

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 25.

FEBRUARY, 1891.

No. 2.

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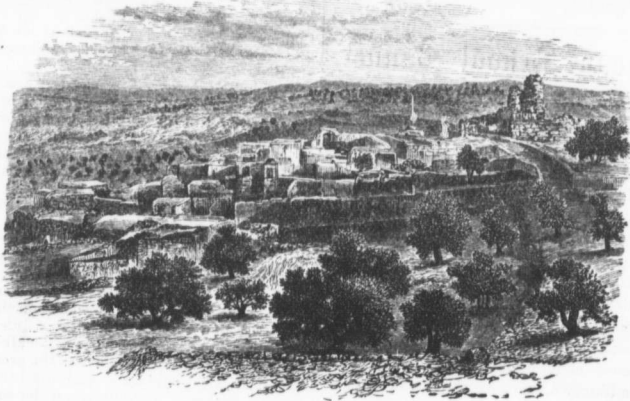
SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

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VOL. XXV.]

FEBRUARY, 1891.

[No. 2.



BETHANY—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

Bethany—From a Photograph.

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

As one turns down the slopes of Olivet toward the wilderness, a quarter of an hour's walk, or less, brings one to a ruined village, hidden, till just as we reach it, by a rocky ridge. A ruined village, truly, it is; but a village never to be forgotten. It is Bethany, the scene of some of the most touching incidents in Our Lord's life, and bearing even in its modern name El-'Azriyeh (from El-'Azin, Arabic for Lazarus), a memento of His mightiest miracle. The houses are rude, massive, and built of old materials; there is a ruinous tower or other lofty structure in a prominent position, on its higher side. There are some fine, shady olives on the sides of the road near by, and a few fig trees. It must have been different when He was here, and these rocky

environs were carefully terraced and filled with palm-trees, laden with the fruit from which it took its name—for Bethany means the House of Dates. Like most of the sites in Palestine, it has now nothing but associations to charm. But what associations cluster around it! Here was the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, almost the only visiting place our Lord allowed Himself. Here, somewhere, though hardly in the spot they show us, Lazarus lay in his four-day's death-sleep, when the voice of the Christ recalled him to mortal life. Here was the house of Simon the Leper, where Mary, in the lavish love of gratitude, anointed her Lord with costly spikenard; and here, close by, in some sequestered nook of these hills—for He led them out "as far as to Bethany"—the risen Lord took leave of His disciples, gave them His final commission and blessing, and then ascended to the heaven from which He had come; "and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

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Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1891.

The Wesley Centennial.

In the month of March twenty-five millions of "people called Methodists" will have their thoughts directed to the centennial anniversary of the death of John Wesley. The General Conference has directed that on Sunday, March 1st, sermons commemorative of that event shall be preached in all our churches. We would take the liberty of making the further suggestion that our Sunday-schools and Epworth Leagues throughout the country should also have a suitable commemoration. That it may be worthy of the occasion, no time should be lost in beginning to prepare therefor. Where practicable, we would further suggest that, on Monday evening, March 2nd, the combined Epworth Leagues or Sunday-schools in our towns and cities should have a joint meeting, at which short papers should be read, or addresses given on the Epworth rectory, its home-life and influence, and on the different aspects of early Methodism, and its development. A selection of the excellent hymns of John Wesley in our hymn-book might be sung, such as Nos. 54, 131, 207, 392, 494, 594 and 611. In this way the thought and attention

of the young Methodists of Canada might be directed as never before to the providential origin of Methodism and its development throughout the world. To hold such meetings successfully will require considerable local energy and effort. A committee representing the Young Peoples' Associations or Schools should take it in hand at the earliest opportunity. If a public meeting on a week night be not held, we hope that, at least, special prominence will be given in all our Epworth Leagues and Sunday-schools to the lessons of the life and labors of the founder of Methodism. Every Sunday-school library should have a good life of John Wesley. The best and briefest that we know, is a recent volume by the Rev. Richard Green, price fifty cents; and one that we like better still, and of greater fulness, by the Rev. Matthew Lelievre, price thirty-five cents. Both are published by the Wesley Conference Office, and are for sale at the Methodist Book Room, in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

We shall give several illustrated articles in both *Magazine* and *Onward* on early Methodism, and on the life and death of its founder. Dr. Ryerson's book on "Epochs of Canadian Methodism," will also give much interesting information, and so especially will the recent volume now in press.

We hope to announce prizes for the best essays on the life of Wesley.

The Rev. Dr. M. P. Morrow, in the *New York Christian Advocate* says:—"Students of literature are familiar with the evergrowing fame of Mr. Wesley among the great teachers of our time. Macaulay's declaration that "he had a genius for government not inferior to Richelieu," was followed by Buckle's finer characterization, that "he was the greatest of ecclesiastical legislators;" and now comes Mr. Lecky, saying, "he has had a wider constructive influence in the sphere of practical religion than any other man who has appeared since the sixteenth century."

In spite of this, I do not think that Mr. Wesley is honored enough by his followers on this side of the Atlantic. Whitefield received his award. Like Petrarch, he put his hand upon his own laurel wreath. A preacher only, yet what a preacher! His work was ephemeral, for it was unorganized. But within Methodism Wesley is immeasurably greater than Whitefield, and we, beyond the touch of his vanished hand, ought to keep his memory green.

To do this we may surely seize the centennial of his death as a providential hour in which to tell the story of his life and speak his praise. Many of our people stand under the shadow of his name knowing not his history or the world-wide, many-sided influences of his conduct and teaching. These justified the historian Green

in saying, "The Methodists themselves are the least result of Methodism." Let something be done to arouse interest in the first and greatest Methodist.

(a) Let sermons be preached in every church on Sunday, March 1st, 1891, in which Mr. Wesley's life and characteristic teaching should be stated and portrayed.

(b) On the same day there ought to be special exercises in all our Sunday-schools. It is fitting that our scholars should be told that forty years before Robert Raikes began his work in England, John Wesley had started a Sunday-school in Savannah.

The English Wesleyans send the following notice, and there are many who will sympathize:—

A series of memorial services will be held in City Road Chapel, London, beginning March 2, 1891. A new tomb is proposed for Wesley, and his house is to be put in repair as a museum for Methodist antiquities. The graveyard in which Wesley's body lies, and in which are the tombs of many Methodist celebrities, will have some needed improvements made upon it.

In the Schools.

For cheap reading the *Methodist Magazine* has become increasingly popular from year to year in the schools. Its attractive illustrated articles, its interesting serial stories, its papers on live Methodist topics, and especially its admirable descriptions of Bible lands, have made it a great favorite with teachers and senior scholars. In a number of schools it circulates to a considerable extent as a substitute for libraries, as being fresher, cheaper and more attractive. A number of schools have taken up 20 ten copies a month, and one school has taken forty copies a month for circulation. It can easily be shown that this is a cheaper way of getting good reading than the ordinary Sunday-school library. For \$1.60, the price at which the *Magazine* is given to the schools, will be furnished twelve numbers of 104 pages each, with about thirty beautiful engravings in each number. This is about equivalent to ten or twelve ordinary Sunday-school books costing \$5 or \$6. It is a matter for frequent complaint that many Sunday-school libraries contain books of sensational, frivolous and even pernicious character. It is almost impossible in purchasing *en bloc* to exercise the careful supervision that should be exercised. But every line which appears in the *Magazine* and *Onward* and our other publications is carefully

pondered, and nothing is admitted that shall not combine interest and instruction with religious truth. We invite our friends who have not made a trial of this method to do so. Our publishing house can give much better value for the money to our schools in papers which we print ourselves, than in books which we have to buy, paying heavy duty and costs of importation thereon. In no way can such good value for the money be given our schools as in furnishing the *Magazine*, *Onward* and *Pleasant Hours* and the other periodicals of our house.

WE are glad to report great prosperity in our periodicals for 1891; subscriptions are coming in in unprecedented numbers. The enlargement and improvement of the *BANNER* gives great satisfaction. Its circulation, we confidently expect, will be a long way in advance.

Our new paper *Onward* has also met with a remarkably encouraging reception. Many golden opinions have been expressed by leading ministers and Sunday-school workers. The best testimony, however, is that of large subscriptions which have come from many schools in the town and cities, and numerous subscriptions for smaller numbers from a widely scattered constituency of country and village schools. The subscription list has reached 900 per day, and already on January 5th, over 12,000 subscriptions were received.

The subscriptions to *Pleasant Hours* and our other periodicals are also largely on the increase.

None of these papers have yet met our ideal. We hope to go on improving from month to month. Send in your subscriptions promptly, so as to get the series unbroken from the beginning of the year. No effort shall be spared on the part of publisher and editor to meet every expectation of our friends.

"Onward."

THE Rev. J. W. Totten, of Oshawa, writes of our new paper:—I hail with delight this latest of our publications, known as *Onward*. Something of this kind has been in my mind for a length of time. I am delighted with the appearance of the paper. I believe it can be made a great favorite, especially amongst the young people of our congregations. I think it may be introduced into many homes where more expensive publications have never been taken. Instead of hindering the circulation of our *Guardian*, we hope it will help it by creating an appetite for our other excellent publications. We wish it great success, and hope to do our share in making it such.

