done?" Because he was the great captain on whose hand the king leaned, he thought perhaps he could afford to sneer. No harm would visit him.

Twilight has come, twilight bringing its deepening hush all over the camp of the Syrians. The sentinels stalk languidly about. It is the hour of peace. Suddenly, there is a sound of war! What a rattling of chariot-wheels, what a trampling of horses' feet! Somebody spoke about the opening of windows in heaven. Had God opened the very doors, thrown back the wide portals, and let out his great, golden, glorious host? There is a wild alarm in the Syrian camp. O, the enemy has come, all Israel, all the Hittites, all the Egyptians! Syrians, away! Hurry, hurry!

Such an abrupt flight!

The tents are left standing. Horses and asses are forsaken, and they stand tied to their stakes wondering at the uproar. It is one huge panic on legs, and all running. There had been by some a hasty grabbing of vessels and fine clothes, but soon these are strewn like autumn leaves the shortest road to the Jordan. And now who will find out that the Syrian camp has been abandoned, and who will make Samaria delirious with joy over the news?

The king with a big army?

No.

The sneering captain with a band of soldiers?

No.  
A forlorn hope of heroes!  
No.

Just a handful of poor, shunned lepers, whom the Samaria famine—they reasoned—would only kill, and the swords of Syria could do nothing worse. So out they go where they stand a chance to get a mouthful of food. And, lo, mountains of it! A whole camp all theirs—all the food, all the wine, all the money, all the fine garments—ha! ha! Long live the four lepers! They drink. They eat. They wrap themselves in purple. They sink in the soft, silken cushions. They shout. They sing. Who in all Samaria wouldn't be a leper!

But a shadow is on their faces. When the morning breaks, what if harm come to them because they did not notify starving Samaria! They hurry and bawl the wonderful news to the city porters. What a hubbub there is now in Samaria! If almost dead a while ago, it is more than alive now. It is one fierce current of hunger, of greed, of avarice, all setting toward that forsaken camp; a mad rush out of the city gate; people hurrying, jostling, shoving, thumping, screaming, laughing, happy, mad; one frenzied scramble for food. But look! Keep back there! The keeper of the gate is trying to have some kind of order, and there he goes, a mere chip in a maelstrom! Down he drops, and the maelstrom goes over him. The people trample out his life. It is the man that sneered!

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

*Verse 1.* God cares for his own. A little child went on a voyage with her father, who was a sea-captain, and when the first storm came the little child was very much frightened, and in the night rushed out of the cabin and said: "Where is father? where is father?" Then they told her: "Father is on deck guiding the vessel and watching the storm." The little child immediately returned to her berth and said: "It's all right, for father's on deck." O, ye who are tossed and driven in this world, up by the mountains and down by the valleys, and at your wit's end, I want you to know the Lord God is guiding the ship. Your Father is on deck. He will bring you through darkness into the harbor.—*Talmage.*

*Verse 2.* Unbelief shuts us away from blessings. "See these electric wires that are shooting their mysterious threads throughout our land, communicating between man and man, however distant; dead, yet instinct with life; silent, yet vocal with hidden sound, as they carry tidings from shore to shore. Interpose some non-conducting substance, and in a moment intercourse is broken. No tidings come and go. The stoppage is as entire as if you had cut every wire in pieces and cast them to the winds.

The non-conductor is unbelief. It interposes between the soul and all heavenly blessings, all divine intercourse. It isolates the man and forbids the approach of blessing."—*H. Bonar.*

*Verses 3 and 4.* The determination of the lepers was like Esther's when she said: "And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." This verse suggested the hymn, "Come, humble sinner, in whose breast." It closes with that verse:

"I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must forever die."

Many have come to Christ as a last refuge and Saviour. Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* is represented as flying from the City of Destruction, crying "Eternal life!" He only knew that death was behind him, and a possible salvation was in the line of his flight.

*Verse 5.* The more they learned the less they feared. The more we know of God and his providence the less we shall fear. There was a time when the astronomer, observing the perturbations in the movements of the planets, would have predicted destruction to the solar system. Further knowledge showed that these seeming irregularities were subject to fixed laws, and cannot possibly become dangerous.

*Verses 6 and 7.* The Syrians were certainly not brave men. "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all," said Shakespeare. Cromwell's Ironsides were men that had the fear of God before them, and they were always victorious. They went into battle praying and singing psalms. Their watchword was, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Every soldier had his pocket Bible of select texts for soldiers, and fed his soul on the word of God. A few years ago, when a crisis came in the English army, the cry was raised, "Bring out Havelock's saints." They were considered invincible.

"This day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace." At the close of the last war with Great Britain I was in the city of New York. It happened that on a February afternoon a ship was sighted which was supposed to be bringing home our commissioners from their unsuccessful mission. The sun had set gloomily before any intelligence from the vessel had reached the city. At length a boat reached the wharf announcing the fact that a treaty of peace had been signed, and was waiting for nothing but the action of our government to make it a law. The men who heard these words rushed into the city, shouting as they ran through the streets, "Peace! peace!" Every one who heard the sound repeated it. The whole city was in commotion. In groups and by firesides they were

gathered, reminding each other that the agony of war was over, and that a worn-out country was at peace. Thus every one became an evangelist; and in this sense the city was evangelized. Christ has offered to this world a treaty of peace. Where are the evangelists? Why do we not proclaim the good news—"Peace! peace!"—*Dr. Wayland.*

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Try to realize this picturesque scene.... Draw forth its lessons concerning God's love and power: 1. God is more than a match for the strongest enemy. 2. He hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. 3. God's promises are always kept. 4. God strides straight across human "probabilities" in the prosecution of his plans. 5. "E'en crosses from his sovereign hand are blessings in disguise."... This lesson may be helpfully studied as showing types of character: 1. Elisha, the man of God, calm in danger, trustful because in communion with God. 2. The unbelieving lord, the agnostic, who believes only what he can see—ignorant of God, contemptuous of spiritual realities, doomed to destruction. 3. The four lepers, typical of men of the world, diseased by sin, doomed to death, yet reveling in transitory pleasures. 4. King Jehoram, the fickle-minded man, unstable in all his ways, veering between trust and doubt, and easily losing confidence in God. To which class do you belong? This passage presents, as suggested by the *Illustrative Notes*: "1. A divine deliverance. 2. An unexpected deliverance. 3. A deliverance foreseen by the prophet. 4. A deliverance through unconscious instrumentalities. 5. A complete deliverance." Do not let the charm of the story hide its spiritual teachings.

### References.

FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 1: Market at the gate, 339. Ver. 2: The king leaning on another's arm, 337. Ver. 10: The porter, 283... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 5812, 5815, 5818, 4509-4524; Poetical, 2531. Ver. 2: Prose, 8107, 8143, 8044, 1591, 1590, 2523. Vers. 3-5: Prose, 7909-7913, 7917, 7918. Ver. 4: Prose, 1080, 11732, 1391, 1396, 1401. Ver. 6: Prose, 4023.

### Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MARTER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Lord Will Provide.*

*Introductory.* [Show a slender bit of wood.] I am going to tell you of something that is like this wood in one way. A man promised to do some work for me yesterday. He said he would come at nine o'clock, but he didn't come. [Break the bit of wood.] How is this wood like the man's promise?

Yes; it could be broken. [Now show a short iron rod. Let two or three children try to break it. Is this like a man's promise? Show that it is more like one of God's promises, though it is not a perfect illustration, for iron can be broken. Can God break one of his promises? No; he never has, and he never will.]

This lesson tells the story of one of God's promises.

*Blackboard.* Make two sides of a city wall with the tower at the corner. Talk a little about walls, what for, etc. In old times cities had walls with big gates which could be shut and fastened. This city was Samaria. Print the name.

See, the gate of Samaria is closed. The people are in great trouble. They cannot get out of the city to buy food to eat, and the food they had is almost all gone. What is the matter?

Begin making little white tents near the walls. What do you think these are? And who stayed in them? Yes; soldiers were in these tents, waiting for the people in Samaria to get so hungry that they would open the gates and let their enemies come in and take the city. The King of Syria sent the soldiers, and he felt sure that in a little while he should have the city and all the people in it for his own. To show how desperate the famine had become, tell the story of the woman who ate her own little boy, and tell how the king in his anger sent to cut off Elisha's head, and why.

*The Promise.* Elisha was the Lord's prophet. Let some child tell how the Lord took care of Elisha at Dothan. Now God told him to tell the king that the next day there would be plenty of food in the city. That was a great promise! But God made it, and so Elisha believed it.

The king's friend who heard it did not believe it. He thought it was a man's promise, like this slender piece of wood which you saw me break. What did I show you that is more like God's promise?

*The Promise Kept.* Just outside the gate here were four poor lepers. I will make four straight marks to stand for them. Why could they not get food in the city? They were dying of hunger, and they talked about it, and said they would go where they could get food, even if the Syrian soldiers killed them. They did not know that God was using them to do his work when they went to the Syrian camp. Poor lepers as they were, they were actually helping God's promise to come true. God can use the smallest and weakest to do his great work.

Help the children to imagine the lepers going about among the tents, finding plenty of food and clothing and silver and gold, but not one soldier in all the tents. God had sent a great noise which frightened them so that they all ran away! And now there was plenty of food close by the hungry people in the city. All they had to do was to bring it into the city.



*Practical Teaching.* What has God promised to do for his little children? Read from the Bible, and paint upon the board, "I will be a father unto you." What does a father do for his children? God will do more than any earthly father can. He will feed you and clothe you and protect you from harm. But, best of all, he will give you a new, believing, loving heart, if you trust him. It is just as easy for him to give heavenly bread as earthly bread.

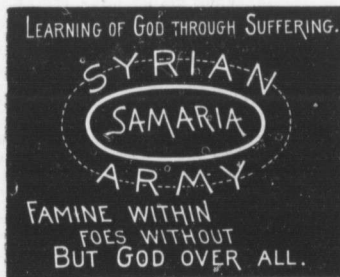
But what if we do not believe he can feed us? This lesson tells what happened to the man who did not believe God's promise meant any thing to him, and he died without eating any of God's bread.

Teach that we must not look lightly upon what God says. Every promise of good will be kept if we believe God.

The lepers were glad to help when they found help from God. When we have found one of God's promises true, we must be unselfish enough to tell others about it. God has food enough for all his children, and the more we give away, the more we shall get.

### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**BLACKBOARD POINTS.**—God is a God of love, yet he sometimes withholds his help until we learn to depend on him. Point to the board, and call attention to the inner circle representing Samaria. Bring out by questions the terrible sufferings within the walls, and then speak of the second circle surround-

ing it, representing the Syrian army. Speak of God's promise as declared by Elisha. How impossible to man! It could only be believed through faith, and these people had not faith. Enumerate the things that made it seem impossible: The foe, his number, and his character; the helplessness of the besieged, their weakness and utter hopelessness.

**CONCLUSION.**—All things are possible with God; though famine may be within and foes without, yet God is over all. Believe in him.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Sun of my soul.  
How good thou art.  
Praise for his greatness,  
Though troubles assail.  
There's a wideness.  
Blest are the hungry.  
How firm a foundation.  
Fear not.  
In some way or other.  
Child of a King.  
Rescue the perishing.  
Gather them in.

### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What was raging in the splendid city of Samaria? **An awful famine.**
2. What did Elisha promise? **Plenty of food next day.**
3. What did the unbelieving nobleman say? **If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?**
4. Who went to the camp of the Syrians? **Four lepers.**
5. What did they find? **Their enemies had fled in fear.**
6. What happened as a result according to the word of the Lord? **There was plenty in Samaria.**

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

19. How does the Lord teach us by His Spirit?  
All the Scriptures were written under the Holy Spirit's inspiration: and He who inspired them will show their meaning to such as humbly ask Him.
20. What do you mean by the Holy Spirit's inspiration?  
That He put it into the minds of holy men to write, and instructed them how to write.

**B. C. 884.] LESSON II. THE GOOD AND EVIL IN JEHU. [April 12.**

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. 1 Sam. 16. 7.

#### Authorized Version.

2 Kings 10. 18-31. [Commit to memory verses 28-29.]

18 And Je'hu gathered all the people together,

#### Revised Version.

18 And Je'hu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, A'hab served Ba'al a little;



and said unto them, A'hab served Ba'al a little; but Je'hu shall serve him much.

19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Ba'al, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting; for I have a great sacrifice to do to Ba'al; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Je'hu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Ba'al.

20 And Je'hu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Ba'al. And they proclaimed it.

21 And Je'hu sent through all Is'ra-el: and all the worshippers of Ba'al came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Ba'al; and the house of Ba'al was full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Ba'al. And he brought them forth vestments.

23 And Je'hu went, and Je-hon'a-dab the son of Re'chab, into the house of Ba'al, and said unto the worshippers of Ba'al, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Ba'al only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings, Je'hu appointed four-score men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, that Je'hu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Ba'al.

26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Ba'al, and burned them.

27 And they brake down the image of Ba'al, and brake down the house of Ba'al, and made it a draught-house unto this day.

28 Thus Je'hu destroyed Ba'al out of Is'ra-el.

29 Howbeit, from the sins of Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat, who made Is'ra-el to sin, Je'hu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth'-el, and that were in Dan.

30 And the LORD said unto Je'hu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of A'hab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Is'ra-el.

31 But Je'hu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Is'ra-el with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jer'o-bo'am, which made Is'ra-el to sin.

19 but Je'hu shall serve him much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Ba'al, all his worshippers, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Ba'al; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Je'hu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Ba'al.

20 And Je'hu said, Sanctify a solemn assembly for Ba'al. And they proclaimed it. And Je'hu sent through all Is'ra-el: and all the worshippers of Ba'al came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Ba'al; and the house of Ba'al was filled from

21 one end to another. And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Ba'al. And he brought

22 them forth vestments. And Je'hu went, and Je-hon'a-dab the son of Re'chab, into the house of Ba'al; and he said unto the worshippers of Ba'al, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the

23 worshippers of Ba'al only. And they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings. Now Je'hu had appointed him four-score men without, and said, If any of the men whom I bring into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life

24 shall be for the life of him. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, that Je'hu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the

25 house of Baal. And they brought forth the pillars that were in the house of Ba'al, and burned

26 them. And they brake down the pillar of Ba'al, and brake down the house of Ba'al, and

27 made it a draught-house, unto this day. Thus

28 Je'hu destroyed Ba'al out of Is'ra-el. Howbeit from the sins of Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat, wherewith he made Is'ra-el to sin, Je'hu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth'-el, and that were in

29 Dan. And the LORD said unto Je'hu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of A'hab according to all that was in mine heart, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Is'ra-el. But Je'hu

30 took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el, with all his heart: he departed not from the sins of Jer'o-bo'am, wherewith he made Is'ra-el to sin.

**TIME.**—B. C. 884. **PLACE.**—Samaria, the capital of Israel. **RULER.**—Jehu, the tenth King of Israel. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—Religion of the heart.

#### HOME READINGS.

M. The good and evil in Jehu. 2 Kings 10. 18-27.  
Tu. The good and evil in Jehu. 2 Kings 10. 28-31.  
W. Ahab's family destroyed. 2 Kings 10. 11-17.

- T.** God's anger with sin. Zeph. 1. 7-18.  
**F.** Warning for us. Rom. 11. 13-22.  
**S.** Zealously affected for good. Gal. 4. 12-18.  
**S.** Real and pretended service. Matt. 6. 1-6.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 128, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Am I a soldier of the cross?

No. 195, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

No. 189, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Must Jesus bear the cross alone?

#### DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 103, 107, 106.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

**1. What Jehu Did,** v. 18-28.  
 How did Jehu come to the throne of Israel?  
 (1 Kings 19. 16; 9. 1-17.)

What monarch did he displace?  
 How did Jehu say his conduct should compare with that of Ahab?

What great gathering did he order?  
 What reason did he give for this gathering?  
 What was his real purpose?

What political reasons may have suggested to Jehu the destruction of Baal's priests?

Against what criminals had God appointed Jehu to be his executioner?

How are Oriental proclamations usually made?  
 What is meant by the house of Baal?  
 Why were the worshippers of Baal to be peculiarly dressed?

Who furnished the vestments?  
 Who was Jehonadab the son of Rechab?  
 What order did Jehu give to eighty soldiers?  
 What is meant by "the city of the house of Baal?"

What difference was there between the "images" mentioned in verse 26 and the "image" mentioned in verse 27?

What good result came from this blood-thirsty usurper's brutality?

**2. What Jehu Failed to Do,** v. 29-31.

What was the sin of Jeroboam?  
 What political causes tended to the perpetuation of this sin?

In what had Jehu done "that which was right in the eyes of the Lord?"

Why did God promise so brief a dynasty to Jehu?

What great moral failure is indicated in verse 31?  
 What does God require of all those that follow Him?

#### Practical Teachings.

- Find in this lesson illustrations of—
1. The truth that God makes the wrath of man to praise Him.
  2. The awful responsibility of leaders in society.
  3. The merit of antagonism to sin.
  4. That heart-worship is the only kind of worship recognized by God.

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Familiarize yourself with the earlier history of Jehu.
2. At different periods in sacred history God anointed comparatively inconspicuous men to be king while other men still occupied the throne. David, Jeroboam, Hazael, and Jehu are four such instances. Compare the methods by which they sought to secure the fulfillment of God's promise.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

**1. What Jehu Did,** v. 18-28.

What did Jehu say to the people about serving Baal?

Whom did he summon, and for what reason?  
 What was his real purpose?  
 What proclamation did he order?  
 What worshippers came together?  
 In what place were they gathered?  
 What order was given about clothing?  
 What warning did Jehu give in the house of Baal?

How many guards were stationed without?  
 What was said to these guards?  
 What was done with the worshippers of Baal?  
 What became of the images of Baal?  
 To what use was the house of Baal put?  
 What then did Jehu do?

**2. What Jehu Failed to Do,** v. 29-31.

Whose evil example did Jehu follow?  
 Of what sin was he guilty?  
 What did the Lord promise for the good he had done?

About what was the king heedless?  
 What is said of him who fails to obey any commandment? (Jas. 2. 10.)

By what does the Lord judge men? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That we ought to obey God's commands?
2. That God rewards obedience?
3. That true obedience requires us to avoid wrongdoing?

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find who had taught King Ahab to worship the false god Baal.

Find who built the house of Baal.

Find who made the golden calves that Jehu worshipped.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who was anointed King of Israel after Ahab's death? **Jehu.**

Who was Jehu? **A bold soldier.**

Whom did he slay? **Ahab's son and Jezebel.**

What did he then call? **A great meeting of Baal-worshippers.**

Where was the meeting held? **In the temple of Baal.**

How did he get all the worshippers to come? **He said he would kill any who did not come.**

Were any besides Baal-worshippers allowed in the temple? **Not one.**

What was then offered to Baal? **A burnt-offering.**

When that was done, what did Jehu tell the soldiers? **To go into the temple and slay every man.**

What was then done with the idols? **They were burned.**

What was done with the image of Baal? **It was broken.**

What became of the temple? **It was torn down.**

What was thus destroyed? **The worship of Baal.**

Did Jehu teach the people to worship God? **No; he told them to worship the golden calves.**

Was this right? **No; it was very wrong.**

How did Jehu follow the Lord? **In some things.**

How should we follow the Lord? **With our whole hearts.**

**Words With Little People.**

Some little people try to please God in all things. Others, like Jehu, try to please him in some things. God looks at the heart and knows just how it is with us. If we let Jesus lead us he will show us that the only safe and happy way is to follow him fully.

**Whisper Motto.**

"All for Jesus."

**General Statement.**

The house of Omri sat upon the throne of Israel for fifty years, and its influence was corrupting and idolatrous. The worship of Baal never recovered from the blow inflicted by Elijah on Mount Carmel, but it was still probably patronized by the court and the nobles. Elisha and the prophets worked against its influence, and its power over the people was in a measure broken. The hour of its doom came at last, and came suddenly, though without doubt the preparation had been carefully made for the revolution. The man of the hour was Jehu, the captain of the host, around whose name the army was ready to rally. He was a man of iron will, of prompt decision, and quick execution. Years before he had ridden behind King Ahab on the day when in the vineyard of murdered Naboth the king met the prophet Elijah and heard his doom. Little did Jehu dream then that he was destined to be the instrument for accomplishing that sentence. But one day a prophet came into his presence, anointed him king, and left him to work out his own plans. An hour more, and Jehu was riding like the wind toward Samaria; a few days, and the throne of Jehoram had fallen in the dust, Jezebel was the prey of dogs, the family of Ahab had been slaughtered, and Jehu was the undisputed king of the ten tribes. As the religion of Baal had been favored by the house of Ahab, Jehu's throne would be insecure while Baal's priests were living. At one stroke, treacherous and cruel, he swept them down, destroyed the temple of Baal, and eradicated the vile system from the land. Jehu was a politician rather than a man of God. He stopped half-way in his reform, and never brought his kingdom wholly into the service of Jehovah. Hence his work was but transient in its effect, and only postponed for a season the day of Israel's fall.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

**Verse 18. Jehu gathered all the people.** He saw that the foreign idolatry was identified with the house of Ahab, and that while it existed his own throne could not be secure; as a patriot he may have disliked Baalism, because it was Zidonian in origin; and he may also have realized the moral evils of a degrading, idolatrous worship. "Idolatry was high treason to the Israelitish State."—*Lange*. But from whatever motive, he resolved to eradicate the service of Baal out of Israel. (1) *Desperate diseases need desperate remedies. Jehu shall serve him much.* To accomplish his purpose, being in heart a hypocrite, he naturally turned to hypocrisy. (2) *Falseness is never approved by the God of truth.* (3) *God makes the wrath of man to praise him.*

**19. The prophets of Baal.** These were perhaps somewhat like the dervishes of the Mohammedan worship. **His servants.** Those who were recognized as the leaders in the new religion. **His priests.** The men who conducted the services of sacrifice and worship. **A great sacrifice . . . to Baal.** We do not know what were the rites of this form of idolatry, but they were accompanied with gross sensuality among the worshippers. **Jehu did it in subtlety.** His aim was not worship, but slaughter, and God's cause is not helped by bloody instruments. (4) *God wants pure men to carry on his work.*

**20, 21. A solemn assembly.** This was expected to be a great gathering from all parts of the land, like the annual feasts to the Lord in Jeru-

salem; or like the *metas* in India, which are often attended by half a million people. (5) *The zeal of idolaters rebukes the apathy of Christians.* **There was not a man left.** His purpose was to gather all together, so that all might be annihilated at one blow. **The house of Baal.** The ancient temples were surrounded by vast courts open to the sky, in which many thousand people could find room. This temple, with its adjoining building for the priests, occupied a ward in the city of Samaria.

**22. Over the vestry.** The robe-chamber of the temple, in which garments for use in the worship of Baal were kept. **Bring forth vestments.** Each worshiper was furnished with a robe or a scarf, which was used only in the service and then returned. Jehu's aim was to have the worshipers easily identified by his guards. (6) *The best dress for worship is a pure and holy life.*

**23. Jehu went, and Jehonadab.** The stern and uncompromising sectarian, Jehonadab, aided in these measures. **Search, and look.** Jehu wished to appear very zealous for Baal; but in reality he aimed to avoid the slaughter of any follower of Jehovah. **The worshippers of Baal only.** In ancient times, the celebration of the "mysteries" of one religion was carefully guarded from all people of another worship, and transgression was punished with death. Hence, this command of Jehu would not cause suspicion among the Baalites. (7) *It is never safe for God's people to be among sinners.*

**24. Jehu appointed four-score men.** Apparently a small number, but they were trained soldiers, fully armed, while their victims were defenseless. **His life shall be for the life.** He gave to these professional executioners the task of murdering the Baalites, and held them responsible for it.

**25. Offering the burnt-offering.** Not by his own hands, but through the priests of Baal. **They smote them.** A horrible butchery of thousands of men, yet their crimes doubtless deserved their punishment. **Cast them out.** Threw out the bodies, in order to make sure that no living persons were concealed among them. **The city of the house of Baal.** An inclosure smaller than a modern city.

**26, 27. Brought forth the images.** The Revised Version translates this "pillars." They may have been wooden obelisks containing inscrip-

tions in honor of Baal. **The image of Baal.** This was probably the great stone idol in the center of the temple. **A draught-house.** He made the place where the temple had stood a receptacle for the filth of the city.

**28. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal.** We notice that there is no word of condemnation, but on the contrary an apparent commendation of these measures. The fact is that individual freedom of worship was not known in the ancient world, nor is it recognized in the Old Testament. The Israelites were as a nation worshipers of Jehovah, and idolatry was forbidden under penalty of death. It is not safe to allow the vices and immoralities of idol-worship, for the safety of the world was wrapped up in the purity of Israel. Hence Jehu's conduct, in its general aim, was thus far in accordance with the Old Testament standards. (8) *Let us be grateful that we live under the Gospel rather than the law.*

**29. From the sins of Jeroboam.** He had introduced the worship of the calves, which was a form of idolatry, though less debasing than Baalism. (9) *See how the evils of one age are reproduced centuries afterward.* **Who made Israel to sin.** This is the terrible epithet always attached to the name of Jeroboam. **Jehu departed not.** He was not a reformer, but a revolutionist. His aims were political, not religious. He destroyed Baalism because it stood in his way, and he failed to establish the true worship because it did not appear to be for his interest. **The golden calves.** The images set up as representing Jehovah to the sight of worshipers. **In Beth-el.** On the southern boundary of Israel, nine miles north of Jerusalem. **In Dan.** In the extreme north, near the sources of the Jordan.

**30. Thou hast done well.** Jehu had followed God's will in destroying the worship of Baal, and in putting to death the corrupt household of Ahab. **Thy children of the fourth generation.** Jehonahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II., and Zechariah, all descendants of Jehu, sat upon the throne. The first of these witnessed the kingdom at its lowest condition of weakness under Syria. The second and third raised Israel higher than it had been since the division. Under the last it felt into anarchy. The house of Jehu wore the crown for a hundred years. (10) *God rewards even worldly men who do his cause a service.*

**31. Jehu took no heed.** He was not a follower of God, but simply a destroyer of Baal. **In the law of the Lord.** (11) *There can be no true service of God which neglects his law.*

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

The history of Jehu is one of those which do most to offend the superficial and perplex the serious student of Scripture. An ambitious soldier of fortune is deliberately appointed by the gentle and tolerant Elisha to dethrone the reigning monarch

and in his commission, expressly sealed by God, are included all the most repulsive features of Oriental revolutions. For us who instinctively recoil in horror from the man who wades through slaughter to a throne, there is something passing

strange in the thought that our God should have actually commanded things which he has taught us to hate. Two lines of thought may be suggested to lighten the difficulty. First, what is described in Israel's annals as the direct and recognized work of God occurs constantly in "secular" history, where theists must believe God's hand is to be traced as surely. Only a century ago God willed that the French people should be delivered from a fearful tyranny. England had been delivered in her day by men of David's mold, but the deliverance of France was wrought through men like Jehu and women like Jacl. And if we ask why God thus uses bad men to work his purposes by means he hates, we only come to the world-old problem of the existence of evil in the realm of an almighty and all-holy God, a problem which our limited intelligence does wisely to leave with him who made us what we are. Secondly, these events stand at a far earlier step in human development than ours. The merest smattering of sociology teaches us that regard for human life varies exactly with the degree of civilization attained. Massacres like Jehu's were looked at from an utterly different stand-point from any we can comprehend. The victims were instinctively held as sinners by a people which for ages could not dissociate suffering from guilt. The instrument of vengeance was saved from being brutalized by the firm assurance that he was engaged in a holy war.

**Verse 18.** Jehu's revolution had hitherto shown no sign of a religious purpose, and it would be easy for him to declare that the new reign would be inaugurated by a vaster sacrifice to Baal than Ahab had ever ordered. The wish to conciliate the powerful usurper would bring indifferentists to the ceremony, while thorough-going idolaters would rejoice in the predominance about to be given to their cult. Ahab's magnificent temple, the monument of a dynasty which had a passion for grand buildings, was thronged with many thousands of Israelites who were ready formally to renounce their national God.

**19.** The distinction between prophets and priests is much the same as in the case of Jehovah's servants bearing those names. **Sacrifice.** There is a touch of what the Greeks called "irony;" Jehu was truly preparing a great human sacrifice to Baal! It is possible that the words "all his worshippers" should be omitted in this verse, the prophets and priests being collected first and then bidden to call officially a universal assembly.

**20. Sanctify.** Comp. Exod. 13. 12, etc. It means to make ready that which is holy.

**21. Sent.** The LXX. adds a passage purporting to be the words of the king's letter, but apparently it is only a repetition from verse 19. The gathering of the people is like Solomon's assembly at the dedication of the temple. Jehu uses the words appropriate to Jehovah's worship—"san-

tify," "solemn assembly," etc.—as if to proclaim that he sets Baal entirely on a level with Jehovah. **Filled.** Probably the temple was built with courts outside an inner shrine, like the temple of Solomon. It would thus hold an enormous crowd, who would, moreover, be so broken up by the partitions that no united defense was possible.

**22. Vestry.** Endowed, we may suppose, by Ahab's munificence with enormous stores of raiment, that Baal might be worshiped "in holy array." We are reminded of the distribution of festal robes which is assumed in our Lord's parable of the marriage of the king's son.

**23. Jehonadab.** Founder of the ascetic order of the Rechabites, which Jeremiah found still faithful to their ancestral customs on the eve of the captivity (chap. 35). The family was Kenite (1 Chron. 2. 55), and is seen preserving still the nomadic life of their race. Jehonadab was clearly a man much revered by the people, and Jehu was anxious to have his public countenance in the work he was sent to do. In those of the Baalites who recognized him his appearance would arouse misgiving, too late, however, for any scheme of escape, if, indeed, any suspicions went so far. **Search.** "*Procul, O procul este, profani.*" The rules which excluded strangers from Jehovah's temple are replied to by a counter-exclusion from the house of Baal. Note that here a sharp line is drawn between the two worshipers. Hitherto all Israelites had been nominal servants of Jehovah, even while they worshiped Baal also—Jehu himself had declared himself the instrument of Jehovah's vengeance on Ahab's house. But now the Baalites are to formally renounce Jehovah, and in the confidence that they are to have exclusive privileges from the king, who thus commits himself to their cult, they unite to expel any whose claim is imperfect.

**24. Sacrifices.** Those in which only a part was burnt, as opposed to the "whole burnt-offering." Jehu (and Jehonadab?) is said to have offered, just as Solomon at the dedication, but of course priests slew the victims. **Four-score.** This seems a small number to accomplish such a massacre, but there is no ancient support for a higher figure except one text of the LXX. We may note that it would not have been safe to trust the secret to a large body of men, also that the victims were unarmed, surprised, crowded together in narrow spaces, and possibly encumbered by the vestments which Jehu's piety had provided. **Without.** Just outside the outermost gates. Jehu was in the innermost court, by the great altar, if the analogy of the temple at Jerusalem may be followed; if the gates of the successive courts were in a straight line the men may have taken the signal from Jehu while still within. But this rather forces the "said," in the next verse, and we must suppose

that the king left the temple after the sacrifice, while the worshipers tarried perhaps for a priestly blessing. We are left uninformed as to the ostensible reason of this procedure. **His life.** Comp. 1 Kings 20. 39 and 42.

**25. Guard.** See margin, with which comp. 1 Sam. 22. 17; 2 Sam. 15. 1; 1 Kings 1. 5. **Cast.** The Hebrew is somewhat peculiar, and the meaning not very clear; perhaps it only describes their casting the corpses aside as they pressed into the inner court. Klostermann boldly conjectures, "and they cast to the earth the Asherim." **City.** The temple house (answering to the Holy and Holiest Place) must be meant, but it is doubtful whether we must alter the text to get this meaning. Lumbly quotes Num. 13. 19; Gen. 4. 17, and Isa. 1. 8 (?), to show that "city" can mean a small inclosure.

**26. Pillars.** Gen. 28. 18; Chron. 3. 2, etc. The present passage shows that these obelisks were not always of stone. Perhaps wood overlaid with gold was the material here. These subsidiary pillars are contrasted with the (apparently stone) pillar of Baal in the next verse.

**27. Draught.** A place for sewerage (Dan. 3. 29; Mark 7. 19). For this treatment of idols comp. Deut. 7. 5; 12. 3, *sq.* **Unto this day.** Here must be understood the time of the document which the compiler of Kings incorporated just as it was.

**28.** Elijah's great blow had so far undermined Baal-worship that it practically only existed as the creed of courtiers. Now there was nothing left to encourage it. Moreover, the deadly insult to Baal, just recorded, which the deity left wholly unavenged, was an effectual check to Oriental superstition. In a similar way Josiah destroyed Molech-worship, by defiling Topheth.