Sunday-school Helps.

THERE are persons who complain that under the International Sunday-school Lesson system, there is not that close and consecutive study of the Bible that was possible before its introduction. With such a complaint we cannot at all agree. It is true, that in many cases, teachers may rely too much upon the Lesson Helps, which may thus enfeeble instead of strengthen their powers. It is also true that diligent students with only a Bible and a concordance, and such commentaries as may be within their reach, may dig out for themselves most valuable Bible lessons; and that much is thus discovered by the student, is of much more value than any which can be given him by others. But every system must be regarded as a whole, and not in its few individual cases.

We think it unquestionable that more intelligent, more complete, more thorough study is being given to the Bible in consequence of the international system, than ever before. The best Biblical scholars of the day devote their best energies to the elucidation of the sacred text. Whole commentaries are being condensed into fly leaves, which are scattered like the leaves of autumn throughout the length and breadth of the land. Leaves of the tree of life, which shall be for the healing of the nations.

These leaflets go, too, where the voice of the living teacher is seldom or never heard. We have seen them in the hands of the poor unlettered colored teachers in the black belt of Alabama, who, without these aids, could not teach the poor colored children at all. They go to the remotest parts of our land, to the fishing villages of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia; to the lumbering regions of New Brunswick and of the Upper Ottawa; to the mountain settlements of British Columbia; to the remotest places on the frontier, and do much to elevate the standard of living in these places.

Nor are the needs of the most advanced teachers neglected. In such books of D. W. Hurlbut's and Doherty's Teachers' Commentary, there are brought together the best thought of the best thinkers on the selected portions of the Holy Scriptures. They are comprehensive commentaries, full of critical information and practical suggestions, enforce the selected lessons. Accurate and elegant maps and engravings, large and small, speak through the eye to the understanding.

Fourteen years ago such books as these were impossible, but now, so great is the demand, that publishers are warranted in spending large sums of money in the preparation of these commentaries and serial lessons helps, whose circulation in the aggregate is so enormous.

A NOBLE and attractive every-day bearing comes of goodness, of sincerity, of refinement; and these are bred in years, not in moments.—
F. D. Huntington.

Book Notices.

Boston Homilies: Short Sermons on the International Sunday-school Lessons for 1891. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$1.25.

For several years a very admirable series of sermons on the lessons has been issued by the Boston Monday Club, a number of Congregational ministers. The present volume is one of similar character, by a number of the most distinguished men in Methodism, all of them members of the Alpha Chapter of the Convocation of Boston University, one of the leading Methodist institutions of the United States. Among the contributors are:—Dr. P. Raymond, President of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.; Dr. McDowell, Chancellor of University of Denver, Col.; Dr. Bashford, President of Ohio Wesleyan University; Prof. Mitchell, Dean Huntingdon, and Prof. Curtis, of Boston University, and a number of other distinguished ministers. The volume consists of forty-eight short, crisp, incisive sermons on the Sunday-school Lessons for the whole year. It will be found very helpful to superintendents and teachers.

One Little Life. By MARY LOWE DICKINSON. Pp. 272. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

Mrs. Dickinson is one of the sweetest and purest writers on American Methodism. There is an elevation of thought, and of literary style much superior to that found in most Sunday-school books. This is the story of a life consecrated to the interest of humanity, and to the noble altruism, and the unselfish endeavor to benefit and bless mankind. It will inspire in its readers lofty ideals, and suggest practical Christian work.

A Piece of Kitty Hunter's Life. By MARY E. BAMFORD. Pp. 336. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a well-written story in the form of a girl's diary. It gives us a peep into the recesses of a girl's heart, ennobled by suffering and sorrow. It describes vividly the trials of a young author endeavoring to procure recognition, and also her compensating joys in, "wreaking her thought upon expression," and at length procuring tardy fame and modest compensation.

Phæbe; or, The Ewings of William Hock. By MARY HARRIETT NORRIS. Pp. 308. New York: Hunt & Eaton.

This book, by the author of those successful volumes, "Dorothy Delafield" and "A Damsel of the Eighteenth Century," will be welcomed by the many friends whom the writer has won by her previous volumes. These are studies of American Methodist life, with certain foreign elements that are very interesting and instructive.

Opening and Closing Services.

FIRST QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

I Responsive Sentences.

Supt. I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.

School. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem;
they shall prosper that love thee.

Supt. Peace be within thy walls, and prosper
within thy palaces.

School. For my brethren and companions'
sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

Supt. Because of the house of the Lord our
God I will seek thy good.

II. Singing.

III. Prayer.

IV. Reading Scripture lesson.

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.

Supt. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.

School. The Lord make his face to shine upon
thee, and be gracious unto thee.

Supt. The Lord lift up his countenance upon
thee, and give thee peace.

III. Dismissal.

APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker
of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His
only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the
Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered
under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and
buried; the third day He rose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the
right hand of God the Father Almighty; from
thence He shall come to judge the quick and
the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Cath-
olic Church; the communion of saints; the
forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the
body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

In Darkest England and the Way
Out.*

THIS book is the literary sensation of the day.
The first edition was exhausted within three
hours of the time of issue. It is characterized
by Mr. Stead, as the most epoch-making book
of the times. It is worthy of the profoundest
study by every lover of his kind, as an heroic
attempt to grapple with some of the pressing
social problems of the day.

The book is divided into two parts: 1. The
Darkness and 2. The Deliverance. The first
part is like the prophet's scroll, written within
and without with lamentation and mourning
and woe. It is like a chapter from Dante's
"Inferno." There are, says General Booth, a
million of souls in the richest country of the
world, who would die during one month from
starvation, if not relieved by the hand of
charity. Add to this the great multitude just
above the starvation point, and he asserts that
one-tenth of God's Englishmen are doomed to
a service of those great Twin Devils, Destitution
and Despair. Like the Hebrew prophet, he
denounces wickedness and wrong in high places;
firms which reduce sweating to a fine art and
grind the faces of the poor. "These men now-
adays are sent to parliament to make laws for
the people. The old prophets sent them to
hell, but here we have changed all that; they
send their victims to hell, while they are re-
warded by all that wealth can give."

General Booth pleads for the thousands of
poor wretches who, as Bishop South said,
"are not so much born into this world as
damned into it." He brings a tremendous
indictment against the drink system. "Nine-
tenths of our poverty, squalor, vice and crime,"
he says, "spring from this poisonous tap root."
With true Christ-like spirit he yearns over
the outcast, the disinherited and the lost. He
contemplates the salvation not only of the
bodies but the souls of these outcasts. "I proph-
esy," he says, "the uttermost disappointment
of the citadel of the heart is reached. If
we help the man it is in order that we may
change him." He urges the fulfilment of the
wonderful words of the prophet (see Isaiah lviii.
6-12). The passage is too long to quote, but our
readers we hope will all refer to it.

The second and major part of the book is
devoted to the problem of deliverance. It is
like that thrilling episode in Stanley's narra-
tive, his emergence from the reeking forest of
darkest Africa into the bright and beautiful
plateau. It is almost like the transition from
Dante's nether world to the *Paradiso*. He
does not minify the magnitude of the task.
He proposes the extension, as described in the

* *In Darkest England and the Way Out.* By GENERAL
BOOTH. 8vo, pp. 285-xxxii. New York: Funk & Wagnalls;
and Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Hall-
fax. With large colored frontispiece. Price, \$1.25.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

[B. C. 906.]

LESSON V. ELIJAH AT HOREB.

[Feb. 1.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee. Gen. 26. 24.

Authorized Version.

1 Kings 19. 1-18. [Commit to memory verses 9, 10.]

1 And A'hab told Jez'e-bel all that E-li'jah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jez'e-bel sent a messenger unto E-li'jah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Be'er-she'ba, which *belongeth* to Ju'dah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake *baken* on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Ho'reb the mount of God.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Is-ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the Lord *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when E-li'jah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Is-ra-el

Revised Version.

1 And A'hab told Jez'e-bel all that E-li'jah had done, and withal how he had slain all the 2 prophets with the sword. Then Jez'e-bel sent a messenger unto E-li'jah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about 3 this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Be'er-she'ba, which *belongeth* to Ju'dah, and 4 left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; 5 for I am not better than my fathers. And he lay down and slept under a juniper-tree; and, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, 6 Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there were at his head a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water. And he did eat and 7 drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because 8 the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto 9 Ho'reb the mount of God. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto 10 him, What doest thou here, E-li'jah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the children of Is-ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my 11 life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the 12 Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still 13 small voice. And it was so, when E-li'jah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, E-li'jah? 14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the children of Is-ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down

have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Da-mas-cus: and when thou comest, anoint Haz'a-el to be king over Syr'i-a:

16 An'i Je'hu the son of Nim'shi shalt thou anoint to be king over Is'ra-el: and E-li'sha the son of Sha'phat of A'bel-me-ho'lah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Haz'a-el shall Je'hu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Je'hu shall E-li'sha slay.