**29.** Jehu fell a victim to the political expediency which had entrapped every one of his predecessors. See notes for January 11, on the nature and motives of Jeroboam's sin. To suit the theory there suggested, that both the calves were at Beth-el, and Micah's "ephod" the image at Dan, we must either regard the last two lines of this verse as an explanatory interpolation, or perhaps read, "and [the ephod] which was in Dan."

**30.** Jehu's partial obedience makes him head of the most extended dynasty that occupied Israel's throne. Had he not followed the calf-worship we may suppose he, like David, would have been promised a perpetual succession. His dynasty—Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II., and Zechariah—mark the period of Israel's decline, though under the third of these there was a flicker of returning success. The house he destroyed had raised Israel to the greatest height of external prosperity, as the records of Assyria attest; the policy of Elijah and Elisha was of set purpose destructive to the nation's power to save what was far more important.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 2.** *What class of men in our time are represented in the character of Jehu?*

Without positive virtue Jehu seems to have been used by Jehovah as an instrumentality for bringing good to pass. Some would see in Jehu a type of "the fast young man." (See Dr. Talmage's sermon from 9. 20.) Many traits in his character and mode of procedure are suggestive of some so-called "reformers," social, religious, or political. Note, for example, his fanatical zeal, hypocrisy, selfish ambition, cruelty, along with a cool, calculating precision and vigor with regard to desired ends. Others may recognize in his make-up characteristics which have given the Jesuits a measure of worldly success.—*Edwin Post, Ph.D.*

Self was the center of Jehu's soul. Whether traveling with the speed which makes his name a synonym of daring horsemanship, or tossing a painted Jezebel out of a window, or converting a pagan temple into a human slaughter-house, his motives were of unmixed selfishness. Yet Jehu's wrath praised God. He was the veriest instrument of a wonder-working Providence; though yet not in such sense as to limit his freedom or abate from his responsibility. The confessedly good results of some of his deeds were not credited to him because of the unworthiness of his motives. The very actions that, performed with truer impulse, would have been esteemed virtuous, were adjudged crimes and their penalties inflicted (Hos. 1. 4). Jehu's type unfortunately survives. Men yet ride to office and emolument on the crest of moral reforms, in which they have no sincere interest. Farmers' Alliance, Prohibition, Tariff Reform are the shibboleths of some selfish Jehus to-day. Let us hope his tribe decreases.—*Rev. Davis W. Clark, A.M.*

Jehu was a cold, calculating, crafty politician; ambitious, unscrupulous; a man of limitless energy and of selfish zeal. It is not difficult to find his likenesses in those (1) who subordinate principle to policy, substituting political methods for moral integrity; (2) who act according to the theory that the end, if good, justifies the means employed to reach the end. Did Jehu live to-day he would be a Jesuit.—*Rev. E. S. Tipple, Ph.D.*

Jehu possessed a brutal nature, which was quickened by the feeling that he was appointed to do a special work. There is no evidence of any sincere hatred of idolatry on his part, for while with fanatical zeal he destroyed Baal-worship, he allowed the worship of the golden calves, showing thereby that the law of expediency rather than righteousness governed him. He is the type of those in our times who assume the garb of piety for selfish ends, whose hatred of the false implies no adherence to the true, and whose groveling elements of character are continually coming to the surface.—*Rev. S. F. Upham, D.D.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline.

## Jehu's Zeal.

## I. AN OSTENTATIOUS ZEAL.

See *my zeal for the Lord*. v. 16.

"Let another man praise thee." Prov. 27. 2.

"They have their reward." Matt. 6. 2.

## II. A MURDEROUS ZEAL.

*Slew all that remained*. v. 17.

"Shall dogs lick thy blood." 1 Kings 21. 19.

"The wrath of man shall praise thee." Psa 76. 10.

## III. A HYPOCRITICAL ZEAL.

*Jehu shall serve him much*. v. 18.

"No man can serve two masters." Matt. 6. 24.

"Flattereth....spreadeth a net." Prov. 29. 5.

## IV. AN UNCOMPROMISING ZEAL.

*Thus Jehu destroyed Baal*. v. 28.

"What agreement....temple....idols." 2 Cor. 6. 16.

"Come out of her, my people." Rev. 18. 4.

## V. AN IRRELIGIOUS ZEAL.

*Jehu took no heed*. v. 31.

"Seek ye first the kingdom." Matt. 6. 33.

"Godliness is profitable." 1 Tim. 4. 8.

## Thoughts for Young People.

## Jehu as an Example and as a Warning.

1. *Like Jehu*, we should be uncompromising in our opposition to evil; but, *unlike Jehu*, we should be gentle toward all, and cruel toward none (verse 17).

2. *Like Jehu*, we should be earnest in our zeal for God's cause; but, *unlike Jehu*, we should not boast of it (verse 15).

3. *Like Jehu*, we should throw all the weight of our influence against sin and wrong-doing; but, *unlike Jehu*, we should make no pretense of a religion in which we do not believe (verses 18, 19).

4. *Like Jehu*, we should be enemies of Baal; but, *unlike Jehu*, we should also be true servants of God (verse 29).

5. *Like Jehu*, we should execute God's will; but, *unlike Jehu*, we should love God with all our hearts (verses 30, 31).

## Lesson Word-Pictures.

Who is this riding so fast? What a fine figure he makes in his chariot, erect, stalwart, brilliant! What a zeal for reform, too, he has showed! He is the champion of the rights of an oppressed people. He is the head and front of the movement against Ahab's cruelty. He is the iron head of the battering-ram driven against the royal sham and shattering it.

And when will that hateful old Baal take his turn? What! haven't you heard the news about Jehu's contemplated crusade against the grim idol? Few

know it. You shall be let into the secret. He is setting all the trumpets to blowing. Loud, long, and clear are the notes, saying, "Come and worship. They come in crowds. They fill Baal's house."

If the grinning, leering old demon on his throne could only speak, how jubilantly he would testify to his joy! But Jehu has called for the vestments of worship. Every one to be vested, though poor and ragged and dirty and unworthy! Such a tumultuous rustling of vestments! Such a fine sight, all made so honorable! For Baal's worship, too! The black, old abomination seems to grin and leer worse than ever. But Jehu does something that, to the idolaters, may seem like loyal zeal, but, to the knowing, is significant. He puts the congregation into the sieve and sifts out all worshippers of Jehovah. A fortunate thing for them! And now do you see that line of armed men winding all around the building; a line silently, stealthily drawn? Watch! The smoke of sacrifice is going up. There is the odor of burnt-offerings. The cries of the worshipers ascend. But, hark! There is another noise, and it is at the doors! The idolaters turn and look. They see only eyes without mercy, swords soon to redden with their blood, feet ready to spring upon them. The order given, that house of idol-worship becomes the house of the idolaters' slaughter! Jehu, too, lays his stern hand on the pillars of Baal, making ashes of them. The very house he tears down and degrades. Such a reformer is this man of blood, this king with a red and iron hand! And is it all a sincere, while mistaken zeal, that of this royal butcher? "Well done!" men may be crying. Other eyes, though, are searching the heart of the fierce chariot-rider. God sees the deceit of the reformer.

Come this way; first to Beth-el, then to Dan. Have you forgotten about the calves of gold, with faces silly and stolid and stupid? There they are! Now let the reformer in his swift-rushing chariot ride upon them and overthrow them! No; the chariot halts. The wild rider alights. He reverently approaches the two beasts. He bows where Jeroboam prostrated himself. He kisses the hand with idolatrous Israel. Ah! God looks down and sees the royal deceit under the royal purple. This Jehu is another Jeroboam! The zealot is a traitor!

## By Way of Illustration.

"But Jehu did it in subtlety." "The evil that men do lives after them." A little newsboy to sell his paper told a lie. The matter came up in Sabbath-school. "Would you tell a lie for three cents?" asked a teacher of one of the boys. "No, ma'am," answered Dick, very decidedly. "For a dollar?" "No." "For a thousand dollars?"

Dick was staggered. A thousand dollars looked big. O, it would buy so many things! While he was thinking about it, a boy behind him roared out, "No!" "Why not?" asked the teacher. "Because when the thousand dollars are all gone, and all things bought with them are gone too, the lie is there all the same," answered the boy.

"*Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.*" "I have been visiting the garden of a friend in this city, to see a century-plant which is now in bloom. Within a few weeks it has shot up from a moderate sized shrub to a stalk thirty feet high, and has sent forth two dozen branches, on the ends of which are several hundreds of minute yellow flowers. In a few days the brief blossoms will have dropped off, and then for another century it will sink again into insignificance. The neighboring geraniums and rose-bushes which flower out every season are worth an army of periodical monsters which can be admired only once in a life-time. There are too many church members like that century-plant; their every-day appearance is very unattractive, and it is only on very rare and extraordinary occasions that they show any blossoms of godliness. This world will not be converted by century-plant Christians any sooner than the skies will be steadily lighted by comets. The demand of the times is not for fitful, spasmodic efforts, but for the steady power of Christ-like Christians, who keep the commandments and draw the sinning and suffering toward Christ."—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

"*From the sins of Jeroboam.... Jehu departed not.*" The fabled Atlas, who carried the world on his shoulders, attempted nothing compared with the man who labors to secure both this world and the next. Among the recent discoveries at Pompeii was a woman in the act of gathering in her apron rings, bracelets, and other articles of valuable jewelry. It would seem that people of wealth, aware of the coming destruction, had made their escape and left these things behind, as worthless in comparison with life; but she, hoping to save both, delayed her flight and, alas! was overwhelmed in the terrific judgment, and so lost her life and her jewels. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

"In the Cathedral of St. Mark, in Venice, there are pillars said to be brought from Solomon's temple. These are of alabaster, a substance firm and durable as granite, and yet transparent, so that the light glows through them. Behold an emblem of what all true pillars of the Church should be—firm in their faith and transparent in their character; men of simple mold, ignorant of tortuous or deceptive ways, and yet men of strong will, not ready to be led aside or bent from their uprightness."—*Spurgeon.*

*Golden Text.* Many have clean hands but unclean hearts, as did Pilate. He washed his hands

of the blood of Christ, but had a hand in his death. The Egyptian temples are beautiful on the outside, but often within you will find nothing but some serpent or crocodile. Judas was a saint without, but a sinner within.

At a ragged school in Ireland a clergyman asked the question, "What is holiness?" A poor Irish convert answered, "Please, your reverence, it's to be clean inside."

### Teachers' Meeting.

Review the history of the kingdom of Israel from Jeroboam to Jehu—very briefly, but enough to show the several royal houses or "dynasties." ... The chapter containing the account of Jehu's revolution should be carefully read; it shows the conjunction of divine and human forces—God's provision and providence and man's free will.... The character of Jehu is good both as an example and as a warning. [See *Thoughts for Young People.*] He was: 1. Prompt. 2. Energetic. 3. Decisive. 4. Thorough. 5. The enemy of open idolatry. He was: 1. Selfish. 2. Deceitful. 3. Cruel. 4. Neglectful of God. 5. The advocate of spurious worship. The duties in which Jehu failed we should be careful to perform.... The fate of the Baalites is illustrative of "the wages of sin." Their destruction was right and necessary; the deceit and cruelty attending their execution were needless and wrong. Baal's worship was obscene, and by its unnatural immoralities worked directly toward the physical and moral destruction of the people. Besides, "the safety of the world in our age required the purity of Israel in that age." Israel was the custodian of all moral truth.... After all, the outrageous sin of Baal-worship was more easily gotten rid of than the spurious worship founded by Jeroboam the son of Nebat; so our greatest danger may come from evils cloaked in garments of righteousness.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 19: Baal, 184. Ver. 22: Priestly robes, 344.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 5116, 11521, 5353, 11726, 11727, 4025, 4029. Ver. 18: Prose, 6260, 6265, 6227, 6274, 6275; Poetical, 3508. Ver. 19: Prose, 174, 5753, 9959, 10998, 10999. Ver. 29: Prose, 11717, 11721. Ver. 30: Prose, 8141, 8412.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON. THOUGHT. *All for Jesus.*

Print lesson thought in large letters with colored crayon. This story of wholesale slaughter must not be presented to sensitive children too vividly. It will be better to teach something positive—the opposite good, suggested by Jehu's evil.

Jehu was half-hearted in God's service. Let us hold up the beauty of whole-hearted de-



votion to God's service. Jehu was self-loving, and therefore self-seeking. Let us aim to teach the blessedness of the life in which there is "none of self, and all of Thee."

Print "Ahab" and "Jezebel" on the board. Recall the story of Naboth's vineyard. Ahab was dead, but Jezebel still lived, and Ahab's son was King of Israel. Would the son of such wicked parents be likely to be a good king?

Show an idol, or a picture of one. What was the name of the ugly idol Jezebel wanted the people to worship? Who can tell the name of the god to whom the heathen priests prayed all one day on Mount Carmel, and got no answer? Print "Baal" in large letters.

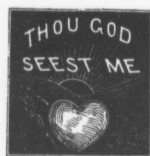
Describe the fine temple that Ahab built for Baal. It was a round temple with a great image of Baal in the center. Lesser gods stood on pillars all around the temple. In front was a tall stone pillar, and on this another image of Baal. What did the people do in this temple? Yes, they worshiped false gods, and so disobeyed God, the King of Heaven. Picture in a few words the people of Israel going to this idol-temple, and worshiping God! And God looked down from heaven and saw it!

Can God see the men and women and children now who go to the church with their hearts full of something besides the worship of the true God. Yes, he sees it all, and reads all that is in the heart.

*The Half Heart.* Make a large heart on the board. Jehu would not worship Baal. He knew that he ought to worship the true God. He was a brave, bold soldier, a general in the army of Israel. He knew that God did not want the people of Israel to worship idols, and so he thought he would destroy this worship. He killed Ahab's son, Jehoram, and Jezebel, and all of Ahab's family that he could find. Then he called all the worshippers of Baal to come to the temple at Samaria. They had to come, for Jehu was now King of Israel. When they were all in the temple, offering the sacrifice, Jehu sent men in to slay them all. Then they tore down the temple, and burned the images of the false gods.

Teach that it is right that sin should be destroyed. Perhaps the children will tell you that Jehu's heart must have been all given to God, to make him willing to do such a great work as this. Print "For God" in the heart.

Recall the story of the golden calves, and tell that after Jehu destroyed the worship of Baal he went on worshipping the golden calves. Cut off by a light line one part of the heart, and print "For Self" in it. Read verse 31. Jehu thought it would be better for him to worship the calves than to worship God. He tried to please God, and to please himself too. Jehu was half-hearted in his worship and service.



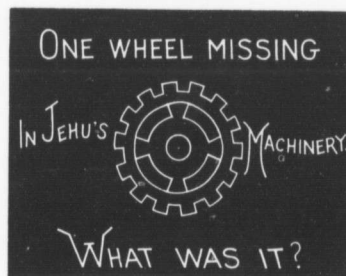
*The Whole Heart.* Make another heart. Print in it, "All for Jesus." Can the minister or the teacher see into a child's heart? No; only God can see if the heart is really all his. Try to find an apple or an orange fair outside, but decayed within.

Let it be cut, so that it will be easy to open it. If such a fruit cannot easily be found, take a pretty paper-box and fill it with soiled bits of paper, rags, etc. Hold up the fair outside for the children to admire. Some people saw how eager Jehu was to destroy false worship, and said, "What a good man he is!" But God could see the inside. [Show the inside of the box or the fruit.] Just so God can see our hearts, and he knows if they are all for him, or some for self.

Print in small letters around this last heart some things that we can say of a heart which is all for Jesus: "Quiet, Loving, Contented, Glad," etc. A child with such a heart is a happy child. [Make sun's rays falling upon the heart.] God's great sun of love falls upon such a heart, and makes it warm and fruitful. Sing

"All for Jesus, all for Jesus,  
All my days, and my hours."

### Blackboard.



**BLACKBOARD POINTS.**—Review the lesson by asking a few leading questions. A safe rule for a review is to avoid being tedious. Think up your questions before you go to the school. What was the trouble with Jehu? The machinery did not run true, for one wheel was missing. Bring out the good qualities, and then state that the missing wheel was an important one, for without it the machinery will never be perfect. Try and get the scholars to name it, but if they do not do so, tell them that this great driving-wheel was that of "loving obedience." Jehu obeyed in part, but it was selfish obedience. A great deal for Jehu the

king, but very little for God. A divided heart and a broken law go together. Write the words "Loving Obedience" across the wheel.

**OPTIONAL HYMNS.**

Hasten, sinner.  
Now is the accepted.  
Who'll be the next?  
Rock of ages.  
Why do you wait?  
Hide thou me.  
Lead thou me.  
O happy day.  
Take my life.  
Take the name.  
Jesus bids us shine.  
No compromise.

**The Lesson Catechism.**

[For the entire school.]

1. What idol did Jehu falsely promise to worship? **Baal.**
2. Whom did he gather together into one temple from all parts of the nation? **The worshippers of Baal.**

3. What did he do with them? **Slew them all.**

4. What did he do with the images of Baal and his temple? **Destroyed them.**

5. Wherein did he do right in the sight of the Lord? **In destroying false gods.**

6. Wherein did he do wrong? **In not worshipping God with all his heart.**

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

21. How is it proved that the Holy Spirit inspired the Old Testament Scriptures?

Chiefly by the words of our Lord and His apostles.

He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord? Matthew xxii. 43.

Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Peter i. 21.

**About B. C. 862.] LESSON III. JONAH SENT TO NINEVEH.**

[April 19.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. Jonah 3. 2.

**Authorized Version.**

**Jonah 1. 1-17.** [Commit to memory verses 14-16.]

1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jo'nah the son of A-mi'tai, saying,

2 Arise, go to Nin'e-veh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

3 But Jo'nah rose up to flee unto Tar'shish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Jop'pa; and he found a ship going to Tar'shish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tar'shish from the presence of the LORD.

4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jo'nah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

6 So the ship-master came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jo'nah.

8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; what is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?

**Revised Version.**

- 1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jo'nah the son of A-mi'tai, saying, Arise, go to Nin'e-veh, that great city, and cry against it; for 3 their wickedness is come up before me. But Jo'nah rose up to flee unto Tar'shish from the presence of the LORD; and he went down to Jop'pa, and found a ship going to Tar'shish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tar'shish from the presence of the LORD. But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was 5 like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god; and they cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it unto them. But Jo'nah was gone down into the innermost parts of 6 ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the ship-master came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, 7 that we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jo'nah.
- 8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; what is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an He'-

9 And he said unto them, *I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.*

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, *Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.*

11 Then said they unto him, *What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.*

12 And he said unto them, *Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.*

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, *We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.*

15 So they took up Jo'nah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jo'nah. And Jo'nah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

brew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, *What is this that thou hast done? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.*

11 Then said they unto him, *What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea grew more and more tempestuous.*

12 And he said unto them, *Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this*

13 *great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to get them back to the land; but they could not: for the sea grew more and*

14 *more tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it*

15 *pleased thee. So they took up Jo'nah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from*

16 *her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly; and they offered a sacrifice unto the*

17 *Lord, and made vows. And the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jo'nah; and Jo'nah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

**TIME.**—About 862 B. C. **PLACES.**—1. Galilee. 2. The Mediterranean. 3. Joppa. 4. Tarsishish. 5. Nineveh. **RULER.**—Jonah prophesied either before or during the reign of Jeroboam II. of Israel. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The omnipresence of God.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* Jonah sent to Nineveh. Jonah 1. 1-17.  
*Th.* Jonah's prayer. Jonah 2. 1-10.  
*W.* Prophecy against Nineveh. Nahum 1. 1-10.  
*Th.* The stormy sea. Psa. 107. 23-30.  
*F.* The watchman. Ezek. 33. 1-11.  
*S.* The disobedient prophet. 1 Kings 13. 11-24.  
*S.* The all-seeing God. Psa. 139. 1-12.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 111, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 There's a gentle voice within calls away.
- No. 116, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Lord, in the strength of grace.
- No. 123, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 I am coming to the cross.

DOMINION HYMNAL  
 Hymns, Nos. 98, 104, 106.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

##### 1. Hiding in the Ship, v. 1-10.

To what city did Jehovah send Jonah?

What were the characteristics of the people of Nineveh?

In what direction did Jonah flee?

What force did God use to arrest him?

Does God now control storms and calms and the other forces of nature?

Why did Jonah think that he could be rid of the presence of Jehovah in Tarsishish?

How was Jonah engaged during this storm?

Who awakened him?

Why did he not at once state his opinion about the cause of the storm?

What course did the idolatrous sailors take to ascertain who was the sinner?

What questions did they ask?

What was Jonah's reply?

Why were the men now more fearful than before?

To what three facts, indicative of Jehovah's power, did Jonah allude in his answer?

##### 2. Cast into the Sea, v. 11-17.

Why did the sailors ask Jonah what should be done with him?

Why did they not wish to do any thing to him?

What sign still warned them that something must be done?

What did he tell them to do?

Did they at once agree to do it?

What effort did they make to avoid casting him into the sea?

What prayer did they offer when they felt compelled to do it?

What happened immediately after they had done it?

What effect had this on the sailors?

What became of Jonah?

How long did he remain in this miraculous place of confinement?

#### Practical Teachings.

Find intimations in this lesson that—

1. All the forces of nature are directed by God.
2. Worldly-minded men are often horrified by the inconsistencies of Christian people.
3. The guilty conscience needs no accuser.
4. God spares the prayerful penitent.
5. When God's law is broken it is useless to run.

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Draw a sketch-map of the Mediterranean Sea and the surrounding countries, and mark upon it the relative position of Joppa, Nineveh, and Tarshish.
2. Worldly and read another biblical account of a mighty tempest in this same sea.
3. Find the account of a man of unworthy character who was prophetically endowed.
4. Find a use made by Jesus Christ of this miraculous preservation of Jonah.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **Hiding in the Ship**, v. 1-10.  
Who received a message from the Lord?  
What was Jonah hidden to do?  
Where did he determine to go instead?  
How did he propose to go to Tarshish?  
How did the Lord interfere with Jonah's plans?  
What did the sailors in their fear do?  
Where was Jonah at this time?  
Who aroused him, and what was said to him?  
What did the sailors propose among themselves?  
Upon whom did the lot fall?  
What four questions did they ask Jonah?  
What did he answer?  
What did the men then ask him?  
Why were they afraid?  
What is God's message to each of us? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

2. **Cast into the Sea**, v. 11-17.  
What did the sailors ask?  
What was Jonah's reply?  
How did the men try to save Jonah from his fate?  
What then was their prayer?  
What did they do with Jonah?  
What was the result?  
What did the sailors at once do?  
Where did Jonah go?  
How long was he in that strange prison?

What did Jesus say about Jonah and the whale? (Matt. 12. 40.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That men cannot hide from God?
2. That disobedience brings trouble?
3. That disobedience brings punishment?

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find an account given in the New Testament of a shipwreck on this same sea.

Find other miracles where God made use of dumb animals in a miraculous way.

Find a comparison made by our Lord to Jonah.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Jonah? **A prophet in Israel.**

To what wicked city did the Lord send him to preach? **To Nineveh.**

What was Jonah unwilling to do? **To obey the Lord.**

Where did he go? **To Tarshish.**

What came during the voyage? **A great storm.**

To whom did the heathen sailors pray for help? **To their gods.**

What was Jonah doing? **He was asleep.**

What did the captain tell him to do? **To rise and pray to his God.**

What did the sailors think the storm was sent for? **To punish some one.**

When they cast lots to find who was the guilty one, upon whom did the lot fall? **Upon Jonah.**

What did Jonah tell them to do? **To throw him into the sea.**

What did they try hard to do? **To bring the ship to land.**

When they could not, what did they do? **They threw Jonah into the sea.**

What had the Lord prepared? **A fish to swallow Jonah.**

How long did he stay inside the fish? **Three days and three nights.**

What is always unsafe? **To disobey the Lord.**

#### Words With Little People.

WHAT I WANT looks very easy and pleasant.

WHAT GOD WANTS sometimes looks very hard and unpleasant. Can a Christian child stop to think of that? No; he must remember that Jesus is ready to help, and that the only really hard things come from trying to run away from God and duty.

#### Whisper Motto.

"Jesus will help if you try."

### General Statement.

At some time when the house of Jehu was upon the throne of Israel arose a prophet in Galilee named Jonah. We know not the precise date of his appearance, but it was at an age when Nineveh was arising as a dark shadow on the horizon of the Oriental world, and threatening to overwhelm all the smaller kingdoms. Jonah with quick eye probably foresaw the danger that was threatening in the growth of this world-empire, and as a loyal son of Abraham felt a hatred of its advancing power. What was his feeling, then, when he felt within him a call to go and preach to this hated people! In his heart he would rather let Nineveh perish in her crimes than receive from his lips a warning which might lead her to repentance. He determined to fly to the ends of the earth, to far-away Tarshish in the west, and let Nineveh die unwarned. We see him hasten to Joppa, and on board the vessel which will bear him over the sea. His conscience troubles him; but worn out with weariness of mind he falls asleep, while a storm rages overhead. He is aroused to find that even the heathen pray; that in savage bosoms there are longings for spiritual communings; that Gentiles' hearts are yet gentle, and even when they know that an Israelite has brought them into trouble they are unwilling to save their lives by sacrificing his own. Touched with a true repentance, with a wider sympathy than he has ever felt before, Jonah offers himself to death that the ship's company may be saved. Still the mariners hesitate; they redouble their labors; they offer prayers to the God of heaven; they show the spirit of true citizens in the Kingdom of God, larger than the churches on earth. At last they do as the prophet bids them, and cast him, as they expect, to death by the waves. But now Jonah is just in the condition of heart to be a preacher of righteousness, for he has shown himself ready to die for his fellow-men. He who has seen the worth of a soul is the man to reach souls. It is as easy for God to save Jonah out of the fish's belly as it was to surround his ship with the tempest. So he is called forth from his living grave to be anew commissioned as God's messenger.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. The word of the Lord.** A divine message imprinting itself upon the inner consciousness of one who was living in fellowship with God, and so clear that it could not be mistaken. **Jonah the son of Amittai.** According to 2 Kings 14, 25, he was born in Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zebulun, near Nazareth, and hence was one of the few prophets who came out of Galilee. It is uncertain when he lived, but probably between 880 and 770 B. C., when Israel was rising from the Syrian oppression, and while Assyria was the dominant state in the Eastern world. A Jewish tradition makes Jonah the son of the widow of Zarephath, restored to life by Elijah's prayer, and afterward Elijah's servant.

**2. Arise, go.** Perhaps this command to go and preach to a Gentile city was given because the work in Israel resulted in comparative failure, and was intended to show the willingness of the Gentile world to hear the Gospel. (1) *Duty is not always easy. Nineveh, that great city.* Nineveh was a combination of four cities surrounded by a common wall ninety miles long. It stood on the Tigris or Hiddekel River, and was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. It was founded at a very early date, but did not become prominent until 1270 B. C. From about this time until its fall, 625 B. C., it was the most important city in the East. **Cry against it.** He was to declare its sin and forewarn of its punishment. (2) *God's servants should always "cry out" against wickedness. Their wickedness is come up.* The sculptures on the walls of Nineveh bear witness to the pride, the drunkenness, the lust and cruelty of

its people; and the prophecy of Nahum also declares their crimes. **Before me.** This expression indicates that the wickedness of the city was like a cry ascending to God's ear, or calling his attention.

(3) *Great cities are often the homes of great sins.*  
(4) *God's warning is given not in wrath, but in mercy.*

**3. But Jonah rose up to flee.** It was not fear that made Jonah flee. Chap. 4, 2, shows us the true reason. He knew that the warning was given to Nineveh that the city might repent and be saved. But he saw in Nineveh the enemy of his own country, the power looming up as the future destroyer of Israel, and he desired not its repentance and pardon, but its utter destruction. He probably regarded Jehovah as having somewhat less power in Tarshish than in Israel. **Tarshish.** In all probability, Tartessus, a Phœnician city in the south of Spain; but the word was also used generally for the far west, as Ophir was for the far east. **From the presence of the Lord.** Literally, "from the face of Jehovah;" that is, as a servant standing in his presence, as a prophet was supposed to be. **To Joppa.** In all ages the principal sea-port of Palestine, on the Mediterranean. It was at that time a heathen city, and never was inhabited by the Israelites. Now called *Yafa*, or *Jaffa*. **Paid the fare.** He paid the fare, but never reached his destination. (5) *Money spent in opposition to God's will is generally thrown away.*

**4. But the Lord sent.** God had his eye upon the disobedient prophet, as he has it upon his unfaithful followers still; and God showed that he

was as mighty on the sea as on the land. **There was a mighty tempest.** Certain old commentators thought that this storm showed itself as miraculous by following the ship and leaving the rest of the sea calm. But all the forces of nature are under God's immediate control (Psa. 104. 3). **The ship was like to be broken.** Literally, "the ship thought to be broken;" that is, all on board thought it would be destroyed.

**5. Cried every man unto his god.** Every man on board had some god; none of them were atheists or agnostics. (6) *The most mistaken idea of God is far better than that of the fool, that there is no God.* **Cast forth the wares.** The heaviest burden in that vessel was the man who was disobeying his God. **Jonah was gone down.** What a contrast. The heathen living up to their knowledge and belief, seeking God; and the prophet with clear conviction of duty, prayerless and insensible. He could not pray because he was living contrary to his conscience. **Was fast asleep.** Probably he had wrestled with his remorse until he was physically worn out and had fallen asleep from exhaustion. There is a sleep which comes not from a conscience at peace. (7) *See in Jonah a picture of the man who resists the call of the Spirit and is in peril, but unconscious of it.*

**6. The ship-master came to him.** The contrast in Jonah's conduct with all the rest on board attracted his attention, and Jonah's appearance when he came on board may have shown his anxiety. **Said unto him.** The follower of God is reminded of his duty by a heathen. **What meanest thou?** In Eph. 5. 14, the apostle Paul paraphrases this call, and bids men awake from the sleep of sin. (8) *How often unfaithful Christians need to be aroused from spiritual lethargy.* **Call upon thy God.** There was in the nations around Israel some dim idea that the God of the Israelites was a being of remarkable power.

**7. Let us cast lots.** This was a common custom in ancient times, and was probably suggested on this occasion because the storm was manifestly an indication of divine displeasure. **For whose cause.** While it is true that all suffering is caused by sin, yet we cannot say that any specific suffering is caused by any specific sin. In Jonah's case, however, there was a divine leading and a divine purpose. **They cast lots.** From the word in the original it may be inferred that the manner of casting lots was by throwing some objects on the ground. "The use of the lot, though frequently mentioned and sanctioned in the Old Testament, and employed, even after the ascension, in the choice of an apostle to fill the place of Judas, never occurs in the Bible after the day of Pentecost."—*Peroune*.

**8, 9. Tell us . . . for whose cause.** Questions from every quarter poured in upon the affrighted prophet, and smote his awakening conscience. #

**am a Hebrew.** This was the name by which the Israelites were known to foreigners, and only used when their relation to foreigners is referred to. The origin and meaning of the word are uncertain. Some think it means a descendant of Eber (Gen. 10. 21); others, "a crosser-over," referring to the original migration of Abraham from beyond the Euphrates. **I fear the Lord.** He did not mean that he was faithful to God, but that in religion he was a worshiper of Jehovah. **Which hath made the sea.** Other nations considered their gods as local, having power only in their own land, or reigning over a single department of nature; the Israelites alone recognized Jehovah as the universal ruler.

**10. Then were the men exceedingly afraid.** They had felt a vague fear and a suspicion that there was a supernatural element in the storm. Now they began to see clearly that this worshiper of Jehovah was the cause of their trouble. **Why hast thou done this?** An exclamation of surprise at his conduct in endeavoring to flee from the power of such an almighty God. **The men knew.** The narrator does not state the particulars, but leads us to infer that in the questioning to which Jonah was subjected he revealed the whole story of his flight.

**11. What shall we do unto thee?** It seems strange that they should ask Jonah, and equally strange that he should answer them as he did. But he was a prophet under divine influence, and they desired not his opinion as a man, but his counsel as a messenger of God. **The sea wrought.** Revised Version, "the sea grew more and more tempestuous," showing more clearly that the storm was for some definite reason.

**12. Take me up, and cast me forth.** He spoke not as an individual, but as a prophet, and gave with his command a prophecy of deliverance. Why did he not cast himself into the sea? Probably because throughout the scene he acted and spoke under a divine direction. **For my sake.** His whole conduct now stood before him in its true light, and he saw as only a prophet could see the wickedness of his conduct. He was ready to die to save even heathen; and in this we see how his thoughts had changed. Only a little while before he had been unwilling to preach that a heathen city might be saved; now he will suffer death for a ship-load of Gentiles. This discipline fits him to be a preacher to Nineveh. (9) *See how God educates his workers in the spirit of love and self-sacrifice.*

**13. Nevertheless the men rowed hard.** His spirit of self-sacrifice aroused theirs, and they were ready to run any risk to save one who was so willing to die in their stead; a life so noble must be preserved if possible. **To bring it to the land.** So that they could place the prophet safely on the land, and then proceed on their voyage.