18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Is'ra-el, all the knees which have not bowed unto Ba'al, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they 15 seek my life, to take it away. And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Da-mas-cus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Haz'a-el to be king over 16 Syr'i-a: and Je'hu the son of Nim'shi shalt thou anoint to be king over Is'ra-el: and E-li'sha the son of Sha'phat of A'bel-me-ho'lah shalt 17 thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Haz'a-el shall Je'hu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Je'hu shall 18 E-li'sha slay. Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Is'ra el, all the knees which have not bowed unto Ba'al, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

TIME.—About B. C. 906. Following closely the last lesson. **PLACES.**—1. Beer-sheba, a city at the southern end of the kingdom of Judah; 2. Horeb, or Sinai, where the law was given to Moscs. **RULERS.**—1. Ahab, King of Israel; 2. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah; 3. Ben-hadad, King of Syria. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The omniscience of God.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Elijah at Horeb. 1 Kings 19. 1-8.
 Tu. Elijah at Horeb. 1 Kings 19. 9-18.
 W. Man's infirmity. Psa. 77. 1-12.
 Th. Comfort for the desponding. Isa. 40. 25-31.
 F. Fear not. Isa. 41. 8-14.
 S. Help from the Lord. Psa. 121.
 S. Testimony of experience. Psa. 118. 1-14.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 223, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,
 Jesus loves to answer prayer;
 He himself has bid thee pray,
 Therefore will not say thee nay.
- No. 221, New Canadian Hymnal.
 "There shall be showers of blessing,"
 This is the promise of love;
 There shall be seasons refreshing,
 Sent from the Saviour above.
- No. 215, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Lead me to Jesus, my soul is so weary,
 Weary of bearing the yoke of sin;
 Dark clouds above me, my pathway is dreary,
 Joy never dwells my sad heart within.

DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 132, 50, 55.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Flight, v. 1-8.
 What story did Ahab tell Jezebel while the rain poured down?

What terrible message came to Elijah during this refreshing shower?

In what direction did Elijah fly for his life?

Why did he journey into the wilderness alone?

How is bread baked in the Orient?

How long did Elijah's fast continue?

Why was Horeb called the mount of God?

Is it ever right to indulge in gloom?

2. The Vision, v. 9-14.

What words broke on Elijah's ear amid the silence of the cave?

Was Elijah's statement of his lonely loyalty correct?

Was his statement of the perfidy and idolatry of the Israelites correct?

Before the manifestation of Jehovah's presence, what great natural forces rent the mountains?

What followed the wind?

What followed the earthquake?

Was the Lord in these?

How did the Lord manifest himself to Elijah?

What was God's purpose in repeating the question, "What doest thou here?"

3. The Command, v. 15-18.

What three men did God order Elijah to anoint?

What was to be Hazael's mission?

What was to be Jehu's mission?

What was to be Elisha's mission?

How many devout wor-shippers did God say he still had in Israel?

Practical Teachings.

How from this lesson may we learn—

1. That men must take the consequence of their actions, whether good or bad?
2. That a man who stands for the right must expect to be persecuted?
3. That angels of God are continually sent with messages of good for the needy?
4. That God's sympathy never fails?

5. That noise is not strength nor quietness weakness?

6. That the Lord knoweth them that are his?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find cases where prophets were commanded to do something symbolical which in reality was brought to pass by the Lord (Jer. 19, 1, *sq.*; 27, 2; 28, 10, *sq.*; Ezek. 5, 1, 12; 12, 3, *sq.*).

2. Find what you can about the characters of Hazael and Jehu.

3. Find what you can about the characters of the men whose authority they usurped.

4. Compare other cases of forty days' fasting with this. Resemblances and dissimilarities.

5. Find some other illustrious servants of God who were prepared for their work by solitary sojourn in the wilderness.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Flight, v. 1-8.

What story did Abab tell?

Who sent a message to Elijah?

What was the queen's message?

What effect had this on the prophet?

Where did he leave his servant?

Where did the prophet himself go?

What prayer did he offer?

Who came to him as he slept?

What did the angel say?

What did Elijah see when he arose?

What did the angel say the second time?

How long did this food last Elijah?

To what place did he go?

2. The Vision, v. 9-14.

Where did the prophet lodge?

What message there came to him?

What was Elijah's reply?

What was he bidden to do?

What then occurred?

What came after the wind?

What followed the earthquake?

What came after the fire?

What did Elijah do when he heard the voice?

What question was asked him?

What was his answer?

3. The Command, v. 15-18.

Where did the Lord bid Elijah to go?

What two kings was he told to anoint?

Who was to be Elijah's successor?

What did the Lord say these three would do?

How many continued faithful in Israel?
Of what encouragement to the fearful does the GOLDEN TEXT tell?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That good men are sometimes discouraged?

2. That God knows and numbers his people?

3. That God's cause is sure to triumph?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

What two other Bible characters fasted forty days and forty nights?

Mention some other instances in the Bible where people were fed by divine power?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Whom did Elijah slay with the sword? **The prophets of Baal.**

Who was very angry when she heard of it? **Jezebel.**

What did she threaten to do? **To kill Elijah.**

What did Elijah do? **He ran away to Beer-sheba.**

Whom did he leave there? **His servant.**

Where did he go? **Into the wilderness.**

What did he ask of the Lord? **To let him die.**

Who came and brought him food? **An angel.**

What did the angel tell him to do? **To take a long journey.**

How many days did it take Elijah to go to Mount Horeb? **Forty days.**

Where did he hide himself there? **In a cave.**

Who came and spoke to him? **The Lord.**

Where did the Lord tell him to go? **To the mountain-top.**

What did the Lord send? **A great wind, an earthquake, and a fire.**

What came after the fire? **A still small voice.**

In which of these did Elijah hear the Lord? **In the still small voice.**

What did the Lord then tell him to do? **To go back to his work.**

Words With Little People.

"FEAR NOT."

This is God's word to every child of his.

Whisper Motto.

"I will trust and not be afraid."

General Statement.

The last lesson ended with the vindication of Elijah at Carmel by the descent of the fire of the Lord. The prophet acted not only as high-priest in offering the sacrifice, but as royal vizier also, in executing the official representatives of Baal's corrupt worship. Then came Elijah's earnest prayer on the rocky crest of Carmel, during which he sent his servant seven successive times to look toward the sea. At length a little cloud, "like a man's hand," arose in the distant west. The prophet sped down the mountain side, and proclaimed the drought and famine over. While heavy showers were still falling the weak-

minded king told the strong-minded queen what Elijah had done. Bishop Hall says, "It is well that Jezebel should not keep her own counsel. Her threat preserved the man she meant to kill." Elijah fled far toward the south, and from under a lonely shrub, in the depths of the wilderness, we hear his disheartened prayer that he may die. At length

"The soft dews of kindly sleep,
His wearied eyelids gently steep,"

and when he awakes it is to the wonderful sight of a freshly-cooked meal and an angel servitor. He eats and sleeps, and is wakened the second time for further refreshment. During the next forty days and nights he fasts from earthly food but feasts on spiritual dainties. Horeb's lonely cave is turned into a trysting-place with Jehovah. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" The poor prophet answers, "They have slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left." Then the Lord passed by. Before him came, as heralds of his divine majesty, a great and strong wind, an earthquake, a fire, and a still small voice. In awe Elijah wraps his face in his mantle, and again comes the question, "What doest thou here?" Then God lovingly encourages him by the marvelous statement that seven thousand uncorrupted men still worship Jehovah, and gives him full instructions for the remainder of his life, which is soon to close amid circumstances of more than human pomp.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Ahab told Jezebel. Ahab bowed in turn to the mastery of the strong-willed queen and the strong-willed prophet. **All that Elijah had done.** The sacrifice, the slaughter of the priests, and the prayer for rain. **Slain all the prophets.** The slaughter of the Baalite prophets, who were, very likely, of the same foreign race as the queen, was the act which roused all the fierceness of Jezebel's nature.

2. Then Jezebel. That all the nation had in an hour changed sides from Baal to Jehovah did not influence this proud queen a particle. She would stand her ground and strike down at one blow her great enemy. **Sent a messenger.** We cannot tell whether this was an act of ungovernable rage or whether she wanted to frighten him into exile. **So let the gods do.** The most terrible oath she could use. **Thy life as the life.** (1) *How often the wicked plan and proclaim as if there were no God in the world!*

3. When he saw. Saw his danger. **Went for his life.** He knew Jezebel's strength and Ahab's weakness, and the instability of public sentiment. He felt that his efforts had been vain, and that, in spite of yesterday's bright promise, God's cause was utterly lost. **Beer-sheba.** Nearly one hundred miles south of Jezreel, and separated not merely by miles, but by national lines also; it was at the extreme southern limit of the kingdom of Judah, on the edge of the wilderness. **Belongeth to Judah.** Not part of Judah's tribal inheritance, but of Simeon's; but Simeon was now absorbed in the kingdom of Judah. **Left his servant.** (2) *Solitude is often helpful in hours of mental and moral strain.* (3) *Strength and weakness lie close together in the characters of great men.*

4. Went a day's journey. Even the kingdom of Judah did not seem a safe hiding place for this timorous soul, for its present monarch was on terms of friendship with Ahab. **Into the wilderness.** The bleak, gravely desert now called

El-Tih. **Under a juniper-tree.** A brown shrub; it grows in some of the bleakest parts of the Sinaiite wilderness. **Requested.... that he might die.** See the reasons (suggested by F. W. Robertson) given in "THE TEACHERS' MEETING" for his deep disheartenment. The entire story is in accord with the deepest principles of mental and physical science.