(10) *True nobility, willing to give up self for the good of men, cannot fail of recognition.*

**14. They cried unto the Lord.** As it was a servant of Jehovah whom they were about to offer as a sacrifice, they appeal to him, and not to their own gods. **Lay not upon us innocent blood.** In relation to them Jonah was innocent, and yet in their stead he must die, for neither they nor the prophet expected his deliverance. **As it pleased thee.** That is, "we are only doing as thou hast commanded," in casting Jonah into the sea.

**15, 16. They took up Jonah.** Was not this a prefiguration of One greater than Jonah, who offered himself up for a world of sinners? **The sea ceased.** At once they saw that the whole

event had been divinely directed. **Feared the Lord.** They recognized the God of Israel as the God of the world, and thus were first-fruits of Gentile faith. **Offered a sacrifice . . . and made vows.** The one on shipboard immediately; the other to be paid on their landing. So the ends of the earth, Tarshish and Nineveh, are alike prepared to receive the Gospel.

**17. A great fish.** There is no reason for supposing that this was a whale, for there have been many other sea-monsters capable of swallowing a man. This was not so great a miracle as the resurrection of Jesus, and no one who accepts that as a fact should deny the possibility of Jonah's deliverance, especially as Jesus Christ himself bore testimony to it (Matt. 12. 40).

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

The book on which we are entering is one of unique character and unique difficulties. So many of these will have to be passed over for lack of space that a word of general comment is needful. Every teacher knows the way in which the story of Jonah is used as an engine of attack upon weak or ill-instructed faith. They are wise who will ever remember that belief in God and his Son rests on far stronger foundations than the literal historicity of this extraordinary narrative. Explanations will be mentioned below which tend to diminish the prodigality of miracles usually assumed. These may be true or not—I do not wish to lay stress on them—but if the story be proved to be, say, an allegory representing the work of Israel as bearer of light to the Gentiles, no injury is done to our faith. It is commonly said that our Lord's own veracity is impugned by an allegorical interpretation. This is by no means clear. He gives his "sign" out of Scripture as it stands, appeals not to a traditional fact, but to the written record, and we are not derogating from this infallibility if we conceive him speaking of Jonah as a person in a book, as we may speak of Bunyan's characters without a thought of making them historical. We may note that once he gave another "sign," which the Jews took literally, while he meant it allegorically (John 2. 19, *sq.*). But I am not adopting the allegorical interpretation, only wishful to show that the issues at stake are not so serious as they are often thought to be. The question is one, not of the authority, but of the interpretation of Holy Scripture. And here we who firmly believe in miracles are giving up no principle whichever view we take. The most "orthodox" expositors are still divided on the question whether we have history or allegory in Hos. 1 and 3, and in Joel 1, and the same openness may be allowed here. Let us, then, endeavor to interpret the book as it stands.

We know nothing about its authorship. There is no conclusive evidence against Jonah's own

claim, but then that claim is made by others only, and without any very convincing reason. Its purpose seems to be the presentation of Israel's position toward the nations, the hardness of heart of God's people being rebuked by the Ninevites' repentance, and Jewish exclusiveness and pride exhibited in all its repulsiveness by the example of the prophet. Our Lord's use of Jonah as a sign brings out this function of the book. The Jew must rise regenerated from the grave of his old life before he could or would take God's message to the Gentile. Even so must Judaism itself be carried in the person of its Messiah through death and resurrection before it can be transmuted into a missionary faith destined to illuminate the world.

**Verse 1. Now.** This beginning has often been supposed to indicate that the book is a fragment, but as Ezekiel and other books begin with the same word (literally, "and"), this is obviously a wrong inference. **Jonah.** "Dove," originally the expression of his parents' fondness. Comp. Sol. Song 2. 14. We have short notice of the prophet in 2 Kings 4. 25, which places him in the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II., Jehu's great-grandson (B. C. 825-784). Jonah prophesied the extension of Israel from Hamath and Damascus down to the southern end of the Dead Sea; a temporary triumph only, for Amos (6. 14) was soon predicting the devastations of Tiglath-pileser over that very territory in less than fifty years. Jonah came from Gath-hepher, in Zebulun (Josh. 12. 17). **Amittai.** "A man of truth," identified by Kalisch with the name Matthew. Jewish tradition makes Jonah the son of the widow of Zarephath, on the strength of her speaking of "truth" to Elijah after the miracle!

**2. Nineveh.** See next lesson. The reign of Jeroboam was exactly the time when such a mission was most natural. Influences so antagonistic as Ahab and Elisha had combined to break down the barrier between Israel and the nations, and Jeroboam's triumphs had invested the kingdom with a

prestige such as it enjoyed under the house of Omri. An embassy of some kind to Nineveh is actually mentioned by Jonah's probable contemporary (Hos. 5, 13). **Cry.** The message of chap. 3. 4. **Wickedness.** Comp. Gen. 4, 10; 18, 20, *sq.*; Rev. 18, 5. The unspeakable wickedness of the Assyrians is the burden of Nahum's prophecy. We can convict them best out of their own mouths. Seldom indeed have human beings gloried in such heartless and abandoned cruelty as the Assyrian records attest to us still.

**3. Rose.** As Jehovah bade him, but only to disobey. The word connotes an earnest and determined effect. **Tarshish.** The Phœnician Tar-tessus in southern Spain, the western limit of the known world. **From the presence.** A prophet "stood," like Elijah (1 Kings 17, 1, and note), "in the presence of Jehovah." To abandon his mission was to flee from the Presence. That a moral severance is intended is shown most forcibly by Gen. 4, 16. We can see that the inward fire of prophecy (comp. Amos 3, 8; Jer. 20, 7-9; 1 Cor. 9, 16) burnt so fiercely that he could only seek relief by flight from the Holy Land, by seeking the uttermost parts of the abhorred sea. He could not even take the natural route to Tarshish. The road to Zidon, the most suitable port, went northward, and took him nearer to Nineveh. The psychology is profoundly true to nature. Most of us know what it is to attempt to shirk a duty which conscience enforces by rearing barriers of circumstances that may make the duty impossible. The lessons of Jonah's flight are splendidly portrayed in Psalm 139. There remains the question *why* he fled. His own explanation (4, 2) is much like that of the unprofitable servant (Matt. 25, 24), an afterthought giving only part of the answer. His main motive doubtless was natural shrinking from the tremendous task of facing that vast city alone with such a message. There was mixed up with this the anticipation that after all the merciful God meant his to be a mission of mercy, and the narrow patriotism of the Israelite could not bear to be the deliverer of Israel's inevitable foe. **Down.** As usual, of a place on the coast. **Joppa.** Now Jaffa, an extremely ancient sea-port, small and very dangerous, but the only one on this coast. It was fifty miles from Jonah's home.

**4.** Comp. Psa. 107, 23-30. Note the vivid word ("hurled," margin) which describes at once the suddenness of the storm and the fact that it was, as it were, God's bolt hurled at the sinner. It is rendered "cast forth" in verses 5, 12, and 15. **Was like.** Literally "thought," the ship being personified. Kalisch's "threatened" gives the nearest English idiom.

**5. His god.** The men belonging to different nationalities. The conduct of these heathens—prayer first, then self-help—is presented for our admiration in contrast to that of the runaway

prophet. **Wares.** Comp. Acts 27, 19, 38, but whether cargo or ship's furniture is meant here we cannot say. **Was gone.** That is, had gone before the storm began. Conscience drove him into solitude, which he found apparently in the hold. **Fast asleep.** "For sorrow" (Luke 22, 45); the same question follows in St. Luke's narrative. The word describes the profound sleep of exhaustion.

**6. O sleeper?** Better, "thus sleeping." **God will.** Hebrew, "the God;" that is, the God whom he has just mentioned as worshipped by Jonah. **Think upon.** Comp. P-salm 40, 17, though the verb is different. A Being almighty and all-loving can only remember for good. Even so the dying robber prayed, "Jesus, remember me."

**7.** We may assume that Jonah, now risen again to the prophetic function he had cast away, prayed for the lives of his innocent comrades in peril. The answer came in the divine guidance of the lot, and in the clear sight of his destiny which nerved Jonah for his self-sacrifice. The unbelief in the inerrancy of the lot is seen here among pagan Shemites as firmly rooted as among their Hebrew kinsmen. Comp. Prov. 16, 33; Josh. 7; 1 Sam. 14, 36-46; Acts 1, 26. When used in simple faith we can well understand God's permitting it to declare his decision. Religiously, men were in the age of childhood, and God wrought miracles to encourage dependence on him, just as he encouraged the belief that misfortune implied sin by notable examples such as this. The suffering Messiah would raise men above the one, and the spirit of wisdom would supersede the other.

**8.** The sailors accept the verdict unhesitatingly, but even in this fearful storm must give the guilty man the utmost fairness. The case of Achan reminds us that confession was looked for after conviction by lot. **For whose.** The words are difficult, and their omission in the LXX. suggests that they may be interpolated. The best alternative is to translate with Kalisch, "thou for whose cause." In the hurried fire of questions they expect to find some clue to the cause of this judgment. One after another contributes his query in the breathless excitement, and Jonah with quiet dignity gives the answer that explains all.

**9. Hebrew.** The name always used by and to foreigners; literally, "emigrant," from beyond the Euphrates. **Heaven.** The prophet claims for Jehovah far more than the restricted divinity the heathen would concede him as God of Israel. A universal Creator was perhaps not imagined by these pagans, though the lofty monotheism of the Persians rose to this conception.

**10. Afraid.** Jonah's words showed them that Jehovah had sent the storm to punish him, and they feel themselves in the hands of a God powerful beyond all their ideas of deity. **What.** Comp. Gen. 4, 10. **Had told.** Probably in con-



tinuation of his words in verse 9. There are difficulties in this interpretation, but the alternative makes the lot and the questions alike superfluous.

**11.** As a prophet of Jehovah he can tell them how Jehovah's wrath may be appeased. The growing storm was evidence that Jonah's confession had not atoned for his sin.

**12.** The heroism of Jonah's bearing here must color our estimate of his pitiable attitude at the end of the story.

**13.** The conduct of these heathen sailors rises to its climax here in their desperate endeavor to save the life of this self-condemned man, which is a foil to the prophet's indifference to the fate of a vast city.

**14.** The continued increase of the storm is the proof that Jonah's words came from the God who sent the storm. Their reluctance is brought out by the intense earnestness of their prayer. **Lay not.** Comp. Deut. 21. 8; Matt. 27. 4. If, after all, Jonah has not been the cause of this storm, Jehovah pardons what he has seemed so clearly to command! **Hast Jone.** The full belief in a Providence that overrules all things could not be more concisely stated.

**15.** The instinctive horror of suicide explains why Jonah did not spare their scruples by casting himself into the sea.

**16.** No miracle wrought on nature could be more calculated to inspire awe than a sudden stilling of such a storm. Comp. Mark 4. 41. "Fear" is used in the same sense as verse 9, not of mere terror which would be roused during the storm and not after it, but of awe and adoration. It is futile to ask minutely how they sacrificed or what they vowed; the point of interest is that a Jewish writer records approvingly the irregular but sincere worship of heathen men.

**17. Prepared.** Like the storm, the gourd, the worm, the cast wind, this was an agent obeying God's command. Jewish writings declare that the fish was specially created in the beginning for this purpose! The means of Jonah's preservation, despite all the attention it has received from shallow skeptics, may be safely regarded as the smallest miracle in the book. Those who expound the narrative literally are divided on the question what kind of monster was meant. Some advocate the shark, which of course has often been known to swallow whole larger animals than man. There is, moreover, a well-authenticated story of a sailor's being recovered alive from the stomach of a shark after a few minutes' entombment, while the creature's young are said to be frequently carried about in this way. Others prefer the sperm whale, which (unlike other whales) can swallow a man, and (it is supposed) nourish him with the air it takes with it into the sea-depths; it is known to strike violently on the shore rocks, when it inva-

riably vomits. Further, we are told that a living man's body will withstand the action of the gastric acid until the third day! We will deal with the alternative exposition in connection with the more difficult wonder of the next lesson.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 3.** *Was Jonah's flight from duty prompted by fear, or was there a deeper motive?*

There was a "deeper motive" than fear in Jonah's flight (Jonah 4. 2). Jonah was a Hebrew, who, with a Jew's sectarian narrowness, had no love for the Gentile. With prophet's ken he saw in Nineveh a prospective destroyer of Israel, and he wished Nineveh to perish. It shocked his Hebrew notions to become a messenger of warning and mercy to the heathen city, and, rather than serve Jehovah in his way, he was willing to sacrifice the prophet's office and all that it implied.—*Edwin Post, Ph.D.*

Instantaneous obedience is always safest. Jonah stopped to consider the possible consequences of the deliverance of his message. God might repent. The over-sensitive prophet had the temerity afterward in his petulant prayer to say, "I told you so" (Jonah 4. 2). The averting of the threatened destruction placed Jonah in an equivocal position, as he thought, and discounted his prophetic character. This was the personal ground of his disobedience. There was also a racial or political ground. Jonah was so far below the "one-blood" universal-brotherhood idea that he would rather the Ninevites would perish than that they should even seem to share the prerogatives of Israel which he esteemed incommunicable. The Bible does not foster hero-worship. The faults of its noblest characters are unveiled with a relentless hand. "There is none good but one, that is God."—*Rev. Davis W. Clark, A.M.*

Not fear, though Jonah was a timid, gentle man, his name signifying "dove." It was in a spirit of rebellion that he started for Tarshish. This rebellion had its root in a natural instinct of self-preservation and his love for his country. God asked him to preach repentance in the capital of the nation which was to scourge Israel and take his people captive! He did not like the disagreeable duty. He loved his own, and refused to have any thing to do with the hammer which was to break in pieces Israel. He therefore sought to separate himself, not from God, but from the service of God, from the office of prophet.—*Rev. E. S. Tipple, Ph.D.*

Human nature instinctively shrinks from difficulty and danger; but this of itself is not sufficient to account for Jonah's conduct. It was because he believed that Jehovah, notwithstanding his threat-

enings, would of his compassion spare Nineveh that he sought release from the responsibility of his mission (chap. 4. 2). His conduct may be explained on the supposition that he highly appreciated the peculiar privileges of the Hebrew people, and feared that the Gentiles might receive mercy and the unfaithful Israelites be rejected; or, that a reproach might be cast by the heathen on the sacred Name in consequence of the averted doom.—*Rev. S. F. Upham, D.D.*

Personal fear is not mentioned in the book. Evidently Jonah anticipated that if he prophesied the Ninevites would not be destroyed. For this reason he disobeyed the Lord. What motive under this motive? Perhaps he felt that it would be humiliating to seem to prophesy falsely. Perhaps he felt it would be a reproach against his people should a foreign nation humble itself before God when Israel would not. Perhaps he felt a desire to see this nation which God might use to humble rebellious Israel destroyed. Perhaps his national antipathy was so strong that he simply desired the demolition of Nineveh. Who knows? God knows. Jonah knows. At the judgment all will know.—*A. B. Riker, D.D.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline.

#### The Prophet in Various Aspects.

##### I. DISOBEDIENT.

*Jonah rose up to flee.* v. 3.

"Warn them from me." Ezek. 33. 7.

"Whither shall I flee?" Psa. 139. 7.

##### II. HARDENED.

*Lay and was fast asleep.* v. 5.

"Let us not sleep, as do others." 1 Thess. 5. 6.

"Time to awake out of sleep." Rom. 13. 11.

##### III. AWAKENED.

*What meanest thou, O sleeper?* v. 6.

"Lighten mine eyes." Psa. 13. 6.

"Awake, thou that sleepest." Eph. 5. 14.

##### IV. CONFESSING.

*I fear the Lord.* v. 10.

"Against thee, thee only." Psa. 51. 4.

*The men knew.... he had told.* v. 11.

"Acknowledge thine iniquity." Jer. 8. 13.

##### V. SUBMISSIVE.

*Cast me forth.* v. 12.

"I opened not my mouth." Psa. 39. 9.

"Do what seemeth him good." 1 Sam. 3. 18.

### Thoughts for Young People. Lessons from the Story of Jonah.

**1.** *We should always obey God.* It matters not whether the work he gives us suits or not. Jonah's narrowness of view made him unwilling to deliver God's message, but he had to learn that God's way is the best.

**2.** *We can never escape the eyes of God.* The

sinner of Nineveh, the sailors on the sea, and the sleeping runaway prophet were all seen by the sleepless eye. And so are we.

**3.** *We should never go where we cannot pray.* The sailors' business took them out on the sea, but when they came into trouble and danger, bad as they doubtless were, they impulsively prayed. But prayer failed Jonah, because he was doing wrong. Not every place and time are suitable for a Christian to lead in vocal prayer, but no Christian has any right to be in a place where he cannot pray in his own heart.

**4.** *All men are worth saving.* Jonah, as an Israelite, despised the Ninevites and the heathen cities. He was forced by severe discipline to learn that there was goodness even in the worst of men, and that God seeks to save sinners.

**5.** *Self-sacrifice is the test of fitness to proclaim the Gospel.* When Jonah became willing to die for the sake of the heathen sailors, his objections to preaching to the heathen Ninevites vanished in thin air.

**6.** *Jonah is a type or picture of One who for our sakes willingly gave himself up to death and shame.*

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

What, Jonah go to Nineveh and cry out against it!

"God want me, little Jonah, to move on Nineveh, great in size, great in power, great in wickedness? O, I never can do that!"

"But God will move through you," says the Spirit within. "You can."

"No, I can't."

"But you must."

"Then I'll run."

And he runs across the country to Joppa. He goes down to its water-front. He looks the shipping over. Ah, here is a ship going to Tarshish. Who will look for Jonah off on the water, in that far-going ship? He embarks. The anchor is weighed. The sail is raised. The ship is away. Jonah has left the deck. He has gone down into a secluded resting-place, quiet and snug and dark. So much better than that little Jonah should throw himself against great Nineveh! The seclusion invites sleep. He closes his eyes, his last sensation that of delight in this nook of shelter where nobody will look for him. But what is that darkening the sea, and that cry also coming out of the swiftly advancing shadows? It is God's searching tempest! God's roaring wind! God's baying hounds! God's swift ministers of justice! Wanted, a man by the name of Jonah, a man that had a great opportunity, a runaway from duty, a sneaking coward!

Here they come, files of detectives, ranks of police, columns of soldiers, all moving in the long, heavy lines of rain sweeping down, driving in every-

where! Here they come, those searching winds! Here they come, the hounds on the fugitive's track, and how they bay about the frightened vessel! "Let us have him! Out with him!" is the voice of this wild uproar of sky and sea. The ship-master is alarmed. The seamen are beside themselves. They are down on their knees before their ugly, dirty gods. Rising, they pitch the cargo into the sea as if to appease and satisfy its greed. Still the uproar goes on.

Every body had been doing something, but who is this do-nothing down in the sides of the ship, this fast-asleep man, the master wonders. He roughly wakes him. This lazy-bones, let him wake up! Let him get down on his knees! Let him take himself to his prayers, for if others go to the bottom he will go too.

Somehow the opinion is set in motion that on board there must be guilt—and who is the guilty one? Does the sea roar louder than ever,—"Jonah?" They begin to cast lots to find out the sinner. Who will get the lot? What eager curiosity! They are bowing to see the result. What, that stupid sleeper the culprit? Ask him what he has done and where he belongs! Look at him! Horror is in his eyes! He shakes like a mulberry-leaf on the wind-swept hills. His knees knock and his legs refuse to hold him. We seem to hear his stammering tongue, "I am—m—m a Heb—b—rew." He fears the great God, he tells them. They ask him why he sinned. They ask, too, what shall be done unto him.

"Cast me forth into the sea!" he bids them.

No, no! They cannot do that.

To the oars, every body! Pull! Pull! All to save Jonah.

It's of no use. The sea will not be pacified. The waves tower and rage. Those baying hounds still clamor. The seamen make a prayer for forgiveness, and then, like some others, they do the thing for which they wish to be forgiven; they toss Jonah into that raging, heaving caldron. Now they are looking over the vessel's side to watch the poor fellow they pitched into the deep. He went down, but, "There he is!" some one cries. Yes; his scarred white face is up on top of that wave! But does any one see that black object swimming about the vessel? Does any one see its big, gaping mouth? Horror-struck, they turn away. When they look again, Jonah is gone.

### By Way of Illustration.

*Verses 1, 2.* Call to mind the story of the rich English merchant to whom Queen Elizabeth gave some commission of importance, and he demurred to undertake it, saying, "Please, your majesty, if I obey your behests, what will become of these affairs of mine?" And his monarch answered, "Leave those things to me; when you are em-

ployed in my service, I will take charge of your business." Surrender yourself to Christ, and he takes in hand all your affairs.—*Spurgeon.*

*Verse 3.* As you stood some stormy day upon a sea-cliff and marked the giant billow rise from the deep, to rush with foaming crest and throw itself thundering on the trembling shore, did you ever fancy that you could stay its course and hurl it back to the depths of ocean? Did you ever think you could grasp the lightning's bolt and change its path? Still more foolish his thought who fancies that he can arrest or turn aside the purpose of God, saying, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? Let us break his bonds asunder and cast away his cords from us." He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh!—*Dr. Guthrie.*

Jonah could not believe that the Lord's will concerning himself was the best thing that could come to him. "A great many Christians actually seem to think that all their Father in heaven wants is a chance to make them miserable and to take away all their blessings. A lady who had this feeling once told a friend how afraid she was to say, 'Thy will be done.' Her friend said, 'Suppose your little Charlie should come running to you and say, 'Mother, I have made up my mind to let you have your own way with me from this time forward. I am always going to obey you, and I want you to do just whatever you think best for me; I know you love me, and I am going to trust myself to your love.' Would you say to yourself, 'Now I shall have a chance to make Charlie miserable; I will take away all his pleasures, and fill his life with every hard and disagreeable thing I can find?'" 'O, no, no, no!' exclaimed the indignant mother. 'You know I would not. I would hasten to fill his life with all that was sweetest and best.' 'And are you more tender and loving than God?' asked her friend."—*Hannah Whitehall Smith.*

For men to think to excuse themselves that they do no hurt is a vain, foolish thing. The idle servant might have said, "Lord, I did no harm with my talent; I did not lay it out in rioting or drunkenness or any way to thy dishonor; I only hid it and did not improve it." Yet this was enough to condemn him. Can we call ground good ground for bearing no weeds, if it never bring forth good corn? Or do we count that servant a good servant who doth not wrong his master in his estate by theft, if he live idle all day and neglect the business his master appoints him?—*Swinnock.*

"The men feared the Lord exceedingly." Their apprehension of Jonah's God was distorted by their knowledge of heathen deities. The services of false religions are to appease the wrath of their gods. In the British Museum is a famous heathen idol with twelve hands, and in each hand is an instrument of torture. Fear and not love is the incen-

tive to worship when the gods are the work of men's hands.

*Golden Text.* Our part is obeying and trusting. God's part is to accomplish results. We speak of these two parts as we might speak of a saw in a carpenter's shop. We say at one time that the saw has been sawn asunder a log, and at another that the carpenter has done it. The saw is the instrument used, the power that uses it is the carpenter's. And so we, yielding ourselves unto God, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto him, find that he works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure; and we can say with Paul, "I labored; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

—H. W. Smith.

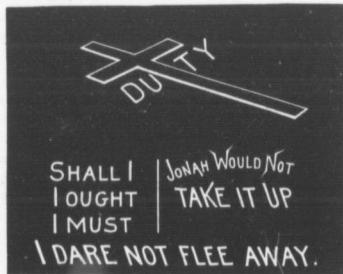
### The Teachers' Meeting.

Preliminary study of Jonah's times, circumstances, and character.... Draw a map, and trace his journey from Gath-hepher (near the Sea of Galilee) to Joppa, and thence on the Mediterranean. Draw a line eastward to represent the caravan route to Nineveh which he should have taken.... Three methods of presenting this lesson come easily to mind: it may be grouped around Jonah, around the mariners, or around the Lord.... I. *Jonah*: 1. His opportunities—an Israelite, a prophet, in fellowship with God; 2. His spirit—at first sectarian, disobedient, hardened; 3. His discipline—how he was led to appreciate the worth of Gentile souls. Or, to use a very simple analysis, view the prophet as: 1. Disobedient (verse 3); 2. Hardened (verse 5); 3. Awakened (verse 6); 4. Confessing (verse 10); 5. Submissive (verse 12).... II. *The mariners*, as types of ignorant seekers after God: 1. Praying; 2. Seeking to know the truth; 3. Kind toward the prophet; 4. Led to fear God and to worship him aright. Notice how much higher their plane at the end than at the beginning of this lesson.... III. *The Lord God*, as shown in this lesson: 1. Not of Jews only, but of Gentiles; 2. Just, and punishing sin; 3. Merciful, and sending warning; 4. Omniscient, watching men from Nineveh to the sea; 5. Almighty; 6. Actuated by love to men and desire to do them good.... Do not spend much time over the fish that swallowed Jonah; give a statement of the event, and get its meaning, but avoid profligate discussion.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 5: Calling on the gods, 610. Ver. 7: Casting lots, 463; Sailors' superstitions, 611. Ver. 16: Vows, 851.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 4172, 4173, 4175-4177, 4158-4161, 4164-4169, 1576. Ver. 3: 7403. Vers. 1-15: Poetical, 3634. Vers. 6-10: Prose, 7403-7411. Vers. 11, 12: Prose, 11790, 11783, 11785, 11787. Ver. 12: Prose, 11792.

### Blackboard.



The subject of the blackboard diagram to-day is DUTY. In presenting it to the school study up all the duties enjoined upon each one of us as church members and professing Christians. Mention special duties and missions. Ask questions to bring out the points in the lesson of to-day. Often a plain duty appears to be a cross, therefore the cross appears on the board. The Saviour said if one would be his disciple he must take up his cross and follow him. Jonah would not take up the duty which he was commanded to perform. The burden seemed too great, so he tried to flee away. Running away from duty is running into danger. A prominent minister of the Gospel felt that he was called upon to do a certain thing for God, and he reasoned out the words which are on the board, "Shall I?" Then it came to him, Yes, "I ought;" and then, "I must," for I dare not do otherwise. So he did it.

APPLICATION.—Do not neglect Christian duty.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Obeying God.*

*Introductory.* Introduce the lesson by the story of a little boy who had his first pair of skates. He learned to use them pretty well the first day, and got up early the next morning so as to have a little time for skating before going to school. He had been told not to go to the upper end of the mill-pond, because the ice was thin there. But he thought he knew best. He said to himself, "The ice looks all right; I don't think there is any danger; I'll do as I please." So he skated to the dangerous spot, broke through the ice, and got very wet and very much frightened. More than that, he was not allowed to skate again for a whole week. This was to help him remember to obey.

The lesson to-day is about a prophet who thought he would do as he pleased about obeying God. Shall I tell you the story?

*Blackboard.* Place upon the board (before the class assemblies) the outline of a city, at a distance

from the kingdom of Israel, as shown on your blackboard map. Print "Nineveh" above it. Print "Joppa" on the sea-shore, and outline a little ship on the "Great Sea."

*God Talking to Jonah* Here in Israel Jonah lived. God spoke to him one day, and said, "Go to Nineveh, and tell the people there that they must stop worshipping idols and worship me." Jonah heard what the Lord said, and began to ask questions and argue, instead of obeying. "What good will it do to preach to people who worship idols?" he said in his heart. "They will not listen to me, and very likely they will drive me out of their city—may be they will kill me."

You see that Jonah thought he knew better than the Lord what was the wise and right thing.

*Jonah Running Away from God.* Then Jonah went down to Joppa. He wanted to get away from the sound of God's voice. There he found a ship waiting. He asked where it was going. How glad he was when he found it was going right away from Nineveh! He did not want to go in that direction at all. With a light crayon line help children to follow Jonah in their minds as he goes on this journey. Have a flat crayon ready, and begin making waves as you talk about Jonah's foolishness in thinking he could hide from God.

*The Lord Following Jonah.* Did God let Jonah get away from him? No; our Father follows us and takes care of us when we are naughty as well as when we are good. He was here, on this stormy sea. He made the waves rise and threaten to destroy the little ship and all in it. Tell how the sailors prayed to their gods, and how they wanted Jonah to wake up and pray to his God too.

Ask if children think Jonah felt happy? No; he knew that God was following him! No one is ever happy in trying to run away from God.

Tell how the sailors found that Jonah was the one who was making all this trouble for them, and how at last they threw him into the sea. They did not want to do this, for they had kind hearts, but now Jonah saw his sin and was sorry, and was willing to be punished for it.

Could God follow Jonah into the deep sea? Yes; he followed him even there! Show from this how God loves his children, and is unwilling to give them up to go their own way.

We do not know much about the fish that swallowed Jonah, but we know that God took care of the prophet even in the stomach of the great fish, and that he brought him out safely when he had learned that it was better to go God's way than his own way.

*The Lesson for us.* Erase the work on the board, and with a flat crayon make two paths coming together in this way: <

In one of them, with bright crayons, make flowers, and pretty forms. In the other, something to represent stones, briars, etc. This work can be

done very rapidly as you talk. Teach that little children often stand at a point like this, looking at two ways. One looks pleasant and the other rough. Print over one, "My Way;" over the other, "God's Way." Tell that it is a trick of Satan's to make the right look difficult and the wrong pleasant. Which is the safe way?



Teach that God's way for some child-to-day may be to tell wicked people to do right. God has little preachers as well as big ones. Will you obey him, or run away, as Jonah did?

Dwell upon the peace and happiness of those who obey, and do not forget that the teaching of this lesson may some day help to decide the question of obedience for one who has heard the call, "Go, preach my Gospel."

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

I'm poor, and blind.  
Weary of earth.  
Look up.  
Tell it to Jesus.  
The Christian's hiding-place.  
Nearer, my God, to thee.  
Precious promise.  
O holy Saviour.  
I need thee every hour.  
Never alone.  
Lead, kindly Light.  
Yield not to temptation.  
The call for reapers.

#### The Lesson Catechism.

1. What great city was the prophet Jonah sent to call to repentance? **Nineveh.**
2. To what place did Jonah flee from the presence of the Lord? **Tarshish.**
3. What did God send to arrest his flight? **A great storm.**
4. How did the sailors find out on whose account the great storm was sent? **They cast lots.**
5. What did Jonah tell them to do to him? **Cast him forth into the sea.**
6. What happened when that was done? **The sea ceased from her raging.**
7. What became of Jonah? **The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.**

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

22. How is it proved that the New Testament is inspired by the Holy Spirit?

The Saviour told His apostles that they should be witnesses of Him, and promised that the Spirit should bring His words to their remembrance, and teach them things to come.

John xv. 26, 27; John xiv. 26.

About B. C. 862.]

[April 26.]

## LESSON IV. NINEVEH BROUGHT TO REPENTANCE.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. Luke 11. 82.

## Authorized Version.

Jonah 3. 1-10. [*Commit to memory verses 9, 10.*]

1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jo'nah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nin'e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jo'nah arose, and went unto Nin'e-veh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nin'e-veh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jo'nah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'e-veh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of Nin'e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nin'e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nin'e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.

9 Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

## Revised Version.

- 1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jo'nah
- 2 the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nin'e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the
- 3 preaching that I bid thee. So Jo'nah arose, and went unto Nin'e-veh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nin'e-veh was an exceed-
- 4 ing great city, of three days' journey. And Jo'nah began to enter into the city a day's
- 5 journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'e-veh shall be overthrown. And the
- 6 people of Nin'e-veh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth,
- 7 from the greatest of them even to the least of them. And the tidings reached the king of
- 8 Nin'e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with
- 9 sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he made procla-
- 10 mation and published through Nin'e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let
- 11 neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any
- 12 thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man
- 13 and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way,
- 14 and from the violence that is in their hands.
- 15 Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger,
- 16 that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way;
- 17 and God repented of the evil, which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

**TIME.**—About B. C. 862. **PLACE.**—Nineveh. **RULER.**—Possibly Jeroboam II., King of Israel. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The forgiveness of sins.

## HOME READINGS.

- M.* Nineveh brought to repentance. Jonah 3.  
*Tu.* Jonah's anger reproved. Jonah 4.  
*W.* Repent ye! Ezek. 18. 28-32.  
*Th.* Turning to God. Joel 2. 12-17.  
*F.* Abundant pardon. Isa. 55. 6-13.  
*S.* Saved by grace. Eph. 2. 1-10.  
**S.** A greater than Jonah. Luke 11. 29-36.

## LESSON HYMNS.

No. 105, New Canadian Hymnal.

Would Jesus have the sinner die?

No. 103, New Canadian Hymnal.

Lord, I despair myself to heal.

No. 107, New Canadian Hymnal.

Lord, I hear of showers of blessing.

## DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 77, 79, 80.

## QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

## 1. Jonah's Repentance, v. 1-4.

What did Jonah do when God for the second time ordered him to Nineveh?