Not better than my fathers. Conscience upbraids him for his own unfaithfulness, cowardice, and irresolution, and he judges himself as he judges others, with stern recitude, and decides that he is not worthy of prolonged life. (4) *How good it is that God does not answer our mistaken prayers!*

5. Slept. God gently supplies the needs of his physical nature first. **An angel.** By superhuman ministrants God dealt with his people in that very desert in ancient days, and so, though invisibly, he deals with us still. **Arise and eat.** (5) *How often have God's people found their needs met by his care!*

6. A cake baked. He may or may not have seen the process of cooking; the statement is simply that the bread was of a kind so baked. **A cruse.** A jar or bottle. **At his head.** Literally, "at his pillow"—a stone, or a garment rolled up. **Eat and drink.** He would seem to have eaten in a dazed, half-awake consciousness, and then lain down again to sleep; for sleep was now his greatest need.

7, 8. The second time. The original shows still clearer the loving-kindness of God. It may be freely translated, "Eat a second time, for otherwise the journey will be too great for thee." **That meat.** That food. (6) *How like the Bread of life sent down from heaven is the preternatural power of this food.* **Forty days and forty nights.** Horeb was thirteen days' journey from Beer-sheba. In the same region Moses passed the same length of time without food, and some have thought that the temptation of Christ was in this desert. **Horeb.** Sinai—now known

as *Ras es-Sufadfeh*—in the southern part of the peninsula. It is called the **mount of God** because here God delivered the law to Moses.

9. Lodged there. Passed a night in the cave. **What doest thou here?** A question of tenderness, yet of rebuke. (7) *God sees where his servants are, and knows their true state.* (8) *He who is found out of his place in God's plan must render an account of himself.*

10. And he said. Elijah's answer shows a spirit of petulance. **Very jealous.** For God. **I, even I only.** Elijah felt always a sense of loneliness, and more than once spoke of it. There were other followers of God, but he needed to be assured of them.

11. Go forth. One of many lessons to be learned from the marvelous revelation which was now made to Elijah is that God's power is not always manifested by startling events. The invisible forces of nature are as full of God as those which seem greater. **Wind rent the mountains.** Not unlike the way Elijah had undertaken to reform Israel. **The Lord was not in the wind** in his fullest revelation; he sent the wind, but (9) *The true glory of God is in his attributes of love and mercy.*

12. A still small voice. Literally, "a sound of soft stillness." To him this voice doubtless furnished the consolation needed by his wounded heart—perhaps nothing more; but to us, favored by further revelation, it lights up the fact that (10) *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

13, 14. His mantle. Probably a cloak of untanned sheep-skin. **Stood.** The posture of service.

15. And the Lord said. Three things God gave to Elijah in this interview: 1. A purpose in life—some definite work to occupy him, and save him from brooding; 2. Companionship, by having a disciple and successor; 3. Assurance that he

had not lived in vain, since seven thousand were still faithful. **Go, return.** (11) *Active service is the best cure for discouragement.* **The wilderness of Damascus.** The country between Bashan and Damascus. **Anoint.** Meaning "appoint" or "set apart." **Hazeal.** General under Benhadad II. of Damascus. He afterward slew his master and succeeded him as king. **Syria.** A country north of Israel, between the Lebanon range and the desert, constantly at war with Israel. Damascus was its capital.

16. Jehu. Ahab's general, who afterward usurped the throne. **Nimshi.** Who was really Jehu's grandfather. **Shalt thou anoint.** Neither of these two commissions were fulfilled by Elijah personally, but they were arranged for by him, and accomplished at the right time by his successor. **Elisha the son of Shaphat.** A young farmer of the Jordan valley, utterly unlike Elijah, and yet well adapted to carry on the work he had begun. **In thy room.** This was not an immediate displacement, however. Elijah probably continued in office for several years after this.

17. The sword of Hazeal. He afterward conquered nearly all of Israel's territory, slew many of its people, and carried others into captivity (2 Kings 3. 12; 13. 3). **Shall Jehu slay.** He slew the whole house of Ahab, and all the leaders of the Baal-worshipping elements (2 Kings 10. 17, 23-25). **Shall Elisha slay.** Not with the sword, but with his prophetic utterances which pronounced their doom.

18. Yet have I left. The Revised Version changes this into "I will leave," meaning that out of all the slaughter the "seven thousand" faithful ones should be exempt as a remnant to transmit the truth to coming generations. **Seven thousand.** A round number, symbolic of completeness. (12) *God knows better than we how many are his followers.*

CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

BY REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A.

The story of Elijah's flight interrupts a series of triumphs absolutely superhuman in their completeness and their magnificent ease, to remind us that their instrument was, after all, a man. What was it that so utterly unnerved the hero who for years had borne a charmed life through deadly peril? The mere fact that Jezebel conveyed her threat to the prophet is enough to show that even she durst not lay hands on a being so terrible. Nor could we suppose the fear of death sufficient by itself to unman one who soon was praying that he might die. The first of the noble army of reformers would have faced death as dauntlessly as any who followed him, had he not been prostrated by the sudden apparition of failure succeeding a triumph which he thought

overwhelming. The idol prophets were lying in their blood, the echoes of the people's acclamation still haunted the silent glades of Carmel, the apostate king had bowed without a struggle before the prophet of Jehovah, and yet the implacable queen can breathe out slaughter with every prospect that the fickle populace would recant their vows. And the fiery son of the desert, swept away by a very tempest of despair, flees from the land where he had irretrievably failed, till at last he can rest in the very dwelling of his God. How in that awful temple Jehovah's knight was once more armed for victory can be told in no other words than those which make this chapter stand out among the very grandest narratives in the world's literature.

Verse 1. It was characteristic of Ahab thus feebly to submit while the prophet smote the deadly blow against the court idolatry, and then to go home and whine about it to his wife. He was soon playing the same part again in the matter of Naboth.

2. Jezebel evidently designed to get rid of Elijah's opposition and then to scoff at his flight. **Saying.** The LXX. has an initial clause which seems to be genuine: "Though thou be Elijah and I Jezebel." The sneering humility with which the queen abases herself before the victor of Carmel is very telling. **To-morrow.** The exact note of time is a further proof that this was intended and understood as a sentence of banishment on pain of death.

3. Was afraid (margin). So the LXX. and other versions, by a change of vowels. "Saw" is exceedingly feeble. **Beer-sheba.** The extreme southern limit of Palestine. It belonged to the tribe of Simeon, but the writer of this passage, who evidently comes from the northern kingdom, as yet in its prosperity, notes it as included in the kingdom of Judah. Judah was too weak to shelter a refugee from Ahab's anger. Comp. chap. 18. 10. **Servant.** According to tradition the son of the widow of Zarephath; a further legend was referred to last month (chap. 17. 12). The longing for solitude in such a crisis re-appears in that last restless wandering before the prophet's ascension (2 Kings 2. 2, etc.).

4. Wilderness. The Desert of Paran, now *El-Tih*, stretching south from Beer-sheba down into the heart of Arabia. **Juniper.** Hebrew *rothem*, a kind of broom, abundant in the desert, and affording welcome shade. **Requested.** The querulous selfishness which prompted the same prayer from Jonah makes a suggestive contrast. **Not better.** We can clearly see that through these years of terrible judgment Elijah had formed higher and higher hopes of a grand resurrection of the national faith. Carmel crowned his loftiest expectations, and he felt assured as the heavens opened to his prayer that he was privileged to triumph where his predecessors had seen no fruits of faithful labor. Now the dream was over; Elijah himself has failed as they did, and when his life-work has failed the prophet has no love for life. Comp. Psa. 89. 12, *sq.*

5. An angel. We hear little of these heavenly ministrants during the great period of prophetic activity; the mediation of angels was supplanted by that of inspired men, who were fitter representatives of God in that they prefigured him who was far greater than the angels. But at times they appear doing service for them or for him (comp. 2 Kings 6. 17; Mark 1. 13; Luke 4. 10; 22. 43), to remind us that they ever "encamp around" God's servants. The LXX. in this verse merely says, "Some one touched him," mentioning the angel first in verse 7. This brings out well the condition of the weary sleeper, who is too drowsy to be sur-

prised at the touch, and merely looks up at the food, which he mechanically takes and lies down again. **Arise.** Note how thoroughly in accord with Elijah's true character was the regimen by which his spiritual strength was reinvigorated. For the first time recorded the prophet of action pauses to reflect, and his reflection has not the inspired power of his action. God restores him by giving him something to do—a meal, a long and devious journey, and finally the appointment of men to carry on his work. It would be well if a like robust treatment were followed more often now in prescribing for doubt and despondency.

6. Cake. A round flat cake put between hot stones laid in embers of a charcoal fire—frugal provision suiting Elijah's ascetic habits. Too utterly weary in mind and body to eat his fill, he turns to sleep again.

7. The journey. Whether Elijah had any definite purpose in his mind may perhaps be doubted. The son of the desert was driven irresistibly into the solitudes where the storm within him might spend itself, and gradually his thoughts framed themselves into an overmastering impulse to seek comfort at Horeb, "the mount of God." And God, who knew by what long wanderings his servant would seek the peace he needed, interposed with miraculous aid—for what? To solve by one convincing revelation the despairing doubts of his soul? No; to leave the soul free to fight its battles undisturbed, by appeasing the wants of the body. Despite the philosophic fools of ancient and modern times, we know how much man's mental and spiritual health may sometimes be promoted by the absence of physical distraction, and God here approves the doctrine that the emaciated frame of the ascetic is not the fittest temple of the Holy Ghost.

8. Went. The word does not imply that he was traveling the whole time, but simply that through these forty days he was conscious of no bodily need. The fast of Jesus in the wilderness was a like example of an intense spiritual conflict which destroyed the sense of hunger. **Unto Horeb.** The distance from Beer-sheba to Horeb was only two hundred miles in a straight line, so it is obvious that the "desert of the wanderings" was true to its character once more. Horeb, or Sinai—the relation of the two names is not quite clear—is now generally identified with the peak *Es es-Sufsafeh*. It is a precipitous granite rock, rising from a plain shut in by mountain slopes in such a way as to make a unique natural amphitheater, capable of holding even the vast audience which assembled there under Moses. The mount of God had been left for five centuries to the awful silence which surrounds it to this day, nor do we hear of any other pilgrim to the shrine.

9. The cave (so read). It is possible that the article describes the pre-eminently sacred spot, the "cleit of the rock," where Moses beheld the after-

glow of the divine glory. The impulse which brought Elijah to Horeb would naturally take him to a place with such associations. The profound similarity between that revelation and this will come out clearly as we go on. **Lodged.** Passed the night, during which came the dream repeated in waking vision on the morrow. **Here.** So far from the post of duty!

10. Jealous. Comp. Exod. 34. Elijah implicitly reproaches God with having left to his servant this jealous care for "his great name." He is impelled by what we may fairly call the master passion of his whole life. We must always remember that the people had never really grasped the fact that their God was no mere local divinity, but one who would be all or nothing. Ahab had introduced Baal-worship not from hostility to Jehovah, but from political motives: if Israel and Tyre were allies, then their gods must be worshipped side by side. The Tyrian woman (chap. 17. 12) recognized Jehovah, and the ordinary Israelite could not see why he should not recognize the Baalim. The issue, Jehovah or Baal, was Elijah's one message, which he presents with an uncompromising decisiveness as novel as it was unpleasant to the statecraft of the day. **Hosts.** Hebrew *Tsebh'oth*, Sabaoth. A title first occurring 1 Sam. 1. 8, and common through the monarchical period. It seems primarily to describe Jehovah as the "Captain of the hosts" of Israel. **Children of Israel.** The old covenant name points the heinous sin of those who had broken the first commandment, the chief seal of the covenant blessings. **Altars.** The "high places," like that of chap. 18. 30 (see note there). **Prophets.** Chap. 18. 4. The prophetic guilds had taken up Elijah's "jealousy," and the persecution was due to their interference with the royal policy. **I only.** After ages praise the *Athanasius contra mundum*, the Abdiel "among the faithless faithful only," but such loneliness must be bitter to a human heart. God strengthens his servant by promising him companions in his faith.

11. Go forth. It is not clear whether Elijah "goes forth" here or in verse 13. The LXX. has hints which suggest our reading thus: "Go forth in the morning and stand before Jehovah, and, behold, Jehovah shall pass by. And, behold, Jehovah passed by." **Wind.** The mighty whirlwind, which rolled the huge bowlders down the precipice around Elijah's retreat, was God's messenger "before" him (Psa. 104. 3, 4). In the earthquake and the fire he had descended to meet his people of yore (Exod. 19. 18), and in later times the psalmist pictured him coming in whirlwind and earthquake and lightning to rescue "his king" (Psa. 18. 7, sq.). But even to Moses a sublimer revelation had been made; Jehovah's glory was his goodness (Exod. 33. 17; 34. 7). He sent his fire and trumpet on Sinai before his face that he might speak with

gentle voice on the Mount of the Beatitudes. Elijah's vision proclaimed to the world that power, even divine power, was less divine than love, and from his day the voice of love was heard more and more among men, until love trod their streets incarnate and God was perfectly revealed.

12. A sound of gentle stillness. The exquisite (and literal) rendering of the margin reminds us that no "voice" was yet heard. The servant knew by long communion when his Lord passed by. He waited, and he learned that force—such as seemed triumphant in apostate Israel—was doomed to fail, for it was not of God. And then in the whisper whose vivid contrast typified the seeming impotence of right in strife with might, he knew that his God was near.

13. Mantle. The shaggy skin garment by which he was ever known (2 Kings 1. 8 [Rev. Ver., margin]; 2. 8, 13). **Went out.** From the inner depths of the cave.

14. He repeats the answer of his dream as explaining the discouragement which brought him there. Doubtless it must have been waning as he realized what his vision taught.

15. The answer assures Elijah, first, that Jehovah will not forsake the covenant of Sinai, whatever his people may do; and, secondly, that Elijah's mission is not in vain and is now expressly renewed. **By the wilderness to Damascus.** This marginal reading seems preferable. He would travel through the Paran desert into Judah, follow the Jordan to Abel-meholah, and pass through Israel to Syria. **Anoint.** The word must be used figuratively, of a solemn designation; prophets were never literally anointed, and Elijah anointed none of these three. He was to appoint his own successor, and commission him to appoint Hazael and Jehu if opportunity should not permit to do it himself. Though Elijah was only to act as deputy, the commission is given here to him because of its bearing on the vision: Hazael and Jehu were the storm and fire which would prepare Jehovah's way before him. For Hazael see 2 Kings, chaps. 8 to 13, and for Jehu (grand) son of Nimshi, chaps. 9 and 10.

16. Abel-meholah. "Meadow of the dance," in western Manasseh, half-way between the Dead Sea and Gennesaret. How significant is the fact that the two most representative heroes of the old dispensation had to train a Joshua and an Elisha expressly to reap the rich harvest they had sown! The world idolizes success; God's heroes are often men who fail.

17. Comp. Isa. 24. 18. The inconsistency of the second clause with the whole picture of Elisha's work has produced many very strained solutions. Perhaps the simplest lies in the fact that Jehu literally extirpated Baal-worship, while Hazael's armies proved a perpetual scourge from without. There were, therefore, scanty gleanings for Elisha's sword, while the government not only forbade but

even persecuted idolatry, and there is nothing to prevent our supposing that he may have sanctioned a death penalty in *terrorem* when idol-worshippers were convicted. Not even to Elisha could God reveal the es-ential unfitness of the secular arm to champion truth: does even the nineteenth century every-where realize it?

18. Saint Paul's keen insight fixes on this first appearance of the doctrine of the "Remnant" so prominent in Isaiah (Rom. 11. 4). **Will I leave.** There should always be a faithful minority, an ideal "Israel of God," to whom should belong the promises forfeited by the "Israel according to the flesh." **Seven.** The sacred number denotes an ideal Church, considerable in number though comparatively small. **Kissed.** Comp. Hos. 13. 2; Job 31. 27.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What was the significance of the commands to Elijah in 1 Kings 19. 15-17, since most of them were not fulfilled during his lifetime?*

There were four commands: 1. To return to Damascus by way of the wilderness. 2. To anoint Hazael King of Syria. 3. To anoint Jehu King of Israel. 4. To anoint Elisha as Elijah's successor in the prophet's office. The meaning of the first and last is very plain, and they were duly fulfilled by Elijah, except in this unimportant particular, that instead of anointing Elisha he put his mantle upon him, which was the usual signal of induction into the prophetic office. The second and third were not literally obeyed by Elijah; but by his anointing Elisha he in a sense fulfilled them. God gave these commands at this time to cheer the failing heart of his prophet. They signified the destruction of the wicked house of Ahab, the inveterate foes of Elijah. They signified divine protection for the Lord's servants in the midst of their enemies. They signified that there is yet a God in Israel who rules and who will rule.—*Rev. W. G. Koons, B.D., Wilmington, Del.*

These commands serve both as an encouragement to Elijah in the hour of his discouragement and as a test of his faith in God's providential guidance and care. They required implicit faith and obedience upon the part of the man of God in the face of his enemies, but they also promised the complete overthrow of these enemies. These promises show the continuity of God's plans and purposes; that his work would still go forward, though Elijah should give place to Elisha. God sees the end from the beginning, and works for all time.—*Rev. B. W. Hutchinson, President West Virginia Conference Seminary, Buchanan, W. Va.*

These great wonders, the burning of the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, the drought of three years, and

the copious rains, had failed to turn the heart of Ahab from idolatry, and the anger of Jezebel had been aroused to the utmost by the destruction of the prophets of Baal. To Elijah it seemed that nothing more could be done; that even the Lord could not turn the heart of Ahab, and that he was left in peril of his life. At this time he is commanded to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha; the Lord thereby enabling him to see that power, foreign and domestic, should be raised up to aid the cause of Jehovah, and that when he should have completed his prophetic work the Lord would provide a successor.—*John D. Earp, D.D., Marion, Kan.*

To "anoint" is, in the Scripture sense, to set apart for the special service of God, or as instruments for the accomplishment of his will. The anointing with oil is symbolical only; the real anointing is by God himself. These commands were a prophecy, and a divine sentence or decree. The prophecy was fulfilled, the sentence was executed, for though Elijah did not anoint with oil the three persons mentioned, they were all used by Jehovah for the accomplishment of his judicial and executive purposes. The fact that Elijah did not anoint Elisha with oil, although he had abundant opportunity to do so, but simply summoned him to be his successor, is clear proof of the correctness of the above position.—*Ross C. Houghton, D.D., L.H.D., Portland, Ore.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Prophet and the Lord.