What characteristic was shown in his conduct on both occasions?

What can you tell about Nineveh?

What did Jonah do when he arrived at this great capital city?

What was his message?

## 2. Nineveh's Repentance, v. 5-9.

What was the effect on the people of the visit of this Hebrew prophet?

In what two ways did they show their penitence?

By what ranks of society was this penitence manifested?

How did the king act?

Why were the beasts mentioned in this proclamation?

What was the leading sin of the Assyrians?

Why did the king urge a personal penitence and reform?

Were the Ninevites certain that if they repented their city would be spared?

**3. God's Repentance, v. 10.**

What was the result of this national and personal penitence?

Does God observe all men's moral changes?

What is the meaning of the statement that God repented?

Has God always mercy on penitents?

Who are greater sinners than the Ninevites?

#### Practical Teachings.

Find intimations in this lesson that—

1. Neither the enormity of the sin nor the rank of the sinner should hinder fidelity on the part of the Christian.
2. A God of justice must punish sin.
3. A God of love must hear the cry of the penitent.
4. Social distinctions do not count with God.

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Find an apostle who fell from grace and was afterward not only forgiven, but restored to his high and holy office.
2. Write down the three or four occasions on which the great empire of Nineveh came into contact with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
3. Find another case where God's threats were turned aside by timely penitence.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

**1. Jonah's Repentance, v. 1-4.**

From whom did a message again come to Jonah?

What was the message?

What journey did Jonah take?

What is said of the size of Nineveh?

What did Jonah at once do?

What did he declare to the people?

Whose message was this? (See verse 2, and chap. 1, 2.)

**2. Nineveh's Repentance, v. 5-9.**

How did the people receive Jonah's words?

How did they show their repentance?

What did the King of Nineveh do?

What did he forbid by a decree?

How were all to be clothed?

What were they commanded to do?

From what were they to turn away?

What did he say about God's mercy?

What is God's promise to every true penitent? (Isa. 55, 7.)

To whom was the repentance of Nineveh a rebuke? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

**3. God's Repentance, v. 10.**

What did God see?

What change did God make in his purpose?

Of what promise was this a fulfillment? (Jer. 18, 8.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That God hates sin?
2. That true repentance means putting away sin?
3. That God loves a penitent?

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find where a high-priest rent his garments.

Find whether or not there was ever any heathen prophet sent to warn a Gentile nation.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What came to Jonah the second time? **The word of the Lord.**

What did he tell him to do? **To go to Nineveh and preach.**

What did Jonah do this time? **He obeyed.**

What did God tell him to say? **That Nineveh would be destroyed.**

How many days would he spare the city? **Forty days.**

What did the people believe? **Jonah's words.**

What did they do? **They fasted and prayed.**

What did even the king do? **He put on sackcloth and prayed.**

What did it show to put on sackcloth? **Sorrow.**

What did all the people do? **They prayed, and left off sinning.**

Who always hears the prayer of true penitence? **The Lord.**

What did he do for the people of Nineveh? **He forgave their sins.**

Was the city destroyed? **No; he spared the city.**

What greater prophet than Jonah is there? **Jesus.**

What should we do? **Listen to him.**

#### Words With Little People.

Jonah told the people of Nineveh their sins. Called them to turn to the Lord. Promised forgiveness if they would obey.

Jesus has come to tell us of our sins. To show us the way to God. To forgive if we believe and obey.

**Whisper Motto.**

"I'll go to Jesus."

## General Statement.

While a descendant of Jehu was still on the throne of Israel a strange figure was seen in the streets of Nineveh. It was a lone, weird form, clad in a mantle of skin, and with unshorn hair and beard; a figure that would anywhere attract attention, and in the East especially would be regarded with reverence. That strange man was Jonah, rescued from the sea and the sea-monster, and now repentant of his former disobedience. He had come to Nineveh at God's command, and delivered his awful, monotonous message in a strange tongue which Assyrians could scarcely understand—a message of warning without one word of hope. Around the gardens and palaces and temples of the great city he walked with one sentence on his lips, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" That strange cry was echoed from the turreted walls, was sounded out from gigantic porticoes and colonnades, and from beside the mystic winged bulls which were the images of Assyrian worship. It struck strange fear into the hearts of the people and their king—a fear perhaps increased by the fact that revolts were rising in every province of the empire. The city believed the prophet, and bowed in the dust before God. True, they had no promise, yet they ventured to seek mercy. With fasting and sackcloth they cried to God, and their cry was heard. The Lord turned from his wrath, sheathed for a season the sword of vengeance, and spared Nineveh.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. The word of the Lord.** See notes on last lesson. **The second time.** He had heard that Voice before, but how different its sound now! Humbled, repentant, and obedient, he listens to the call of duty. (1) "God's making use of us is the best evidence of his being at peace with us."—M. Henry. (2) God does not utterly reject him who has failed once, but rather gives him a new opportunity.

**2. Go unto Nineveh.** See notes on last lesson (verse 2). **That great city.** It formed an irregular "trapezium," by the union of several cities within one great wall. But it was destroyed six hundred years before Christ so utterly that when Xenophon and his Greeks encamped upon its site they were ignorant of its existence, and it remained unknown till the present century. **The preaching that I bid thee.** He did not even know what word he was to deliver, for He who chooses his messengers will appoint their message. (3) *God's word is not to be suited to man's tastes.*

**3. So Jonah arose.** He had been fitted by experience to be God's messenger. **Now Nineveh was.** This does not necessarily imply that the record was written after the destruction of the city. **Three days' journey.** The four cities with their suburbs, within one wall, covered an area of four hundred square miles; more than three times the extent of Philadelphia, though its population may have been less than the population of that city. (4) *Jonah has more followers in flight than in obedience.*

**4. Jonah began to enter.** Not to wander at its palaces, nor to wander through its parks; not, as many travelers, to enjoy its pleasures or partake in its sins, but to rebuke its wickedness and warn of its doom. **He cried, and said.** He may have spoken in the Hebrew language, which was closely allied to the Assyrian, and would be partially understood by the Ninevites; or he may have used their own language, with a foreign ac-

cent all the more emphatic to their ears. **Yet forty days.** God gave Nineveh time because he desired not its destruction, but its repentance. (5) *Men who would be alarmed if they knew death would come in forty days are careless when they know it may come at any moment. Nineveh shall be overthrown.* If such a message should be sounded in New York or Chicago it would meet with ridicule, for ours is a time of peace. But Nineveh was the capital of an empire where revolts and wars were incessant. It was liable at any day to attack from an invading host or a rebellious province. And when at last it fell, the destruction came sudden. Some of its palaces stand in ruins half-built, with unfinished inscriptions.

**5. Believed God.** The faith of Nineveh, after but one message from but one prophet, without a single promise, shines out in strong contrast with the unbelief of Israel after many warnings and wonders; and in still stronger contrast with the unbelief of those to whom "a Greater than Jonah" speaks in His word and through His Spirit. (6) *How much greater reason have we to believe God's message than the people of Nineveh had! Proclaimed a fast.* The Assyrian revelers, greatly addicted to animal pleasures, abstain from feasting and even from food, thus showing the humiliation of their souls before God. (7) *The true fast is that when the heart is too hungry for spiritual food to care for earthly dainties. Put on sackcloth.* A rough garment of dark color made from goat's hair, and irritating to the skin, worn during seasons of mourning. (8) *True repentance will always be evidenced by fruits. From the greatest.* It would seem that, as in most great reforms, the people led the way and the rulers followed. (9) *Social distinctions do not count before God.*

**6. The king of Nineveh.** His name is uncertain. Expositors have conjectured that it was Pul, Adrammelech, or Sardanapalus; but Geikie suggests Assurnirar, who reigned from 754 to 746



B. C. For fifty years about this time the Assyrian empire was "a wide sea of revolt." **He arose from his throne.** Fortunate is that nation whose rulers set an example of faith, fear of God, and repentance. (10) *The greatest of monarchs may well sit in the dust before the great God.*

**7. By the decree.** The word in the original is peculiar, and used in the later epochs only, of an order not by a subordinate ruler, but by the "great King" himself. **The king and his nobles.** We find that the nobles were associated with the king in Oriental legislation, as in Dan. 6, 7, 17. (11) *Leaders in society and politics should be leaders in religion.* **Manner beast.** Food was withheld from beasts that their cries of hunger and thirst might add to the general tokens of grief.

**8. Let man and beast be covered.** As when a Persian general was slain all his soldiers, with their horses and mules, were shorn; as in Alexander the Great's army, the beasts as well as the men were placed in mourning for his friend Hephæstion; and as the horses wore sable coverings at General Grant's funeral. **Cry mightily unto God.** These words are to be restricted to "man;" but sin brings suffering to the lower creatures no less than to man. **Turn every one from his evil way.** Here was a true repentance; confession, sorrow, and renunciation of sin; turning to God and earnest prayer. Fasting and sackcloth were the tokens, reformation the outward work, and sorrow the inward feeling. A repentance that turns from sin without a tear may be genuine; a repentance that weeps over sin, but does not renounce it,

is utterly vain. **The violence.** Ambition or just for power was the peculiar crime of Nineveh, destined later to bring about its destruction.

**9. Who can tell.** They had received no promise that God would relent from his fierce wrath and spare their city. Their only hope was that Jehovah might possess the attribute of mercy. The truth that "God is love" was not yet revealed. (12) *Let us rejoice that what they hoped, that we know.*

**10. God saw their works.** He saw their sorrow as he had seen their sin. (13) *Let us be thankful that he who marks iniquity marks also the turning from it.* **God repented.** "To repent" is not "to be sorry," merely, but "to turn," or "to change." God's promise is always conditioned upon man's conduct; and when men change from sin to godliness, then God changes from wrath to mercy. **That he had said that he would do.** What he had said was a truthful statement of what he would do in the condition of affairs then existing. When the condition was altered, the purpose of God was altered with it. **He did it not.** The penalty was averted, and Nineveh was granted a longer lease of life. But about one hundred and fifty years after this the cup of its crimes was filled once more, and there was no repentance. The combined armies of the Medes and Babylonians destroyed the city, and Nineveh became a perpetual desolation. (14) *"That Nineveh was converted is a wonder; it is a wonder if we are not converted."*—Kleinert. (15) *Lumiliation unaccompanied by lasting reform is not availing.*

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

The repentance of Nineveh is a stupendous miracle in itself, but the difficulty lies not in the miracle, but in the absolute silence of Scripture and of external records upon a triumph of religion beside which Elijah's triumph on Carmel sinks into insignificance. Here lies the strength of the allegorical exposition, which I will sketch, without pronouncing either for or against it. The historical prophet of Jeroboam's reign is selected to represent Israel partly because of the symbolism of his name, "Dove the son of Truthful." Comp. Hos. 7, 11; 11, 11, etc. Israel fled from his mission and launched upon the sea of nations, seeking to be like them. The storm of the great world-powers swept upon them, and the gods of the nations were powerless (Isa. 36, 18, *sq.*). Israel slept while the nations struggled (Isa. 29, 10), and was at last cast into the deep. The image of the sea-monster describes the captivity in Jer. 51, 34 (comp. Isa. 27, 1), and that of his disgorging comes in verse 44. Moreover, Hosea (6, 2, *sq.*) describes the brevity of the judgment by fixing "the third day" for deliverance. Nineveh becomes the symbol of the Gentile world, just as Babylon is used

by St. John; and the repentance of the Gentiles, prophetically anticipated by the author from partial signs in his own day, becomes a warning to impenitent Israel. Dr. Wright—from whose interesting study in *Biblical Essays* this summary is taken—goes on to identify the "gourd" with the brief hopes centered on Zerubbabel, the heir of David. Comp. Isa. 11, 1, etc. The jealousy of the Jews toward the Gentiles is strikingly illustrated by the parable of the prodigal son, which ends, like "Jonah," with God's expostulation, without a word being said in reply. Our Lord's words in Luke 11, 30, become a support to this theory when we remember that on the literal interpretation Jonah's deliverance could not have been a "sign" to the Ninevites, for they could only learn of it from his own lips, and that would be no credential to an unbeliever. Finally, since what was written of Israel was constantly fulfilled in Israel's Head, the appropriateness of the Jonah story as a type is greatly enhanced.

**Verse 1.** Israel (on the allegorical theory), after "singing the song of Jehovah in a strange land," is restored to his prophetic office among the nations.

It has been strikingly observed that God sought no other instrument for Jonah's work. A duty neglected remains undone!

**2. Compare the commission in chap. 1, which Kalisch perhaps rightly regards as vaguer and narrower in range.**

**3. Was.** It is hard to resist the inference that the city was no more when this was written (though this is not conclusive). It was in ruins before the beginning of the fourth century B. C.; how much before we do not know. **Great unto God** (margin). Comp. Gen. 23. 6; Acts 7. 20, and many other passages. What was great in God's eyes might well be the worthy object of a prophet's interest. **Three days'.** It seems clear that this is to be understood in the same way as "a day's journey" in verse 4. It therefore does not help us to find that the circumference of the square of towns supposed to be included was fifty-five miles; one of these towns, Khorsabad, was founded by Sargon a century after Jonah. It is best to take it as an ideal description. A city sixty miles in diameter would contain four times the area of London.

**4. Begun.** Apparently along the chief street toward the center. **Said.** Perhaps these words only, whose simplicity and repetition would make them terribly impressive to the Oriental mind. The terrible denunciations of Isaiah, Nahum, and other prophets answer to this brief and comprehensive woe. **Forty.** A symbolic number. The respite was itself a suggestion that time was given for repentance. **Overthrown.** The word is one appropriated to the destruction of Sodom. The conception of the solitary prophet entering the proud and cruel city with the message that in forty days all that grandeur would lie in the dust and all that busy life be still is one of the sublimest in literature.

**5. Believed in God** (so read). This must mean that they were turned to Jehovah. The religion of Assyria was utterly polytheistic. The Assyrian records before and after Jeroboam's time show no variation in their devotion to their well-peopled pantheon; if the repentance be historical it must have been very brief. Apart from this lack of evidence the event, though wonderful enough, is not without parallels on a small scale. The description is ideal and climactic; the movement is spontaneous, starts among the masses with the usual demonstrations of mourning, reaches the palace, and brings about an edict of the utmost stringency, enforced and exemplified by the monarch himself. **Greatest.** Either "highest" or "oldest."

**6. The spontaneity of the humiliation comes out most forcibly here.** The news reaches the king toward the end of Jonah's single day of preaching. He first yields personally to the overwhelming impulse, and then calls his people to prayer, encour-

aging them with the gleam of hope he himself had conceived. **King.** Unnamed, and not to be identified. **Robe.** Layard describes the gorgeous royal robe from the Assyrian bass-reliefs. The clause is very much like Ezek 26. 16.

**7. And his nobles.** Associated here by the writer to add emphasis. Assyrian despots scorned to place inferior beings on a footing with themselves. **Beast.** That is, beasts of burden, covered with coarse sackcloth instead of gorgeous trappings; they might seem to add their mute appeal to the cry of the penitent city. The solidarity of man and beast appear again in the last words of the book.

**8. Let them cry.** Joel 1. 18, 20, is not close enough to warrant our including the beasts in the "them," as Keil does. The purely moral character of this reformation is very striking; the rabbis themselves commented on the fact that God looked upon their reform and not on their sackcloth. **Violence.** The crying sin of Nineveh.

**Hands.** Comp. Psa. 7. 3.

**9.** This seems to prove that Jonah did not go beyond the message of verse 4. The king hopes for mercy simply because of the days of grace. Only true penitence could catch at the hope thus dimly promised.

**10. Repented.** As often noted, God's "repenting" of a promised blessing or a threatened doom is only the reflection of a corresponding change in man. His own purposes change not, and man's conduct is the determining factor which is foreseen by his omniscience. The great lesson of repentance, one of the central objects of the book, is thus enforced by an example in action of God's words to Jeremiah (18. 8).