I. THE DEPRESSED PROPHET.

- 1. Fear.** "Went for his life." v. 3.
"Fear of man bringeth a snare." Prov. 29. 25.
- 2. Discouragement.** "It is enough." v. 4.
"Take no thought for your life." Matt. 6. 25.
- 3. Complaint.** "Forsaken thy covenant," v. 10.

"Rest in the Lord.... wait." Psa. 37. 7.

- 4. Loneliness.** "I, even I only." v. 10.
"I am not alone." John 16. 32.

II. THE COMFORTING LORD.

- 1. With strength.** "Arise and eat." v. 5, 6.
"Bread shall be given him." Isa. 33. 16.
- 2. With manifestation.** "Passed by." v. 11, 12.
"See the King in his beauty." Isa. 33. 17.
- 3. With work.** "Anoint Hazael.... Jehu," v. 15, 16.
"My meat is to do." John 4. 34.
- 4. With companionship.** "Anoint Elisha," v. 16.
"Fellowship one with another." 1 John 1. 7.
- 5. With encouragement.** "Seven thousand," v. 18.
"There is a remnant." Rom. 11. 5.

Thoughts for Young People.

Spiritual Depression.

1. *We are all at times tempted to dejection. Even the greatest and best of men are apt to have seasons of discouragement when they are sorely troubled by temptations.*

2. *The causes of spiritual depression are partly physical, partly mental, and partly in the surroundings.*

3. *God deals gently with his servants in their discouragement, not answering their unwise prayers, nor reproaching them for their lack of faith, but tenderly supplying their needs.*

4. *We may bring our deepest troubles to the Lord, and tell him all our grief, assured that he will listen to us.*

5. *A remedy for spiritual depression is found in spiritual work. He who labors for God will be lifted up in peace.*

Lesson Word-Picture.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

Such a change in Elijah's situation! One day bringing fire down from heaven, then marshaling the columns of the rain for the storm that ended Israel's drought, and standing out as the bravest, mightiest, most popular man in the land.

And now look at him! Running for his life! A woman's life is behind him, and before him, unless quicker than Jezebel's minions, are disgrace and death. He hurries down through Judah. Not a despised dog in all the streets of the land but has a better chance for life than Elijah. He drops his servant at Beer-sheba, and runs for the wilderness. Only a wild sky above him; only a wild land about him—rocks and bushes and lonely ravines and serpents' holes and jackals' dens. O, this loneliness of the exile! The sun beats down. Is there no shadow of a great rock in all the weary land? That juniper-tree, it is green and throws a shadow. He will lie down there. O, if he might die! O, if hunger and thirst, disappointment and persecution and life itself might end in the sweet forgetfulness of the grave! For who cares for Elijah? The proud outrunner of Ahab's chariot-horses, the tempest's master, Baal's conqueror, what better is he than others? He filled the sky with rain-clouds, but who now will show him where to wet his fevered lips? He summoned flame from the skies, but where will he get fire just to cook an evening meal? Evening meal! This filler of widow's cruses and widow's meal-barrels cannot get sustenance enough for supper. When will death come? Forgotten, an outlaw, without food, without a roof at night, he lies under the juniper-tree and longs for death.

Something else comes. Sleep, the sleep of the hungry. Is it a dream that somebody comes and offers food?

He opens his eyes. O, the compassion of the face bending over him! What music to the angelic voice bidding him rise and eat! And see the glow of the embers on which is the baked cake! Near him is a cruse of water. Forgotten of man? He is the remembered of God. Did Jezebel hunt him? Jehovah has made a place of refuge. He eats. He drinks. He sleeps again. There is another touch, another awakening, another summons from God. There is a journey before Elijah. Let him eat once more, and then away! On and on, hour after hour, day after day, without slackening his steadfast pace, till Horeb rises before him, gaunt and gray and alone and awful!

How desolate those crags, how wild and bleak and stern! And he, Israel's one true prophet, crouching in a cave like a hunted beast. Hark! It is God's voice calling, summoning him to say why he is there. O, how weak he tells God he is, and how ruined he feels God's cause to be.

"Go forth!" cries a voice. God will show Elijah who Jehovah is and what the prophet's mission may be. How impressive that solitary human presence amid all the mountain wilderness! One single, solitary being looking off upon the solitude. But, hark! There is a murmur, a roar, a tempest-blast, and whirlwind upon whirlwind crashes upon and crushes the mountain-tops. It passes by and becomes an echo far down the valley. God is not in it. That tornado-roar is not his voice. But, listen! There is an ominous rumble beneath Elijah's feet. It is the jar of the earthquake. It rocks and topples, it heaves and is buried. God is not in that. His trampling feet make not the earthquake. But there is a sudden terrible glare, an unearthly lighting up of flame, a blinding, dazzling burst of fire, and it makes like the noon-day the depths of the cave where the frightened prophet has been hiding. God is not in the fire. His eyes are not the flame. Every thing passes away: wind, earthquake, fire.

What stillness! Far up the mountain summit, far down the mountain gorges, what silence! No cry of beast disturbs it. No song of bird was heard warbling. Such a deep, impressive, awful hush. And now amid it all a voice so small, so still!

"That is God!" says Elijah. He folds his mantle about his face. He goes out. He stands at the entrance of the cave, and God asks him why he is here. And then God sends him out, to anoint a king over Israel, to consecrate his successor, to remember that seven thousand bow not to Baal. Like a whirlwind he drives back to meet Israel, to fling himself across the Jordan, to find and defy Ahab, while upon Eli-sha falls the mantle of Elijah.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

Verses 1-4. We are taught by the prophet's history the evil of undue disquietude about the aspect of the times. Elijah's desertion of duty and failure of faith are characteristics of modern days. When Christian men cease their work and talk only of the increase of crime and drunkenness and atheism and rationalism and communism they need to hear the Lord's voice—"I have left many thousands in Israel which have not bowed unto Baal." God's name recognized in our government, his name stamped on our currency, his blessing invoked on our rulers, our religious freedom, our precious Sabbath, our wide-open Bible, are answers to those who sit under the juniper-tree.—*W. M. Punshon.*

Verses 11-13. The word is God's chosen instrumentality for the world's recovery. Jehovah works not with the turbulence and passion of a man, but with the stillness and grandeur of a God. The "whirlwind" of battle, the "earthquake" of political convulsion, the "fire" of the loftiest eloquence and intellect are valueless to regenerate the world. They often are forerunners of moral triumph, but God's power is in his Gospel, God's presence is in his word. Here we are at issue with pseudo-philosophers who discrown Christ, ignore the Holy Spirit, and proclaim that the perfection of human nature has superseded the word as an instrument of progress. All human speculations fail—the word abideth. The Jews hated it and are in ruins, with all the empires of old, which have cast out the word.—*W. M. Punshon.*

Golden Text. A mixed company were gathered in a little chapel for worship. Differing in many ways, they were alike in this: all were sick, either in body, mind, or heart. All needed to be comforted of God. The lesson for the evening was the thirty-seventh Psalm. The leader said: "Here in seven verses is a prescription for each one. There are six ingredients: 'Fret not,' 'Trust,' 'Delight thyself,' 'Commit thy way,' 'Rest,' and 'Wait patiently.' Then, as if a double dose was needed, 'Fret not' is repeated at the end. Try this prescription of the Great Physician, and see how it will raise the spirits while it quiets the heart."—*Christian Union.*

A traveler among the mountains of Madeira set out for a distant summit, but was soon lost in a thick mist. He would have given up in despair; but his guide ran on before, constantly calling out, "Press on, master, press on; there's light beyond!" Soon they passed the region of darkness, and stood upon the cloudless mountain-top. Beclouded, dependent pilgrim, "Press on; there's light beyond."

If the stars, first created and starting forth on

their vast circuits not knowing the way, were conscious and sentient, they might feel hopeless and despairing about maintaining their revolutions and orbits. Without hands or arms, the sun holds them through their mighty rounds. Now, if the sun can do this, which is a thing itself, driven and held, shall not He who created the heavens and gave the sun its power be able to hold us by the attraction of his heart and the strength of his hands?

The Teachers' Meeting.

Three word-pictures: I. *The Flight.* 1. In the background: Elijah's triumph at Carmel; the overthrow of Baal's priests; the prospective reformation of court and people. 2. In the foreground: the wicked queen's threat; Elijah's dejection and flight. II. *Angelic Ministration.* III. *Divine Revelation.* (This scene, one of the most wonderful in God's word, should be made vivid to every mind).... Make sketch-map, showing Carmel, Samaria, Beer-sheba, Horeb.... The causes of mental despondency (condensed from *F. W. Robertson*): "1. Want of occupation—while there was work to be done Elijah was brave. 2. Nervous exhaustion—natural revulsion after a day of mighty effort and strain. 3. Loneliness—note how often Elijah said, 'I am alone.' He felt the need of a kindred soul. 4. Apparent failure—his apparent success had vanished into thin air. 'All is lost—let me die,' is his thought.".... The unreasonableness of mental despondency: 1. It may alter our views of things, but cannot alter facts. 2. No true follower of God is ever alone. Jehovah was Elijah's friend, and angels were eager to minister to him. 3. There is no permanent failure possible to the advocate of the right. 4. The most discouraging events of life are interwoven by a kind Providence to secure us the victory.... God's sympathy with human infirmity: he sent an angel from heaven to do duty as a tender nurse.... Symbols of divine presence.... God's work endures. His far-reaching plans take in Hazael, Ben-hadad, Ahab and his sons, Jehu, Elisha, and the uncounted "sons of the prophets." Elijah's tried prayer was about to be answered, and he was to be removed to heaven, but not because of his failure. We need the stand-point of eternity to properly estimate any failure or success.... Suggestive points may be found in "Thoughts for Young People," and in the numbered italic lines in the notes.

References.

FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 4: A day's journey, 815. Ver. 6: "A cake baked on the coals," 11; the cruise, 266. Ver. 13: Covering the face, 816. Ver. 18: Baal, 184; kissing as an act of homage, 427.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 2261, 2262, 2265, 2268, 2269, 2255, 8704, 8706. Vers. 1-8: Poetical, 3871. Vers. 1-9: Poetical, 3874. Ver. 4: Poetical, 884. Ver. 5: Prose, 2626. Ver. 6: Poet-

ical, 310. Ver. 8: Prose, 8665, 10561. Vers. 9-13: Poetical, 3377, 3378. Ver. 10: Prose, 12337, 12346, 12347. Vers. 11, 12: Prose, 10711. Vers. 11-13: Poetical, 1053. Ver. 12: Poetical, 2748; Prose, 9559, 9554, 9567, 289, 2997, 3008.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MANTER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Helper in Trouble.*

Review. Make a little word-picture of Elijah, and let the children tell his name. See who can recall some wonderful thing in his life? The ravens and the raising of the widow's son will very likely be called back. Help, if need be, to recall the last lesson. Tell how angry the heathen queen Jezebel was when she found that the priests of Baal had all been killed. Jezebel did not believe in Elijah's God. She said she would kill Elijah. She thought she could, for she did not know the prophet's great Defender. Let children say how they think Elijah would feel. Such a brave, bold man! He would not be afraid, surely!

But he was! Ask if children sometimes forget to have faith in God? Yes; and Elijah was only a big child. All at once he began to think that the heathen queen had power to kill him. He forgot that God is stronger than all the kings and queens that ever lived. What did he do? He ran away to Beer-sheba. [Point it out on the map.] But he did not feel safe yet; so he left his servant there and went on into the wilderness. He was tired and discouraged and afraid. He sat down under a tree and began to complain. He told the Lord that he wanted to die. He was tired of living. He had tried to please God and obey him, and all the time he was making enemies and getting into trouble deeper and deeper! Elijah was discouraged. See if children know the meaning of the long word. Some simple illustration will make it plain, as a little boy set to do a task which looks hard to him. His father is near, ready to help; but he wants his boy to learn how to conquer difficulties. Elijah, the strong prophet, like the little boy, was saying, "I can't." Now we will see how God, his Father, helped him.

We will print on the board the names of some of the helps God sent: "Sleep." Do you ever think at night that the sweet sleep which comes to you is from God? He sends it to you as surely as he did to Elijah. "Food." "Drink." Where was Elijah? In the wilderness; yet God found a way to get food and drink to him there. Pin up a picture of an angel. Do angels bring us our food and drink? Yes; God's angels of sun and rain and dew and air. We cannot always see them at work; but they are working for us all the time, and it is God who sends them. Let us thank him for his loving care!

Sleep and rest and food and drink make us strong. When Elijah woke he was so strong and had such courage that he was ready to go on his journey. Show Mount Horeb on the map, and tell that Elijah came here and found a place to stay in a cave. God sends his good gifts to make his children strong to go where he sends them.

Now the Lord came to talk with him. He heard Elijah's complaint. (Read verse 10.) Ask if children think the Lord reproached him. No; but he showed him that he must be patient and gentle, and learn to wait. Tell how he stood upon the mountain and looked for the Lord, first in the wind, then in the earthquake, and then in the fire, and found him at last in the still small voice.

Then the Lord gave Elijah work to do for him, and told him that he still had seven thousand left in Israel who believed in him.



Teach that God always comes to his children when he sees they are ready for him. Every child who is trying to please God will feel discouraged sometimes. But God is never discouraged, and he never forgets to send help and strength where they are needed.

Children have work to do for God, and every child should ask him each day, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then do not be afraid, but expect him to help, and he surely will.

Show that this lesson teaches that God is in the little things as well as the great. Elijah forgot this for a little while, and so became discouraged. Sing, "O, do not be discouraged."

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ



HOW TO DRAW THE WHEEL.—Tie a piece of string about twelve inches long to a piece of colored crayon, dark red, yellow, or brown. With the left hand hold the end of the string against the board; with the right hand describe the circle. The center of the wheel will be where the end of the string

was placed against the board. Fix the spot with a piece of chalk, and then from that center let the spokes radiate.

APPLICATION OF THE DESIGN.—Do not be discouraged though trials and disappointments come. Never desert the ship; stand firm at the wheel of duty. Review the circumstances that caused Elijah to desert his post and run away; the patience and promise of God; the need of all manner of workers, and the searching question,

“WHAT DOES THOU HERE?”

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

I am poor and blind.
Blest are the hungry.
How firm a foundation.
Look up.
In thy cleft.
Precious promise.
It is well.
Guide me, O thou.
Come unto me.
In the secret of his presence.
My Jesus, as thou wilt.
What a Friend.
I heard the voice of Jesus.
He left me.
Never alone.
The Lord will provide.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. From what wicked woman did Elijah flee? **Jezebel.**
2. When exhausted in the wilderness, who comforted him? **The angel of the Lord.**
3. Where did he fast forty days and forty nights? **In Horeb, the mount of God.**
4. By what four means did God manifest his power to Elijah? **By strong wind, earthquake, fire, and a still small voice.**
5. What question did God ask? **“What doest thou here, Elijah?”**
6. What is the **GOLDEN TEXT**? **“Fear not,”** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

8. And what was the last and greatest proof? **His rising from the dead, as He Himself foretold.**—John ii. 18, 19, 21; Acts ii. 32; Matthew xvi. 21.
9. **Have believers an internal evidence that Christ came from God?**
They have, according to their faith, the witness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

B. C. 899 or 900.]

LESSON VI. AHAB'S COVETOUSNESS.

[Feb. 8.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Take heed, and beware of covetousness. Luke 12. 15.

Authorized Version.

1 Kings 21. 1-16. [Commit to memory verses 15, 16.]

1 And it came to pass after these things, that Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had a vineyard, which was in Jez're-el, hard by the palace of A'hab king of Sa-ma'ri-a.

2 And A'hab spake unto Na'both, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Na'both said to A'hab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And A'hab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 But Jez'e-bel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, and said unto him, Give

Revised Version.

- 1 And it came to pass after these things, that Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had a vineyard, which was in Jez're-el, hard by the palace of A'hab
- 2 king of Sa-ma'ri-a. And A'hab spake unto Na'both, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it: or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.
- 3 And Na'both said to A'hab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. And A'hab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jez'e-bel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please

me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jez'e-bel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Is'ra-el? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Na'both.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Na'both on high among the people.

10 And set two men, sons of Be'li-al, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jez'e-bel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Na'both on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Be'li-al, and sat before him: and the men of Be'li-al witnessed against him, even against Na'both, in the presence of the people, saying, Na'both did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jez'e-bel, saying, Na'both is stoned, and is dead.

15 And it came to pass, when Jez'e-bel heard that Na'both was stoned, and was dead, that Jez'e-bel said to A'hab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Na'both is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when A'hab heard that Na'both was dead, that A'hab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, to take possession of it.

thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jez'e-bel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Is'ra-el? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite. So she wrote letters in A'hab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, and that dwelt with Na'both. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Na'both on high among the people: and set two men, sons of Be'li-al, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst curse God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he die. And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jez'e-bel had sent unto them, according as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Na'both on high among the people. And the two men, sons of Be'li-al, came in and sat before him: and the men of Be'li-al bare witness against him, even against Na'both, in the presence of the people, saying, Na'both did curse God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. Then they sent to Jez'e-bel, saying, Na'both is stoned, and is dead. And it came to pass, when Jez'e-bel heard that Na'both was stoned, and was dead, that Jez'e-bel said to A'hab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Na'both is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when A'hab heard that Na'both was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, to take possession of it.