### The Lesson Council.

#### Question 4. In what sense does God repent?

Draw two parallel lines. Write on one, "God's immutable purpose to punish the impenitent;" on the other, "God's immutable purpose to forgive the penitent." The Ninevites were standing upon the first line. The wrath of God was revealed against them. His face was against them. To them he was a consuming fire. But on the preaching of Jonah they moved over to the line marked, "God's immutable purpose to forgive the penitent." Whereupon the angry God smiled on the great sackcloth city. Where was the change? In God? Never! His double purposes were more securely riveted by his justice and truth than iron rails. Nineveh repented. It is a mere accommodation of speech to say God did so.—*Rev. David W. Clark, A.M.*

The destruction of Nineveh was conditional, the condition being implied in the warning. Had God intended to destroy the city anyhow, he would have given no warning. The Ninevites were to be

destroyed if they did not repent. But when they did repent they were under another class of relations, namely, the promises of forgiveness. When, therefore, it is said that "God repented," reference is not to a change of counsel, but of act. He held back from Nineveh what would have happened to the city had the people not turned to the Lord.—*Rev. E. S. Tipple, Ph.D.*

God is immutable in his nature, in his purposes, in his promises, and in his threatenings. But this does not imply that he may not change his dispensation toward men. Indeed, the unchangeableness of God itself requires that his dealings with his creatures should so vary as to correspond with the changes in the moral agents who are the subjects of his government. The threatenings against Nineveh were conditional in intention. So Jonah must have understood his commission; and so the Ninevites understood it, for they repented, "turning every one from his evil way;" and God "repented"—that is, changed his administration toward them. When they forsook their sins, he forsook his wrath.—*Rev. S. F. Upham, D.D.*

God is immutable. Repentance, in the last analysis, is a change of mind. How can God repent? An immutable moral being must necessarily change his mind toward mutable moral beings at every change of moral condition in them. Toward a sinner defiant God is invariably retributive. Toward a sinner penitent God is invariably complacent. When a defiant sinner repents, a great change takes place, which, because of God's immutability, requires a change of his attitude toward the sinner. To thus change with the volitional change of the creature is the only sense in which the Creator can be said to repent. Nineveh on its knees in sackcloth and ashes diffred from proud, idolatrous, voluptuous Nineveh. Against the latter God was wrathful; against the former, merciful. "And God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."—*A. B. Riker, D.D.*

In the sense that repentance is "conviction of sin and sorrow for it" God never repents (Num. 23. 19; Jas. 1. 17). Repentance some-times signifies a change of mind or purpose. "God repents" is a form of speech used to indicate that he modifies his action toward men for reasons growing out of man's acts as a free-will agent. Comp. Gen. 6. 7; Exod. 32. 14; 1 Sam. 15. 11, 35; Jer. 15. 6; 18. 7, 8. As finite creatures we can conceive and speak of the personality of the Infinite from the human stand-point only; hence, such expressions as "God repents." The threatened destruction of the Ninevites was conditioned on their failure to repent within forty days. Because Nineveh repented God did not carry out his conditional intention to destroy it.—*Edwin Post, Ph.D.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline.

### The Way of Salvation.

#### I. WARNED OF GOD.

1. *Go...and preach.* v. 2.  
"Into all the world." Mark. 16. 15.
2. *Yet forty days.* v. 4.  
"Now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6. 2.

#### II. BELIEVING THE WORD.

1. *So the people believed.* v. 5.  
"He that believeth...saved." Mark 16. 16.
2. *Greatest...even to the least.* v. 5.  
"Not willing...any should perish." 2 Pet. 3. 9.

#### III. CONFESSING SIN.

1. *Proclaimed a fast.* v. 5.  
"The fast that I have chosen." Isa. 58. 6.
2. *Put on sackcloth.* v. 5.  
"Repent in dust and ashes." Job 42. 6.

#### IV. TURNING FROM SIN.

1. *Turn every one from his evil way.* v. 8.  
"Cease...evil, learn to do well." Isa. 1. 16, 17.
2. *The violence...in their hand.* v. 8.  
"Put off...the old man." Eph. 4. 22, 23.

#### V. SEEKING GOD.

1. *Cry mightily unto God.*  
"Seek me, and find me." Jer. 29. 13.
2. *If God will repent.* v. 9.  
"He hath torn, and he will heal." Hos. 6. 1.

#### VI. SAVED.

1. *God saw.* v. 10.  
"His eyes behold" Psa. 11. 4.
2. *He did it not.* v. 10.  
"His compassions fail not." Lam. 3. 22.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### Lessons from Jonah's Preaching.

1. *God speaks to men through men.* Those who have themselves found mercy can address their fellow-sinners with all human sympathy (verse 1).
2. *The preacher must deliver the message as God gives it, not smoothing over its sternness, not toning down its truth* (verses 2, 3).
3. *There is power in the truth of God, when earnestly preached, to reach the consciences of men* (verses 4, 5).
4. *Do right.* The best effect of preaching is when men do not compliment the preacher, but follow his counsels (verses 5-8).
5. *True repentance is that which results in forsaking sin and turning to God* (verses 8, 9).
6. *God never rejects those who cast themselves upon his mercy* (verse 10).

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

And here comes Jonah!

Just out of the sea, may be. I don't know that his clothes are dry. His hair still may be dripping with

the salt water. He is ready for that mission to Nineveh though. He has heard the word of the Lord. No running away. No skulking now.

Bound for Nineveh!

The way is long, the way is rough. There are places of ease to tempt and places of difficulty to affright. Jonah, though, heads only one way, toward Nineveh. He is travel-stained. His clothes are ragged. His face is tanned. The light of a grand mission is in his eyes. They sparkle with the enthusiasm of this secret, high endeavor. He presses on, and, lo, at last Nineveh! How it rises and towers before him! Such walls, such gates, such battlements! Immense Nineveh! This "great city of three days' journey!" And this solitary, sore, much-traveled pilgrim coming to humiliate it! Coming to denounce its sins! Coming to bow it to the dust! Coming to say that in forty days great Nineveh shall be humbled, thrown down, a ruin!

"Presumptuous! A fool's folly!" says one.

Nineveh, do you see this strange man stalking through the haughty gate? Do you hear at last his shrill, piercing cry, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown?" Nineveh may laugh at the invading force, but, O! do you not see its vanguard, its rear-guard, its great, glorious center—an immense army moving through the air, horsemen numberless, great war-chariots riding on, rank upon rank of angels? Do you not catch the rumbling of wheels, the shouts of warriors? Nineveh sees nothing but this single lunatic; hears only his monotonous, crazy threat. Jonah goes on. Morning, noon, and night he is the preacher with this one sermon, the prophet with this one solemn burden, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

"Ha-ha! There he is, that crazy foreigner!" people may have said, watching him from their doors.

The hooting crowd jostles him. The Bœchanalian mockers laugh. Above the clamor echoes that piercing cry, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" It is his last utterance ere he throws himself down anywhere for sleep at night; it is the first cry with which he breaks the morning stillness and travels on.

At last there is a conscience awed, struck, smitten hard. A second soul begins to feel alarm. The consternation spreads. It is an earthquake heaving farther and farther; a fire running across a prairie; a tornado leveling stoutest obstacles. Such terror! It is owing to Jonah, and, above all, to Jonah's allies. They are making an impression on Nineveh, stirring its vast, careless life down to its lowest, sinful dregs. That wind of dread blowing so hard penetrates the very palace of the king. It reaches him on his throne, topples him over, makes him call for sackcloth, and forces him to adopt an ash-heap as his throne. Hark! The trumpets are blowing! Hear the king's heralds! No food shall be eaten!

No water shall be drunken! Sackcloth on every thing that has life! What a scene in Nineveh! Not only their drivers, but the camels are draped in black. Not only the charioteers, but the great, lumbering chariots go in sackcloth. All over the city there is a crying unto God. Feasts are forsaken. Idols are abandoned. Wine and gluttony and harlotry are without their devotees. Nineveh is down at Jonah's feet, down before One greater, for the mighty God has humbled Nineveh.

### By Way of Illustration.

"Go unto Nineveh." "The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lonely pine on the mountain-top waves its somber boughs, and cries, 'Thou art my sun.' And the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue and whispers, 'Thou art my sun.' So God is not for the favored few, but for the universe of life; and there is no creature so low or so far removed that he may not say, 'My Father, thou art mine.'"—*Beecher*.

Christians receive illumination, not for each other's enjoyment, but to give light unto the world. Suppose on a dark, stormy night the light-house keeper should say, "I am instructed to take care of this light," and should put up the shutters and hang curtains over all the cracks to keep out every breath of air. The light is safe, and it illumines the little room in which it burns; but on the sea it is dark, and lives are going out in that darkness for the want of that light. Christians are God's light-houses, and he says to them, "Shine out for the ignorant and neglected every-where. Your chief business on earth is to reflect God's truth into the souls of men."

Verse 4. Rowland Hill said, "Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast. When I first came into this part of the country I was walking on yonder hill and saw a gravel-pit fall in and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help so loud that I was heard in the town below, at a mile's distance. Help came and rescued two of the sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast then. But when I see eternal destruction ready to fall on poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrevocably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, I am called an enthusiast."

Verses 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. "In the court of law, if a man be called as a witness, no sooner is his name mentioned than he begins to force his way up to the witness-box. Should any one ask, 'Who are you? Why are you pushing through here?' it would be a sufficient answer to say, 'My name was called.' So, make way, ye-doubts and fears; make way, ye powers of evil; Christ calls the sinner. Sinner, come; for it is written, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'"—*Spurgeon*.

Let every one turn from his evil way. "If a man say, 'By the grace of God, I will forsake my sin and do his will,' that is repentance—a turning right about. It implies that a man who has been walking in one direction has not only faced about, but is actually walking in an exactly contrary direction. 'Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?' A man may have little feeling or much feeling; but if he does not turn away from sin, God will not have mercy on him."—Moody.

Forgiveness followed repentance. "You never saw a woman sewing without a needle. She would make poor speed if she only sewed with the thread. So, I think, when we are dealing with sinners, we must always put in the needle of the law first; for the fact is, they are sleeping sound, and they need something sharp to awaken them. But when we've got the needle of the law fairly in, we must draw a long thread of gospel consolation after it."—Flockhart.

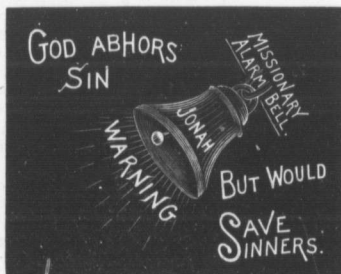
### The Teachers' Meeting.

Begin with Nineveh—location on the map, position, size, history. Draw sketch-map of "Turkey in Asia," and show that the Ninevite empire extended in some directions even beyond its limits. Mention leading kingdoms and tribes conquered and absorbed by Nineveh: Syria, Heth, Edom, Israel, etc.... Show picture of palace, or sculptures in Nineveh. Almost every book on Bible topics has some sketch which will throw light on its peculiar civilization.... Review by questions the story of Jonah in previous lesson.... Present the facts of this lesson, emphasizing especially the effect of Jonah's preaching.... The repentance of this city is a beautiful illustration of the way of salvation: 1. Warning. 2. Conviction. 3. Confession. 4. Repentance. 5. Seeking God. 6. Salvation.... Or, the lesson may be profitably studied, as suggested by the *Illustrative Notes*, by help of the following outline: 1. *The prophet*: (a) a man; (b) a forgiven sinner; (c) a man called to be a preacher. 2. *The place*: its might and its wickedness—a type of the world in sin. 3. *The preaching*: (a) its directness and sternness; (b) how much it falls short of our good news of redemption. 4. *The penitence*. 5. *The pardon*—unpromised in the case of Nineveh; secured to us by the sacrifice of Christ.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 3: Day's journey, 315. Ver. 5: Sackcloth, 70.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 3827. Ver. 2: Prose, 10762-11779, 11422. Ver. 5: Prose, 11399-11415, 6674, 7351, 7486-7488, 8592, 10936, 10759, 4963, 4967-4969, 4974, 4977, 1046, 1047, 1095, 1104, 1106, 3572.

### Blackboard.



**BLACKBOARD POINTS.**—The prominent feature of the diagram is a bell. Speak of alarm-bells, fire-bells, fog-bells, etc. They are not for music, not for pleasure, not to soothe one to rest, but to alarm one in case of danger. What is this bell named? Who was the missionary? Who sent him to Nineveh? For what purpose? Could Jonah save the people? No; all he could do was to speak the short sharp words of alarm, like the peal of a great bell. Bring out especially the thought that all sin is abhorred by God; small and great is hateful to him, yet he would save sinners. He sent Jonah to save Nineveh; he gave his only Son to save you and me.

### Primary and Intermediate.

#### LESSON THOUGHT. *The Mercy of God.*

*Review.* Last Sunday we had two paths on the board. One looked easy and the other hard. Who will tell what was written over each of these paths? Print "Jonah" at the point where the paths part. Which path did he choose? Why was he unwilling to go God's way? Did he find it safe to go his own way? Call upon one child to tell where he went when he tried to run away from God. Let another tell of the great storm, and what the sailors did with Jonah, and call upon a third to finish the story.

Pin up a picture of a scowling, unhappy-looking child. By its side, another child with a happy face. Which of these do you think Jonah looked like when he ran away from God? No one is ever happy in disobeying God.

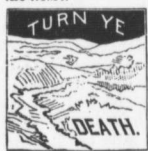
But Jonah does not look this way in to-day's lesson. While he was at school in the great sea he learned that it was best to obey God. So when God told him the second time to go to Nineveh and preach, he was ready to go, and he went with a happy heart, not fearing danger, because he knew God would take care of him. Which face do you like best? Who can have such a face all the time? Impress the truth that the child who believes God and obeys him will have a happy heart.

**Jonah Obeying.** See if any child can tell why Jonah dreaded so much to go to Nineveh at first. Show picture of an idol, and tell that the people there were heathen. Then Nineveh was a very great city. Jonah had not one friend there to help him! What could one man do alone? Then, too, it was a long way off from Jonah's home. You do not wonder that Jonah was afraid, and tried to hide from the Lord, do you? But he forgot one thing. Print "God is every-where." When he says "Go," we may be sure he will go with us.

**The Great City.** Make an outline of a city. Tell that this was a very old city; that it was very rich and beautiful; that the wall around it was broad enough for three chariots to drive abreast on it; and that this old, rich, beautiful city was so full of wickedness that God said it must be destroyed.

**The Great Warning.** God showed his love for the people of Nineveh by sending Jonah to warn them of their danger. Take this opportunity to teach once more that God loves naughty people, and wants to make them good. Describe Jonah in his strange dress, with long hair and beard, walking through the beautiful streets, and crying in a loud voice, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." All day long he goes straight on, saying the same thing. At first people do not notice him. May be they think he is a crazy man. Is this Jonah's voice only? No; it is God's voice, and so the people have to listen.

Pin up a paper sword. What does this mean? Tell that a sword is used to destroy. What does God want to destroy? Yes, Sin—in the city and in the heart.



Tell the story of Nineveh's repentance. Show a piece of sackcloth, or something to represent it, and make vivid word-picture of the people, from the king down, all wearing the sackcloth to show their sorrow, and calling

upon God to save them from destruction.

Sing here,

"Jesus loves me, he who died,  
Heaven's gate to open wide."

Make an open door on the board; print on it "Repentance," and inside the door print "Forgiveness." Teach that sorrow for sin and turning from it is the door that leads to God's forgiveness. The people of Nineveh came to this open door, and God forgave their sin and saved their city from destruction.

For closing exercise print "Jonah" above the paper sword. Pin up a cross, and print "Jesus" above it.

Read Luke 11, 32, and show that the "Greater than Jonas" is Jesus, who saves us from destruction by the love which bore the cross for us.

Children never tire of the dear old story of the cross, and we cannot tell it too often. It may seem to us that the children grow indifferent as to an old story; but if we tell it from the heart (not the head) it will never fail to carry with it the power of the Spirit.

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Grace, 'tis a charming.  
Father, I stretch.  
Depth of mercy.  
God calling yet.  
Pleading with thee.  
Weeping will not.  
Lord, I hear.  
Take me as I am.  
Just as I am.  
Dare to do right.  
Is my name written.

#### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. After Jonah had escaped from the dangers of the sea, against what city did God send him to preach? **Nineveh.**
2. What was his message? "**Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.**"
3. How did the people of Nineveh show their repentance? **They mourned and fasted and prayed.**
4. What did the king and his nobles do? **Urged the people to repent still more earnestly.**
5. What did God do? **Pardoned the Ninevites.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? "**The men of Nineveh,**" etc.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

23. What other proof is there that the Bible is inspired?

Its wonderful and heavenly power over the human heart.

The word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews iv, 12, 13.

#### Topics for the Young People's Prayer-Meeting of the Epworth League.

**April 5. Opportunities.** Gal. 6, 10; Eccl. 9, 10; John 9, 4.

**April 12. What Keeps the Christian?** 1 Cor. 10, 13; 2 Cor. 12, 9; 2 Tim. 4, 18.

**April 19. What Shall I Render?** Psa. 116, 12-14; 103, 2, 3; Rom. 12, 1.

**April 26. My Reasons for Praising God.** Psa. 34, 1-8.

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