TIME.—B. C. 899 or 900. **PLACES.**—Ahab's palace in the city of Samaria; the ancient city of Jezreel; and Naboth's vineyard outside of its eastern wall. **RULERS.**—Same as before. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—Human depravity.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Ahab's covetousness. 1 Kings 21. 1-7.
 Th. Ahab's covetousness. 1 Kings 21. 7-16.
 W. The law of inheritance. Lev. 25. 23-28.
 Th. Sin of oppression. Mic. 2. 1-6.
 F. Oppression denounced. Isa. 3. 10-15.
 S. Punishment of oppressors. Psa. 94. 14-23.
 S. Warning against covetousness. Luke 12. 13-21.

HYMN.

How vain are all things here below!
 How false, and yet how fair!

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 54, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Come, every soul by sin oppressed.
 No. 51, New Canadian Hymnal.
 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord.
 No. 55, New Canadian Hymnal.

All my doubts I give to Jesus.

DOMINION HYMNAL.
 Hymns, Nos. 69, 76, 73.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Covetous Ahab, v. 1-4.
 Where was Jezreel?
 Was Ahab's palace in Samaria or in Jezreel?
 Why did Naboth feel it wrong to sell his inheritance? (Num. 36. 1-13; Lev. 25. 10-28.)

Of what had Samuel forwarned the Israelites? (1 Sam. 8. 14.)

Why did not Ahab take the property by force? (Exod. 46. 18.)

What characteristic is shown by Ahab's conduct?

What is said by one of the apostles about godliness and contentment?

2. Wicked Jezebel, v. 5-10.

Why did Jezebel use Ahab's seal?

What characteristics of the elders of Jezreel must Jezebel have known before giving the order contained in verse 10?

Why was Naboth "set on high"?

Why was a fast proclaimed? (1 Sam. 7. 6; Joel 2. 12.)

Before what sort of tribunal was Naboth brought? (Deut. 18. 16.)

What sort of men could they have been who would thus submit to the dictation of the sentence that they were to pass on their victim?

Why were two bad men brought up as witnesses? (Num. 35. 30; Deut. 17. 6; 19. 15.)

What does Belial mean?

3. Murdered Naboth, v. 11-16.

Which three of the Ten Commandments were broken by this proceeding against Naboth?

What awful retribution followed in Ahab's family?

Is it right to do wrong if our superiors command us?

Was this wrong act legal?

Would it have been right if it had been legal?

Can it ever be right to do wrong?

Can you think of any great wrong that is to-day legalized, and which some people who believe it to be a great wrong conscientiously support?

Practical Teachings.

Wherein does this lesson teach—

1. The wickedness of coveting our neighbor's goods?

2. The weakness of all wickedness?

3. That one sin leads to another?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Read Ahab's entire history and give your ideas of the good and bad traits of his character.

2. Find out evidences that the character of Ahab's wife was much stronger than his own.

3. Would it have been wrong for Naboth to sell his vineyard? Be ready to give the Hebrew law in this matter.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Covetous Ahab, v. 1-4.

Of what was Ahab covetous?

What commandment did he thereby break? (Exod. 20. 17.)

To whom did the vineyard belong?

For what purpose did Ahab want it?

What did he offer to Naboth for it?

What was Naboth's reply?

How did this answer affect the king?

How did he show his displeasure?

2. Wicked Jezebel, v. 5-10.

What question did Jezebel ask the king?

What was Ahab's reply?

What did Jezebel then ask?

What did she promise to do?

To whom did she send letters?

In whose name did she send them?

How did she command them to honor Naboth?

What wicked plot was then to be carried out?

What is the ninth commandment? (Exod. 20. 16.)

3. Murdered Naboth, v. 11-16.

What did the elders and nobles do?

What message was sent to Jezebel?

What did Jezebel then say to Ahab?

What did Ahab at once do?

What is the sixth commandment? (Exod. 20. 13.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That selfishness leads to sin?

2. That one sin leads to another?

3. That one sinner can do great harm?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

What peculiar Jewish law prohibited the sale of a man's inherited real estate?

What was the Hebrew law for the punishment of blasphemy?

How did this false accusation of Naboth resemble that of our Lord?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What king coveted a vineyard near his palace? **Ahab.**

Who was the owner of the vineyard? **Naboth.**

What did Ahab try to do? **To buy the vineyard.**

Why was Naboth unwilling to let it go? **Because his fathers had owned it.**

How did Ahab feel about it? **He was vexed and unhappy.**

What did Jezebel say she would do? **Get the vineyard for him.**

What did she first do? **Wrote letters to the rulers of the city.**

What did she ask them to do? **To accuse Naboth.**

What crime was charged him? **Blasphemy.**
How was he punished? **He was stoned to death.**

What did Jezebel then tell Ahab? **That Naboth was dead.**

What did Ahab do? **He took the vineyard for his own.**

What was Ahab's sin? **Covetousness.**

What was Jezebel's sin? **Falsehood and murder.**

Who always punishes sin? **The Lord.**

Words with Little People.

"I WANT" may be a good friend or a great enemy.
When it chooses the things that please God it is a

friend. But when it chooses the things that please Satan and self it is an enemy. We can never want God and good things too much. But we must always try to find out if God wants us to have the things we want.

Whisper Motto.

"Thou God seest me."

General Statement.

Elijah journeyed northward from Horeb, and in God's name called Elisha the son of Shaphat to be his successor. Ahab, the petulant King of Israel, had meantime been hard beset. The Syrian king had first made him his vassal, and then had sought to still further degrade him. War between the two kings was declared. A prophet foretold the utter overthrow of the Syrian armies, and directed how it was to be brought about. So far as Ahab followed this divine direction he was blessed with success, but his downfall was foretold by God because of repeated disobediences. Turning his attention again to his private affairs, King Ahab looked with longing eyes on a vineyard which was "hard by" his palace in the city of Jezreel. Naboth owned it, and refused to part with it, believing such an act to be contrary to God's law. Ahab sulked and pouted because he could not have the vineyard he coveted, but did not dare to so grossly violate the constitutional law of the nation as to take it by force. Queen Jezebel's character contrasts strangely with that of Ahab. She was far bolder and more decided than he, and she had no lingering Israelitish scruples to restrain her, for she was foreign born and bred. So, taking upon herself the full responsibility, she wrote letters in Ahab's name, directing the local authorities of Jezreel to accuse Naboth of a capital offense, prove him guilty by false evidence, stone him to death, and then confiscate his property to the crown. Far slighter outrages have often overthrown governments, but so craven were the "elders" of Jezreel that the queen's commands were followed to the letter, and King Ahab became the owner of Naboth's vineyard. But the curse of God came with it, and in the most marvelous way were Ahab, his wife, and his descendants afterward punished for this ruthless crime.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. After these things. After Ahab's struggle with Ben-hadad of Syria. **Naboth.** Evidently an honest, sturdy citizen. **A vineyard.** This vineyard was outside of the eastern wall of Jezreel, near the fountain (for there Jehoram's body was cast before Jehu entered the city [2 Kings 9. 24-2]). **Jezreel.** An ancient city of Canaan, built on the side of Mount Gilboa, and overlooking a plain of great historic importance which derives its name—Esdraelon—from this city. **Hard by.** Close to. **Palace.** Ahab was famous for the splendid buildings he erected. His Jezreelite palace was in the eastern quarters of the city (for it was just as Jehu entered the city gate from the east that Jezebel looked out at him [2 Kings 9. 31]). **Samaria.** The name of this capital city of the kingdom of Israel was sometimes used in place of that of the kingdom.

2. Garden of herbs. "Both a vegetable and a flower garden."—Terry. The ancient Hebrews gave much attention to both horticulture and floriculture.

3. The Lord forbid. Evidently Naboth was one of those who had not "bowed the knee" to Baal. "The Lord" here stands for the proper name Jehovah. Moses had made the inheritance of each tribe and family inalienable (Num. 26. 1-13; Lev. 25. 10-28). The preservation of this inheritance "was for every covenant-keeping Israelite a religious duty."—Lange. Naboth was a bold

man to stand thus for his rights in the face of a king's desire.

4. Into his house. Probably into the palace in Samaria, though it may have been the palace which stood close by the wall of Jezreel, overlooking the field of Naboth. **Heavy and displeased.**

(1) *The man who thinks only of his own interest, and lives only for his own pleasure, will have many miserable hours.* **Turned away his face.** Instead of reclining on his couch toward the table, he turned away from it in the ill-humor of a spoiled child. (2) *The man who cannot govern himself is not fit to govern others.*

5. Jezebel his wife. In this lesson is revealed all the fierce energy of her nature, her absolute want of principle, and the universal fear which she inspired. Her influence for evil, reaching through generations, shows how great might have been her power for good.

6. I spake unto Naboth. He had proposed to make Naboth his accomplice in a violation of God's law, and was vexed not merely at Naboth's independence, but even more at his righteousness.

(3) *A God-fearing man is a constant rebuke to the godless.*

7. Dost thou now govern. Jezebel felt a contempt for her weak husband, and, coming from despotic Tyre, she could not comprehend the constitutional government of Israel. Her words are an implied taunt: "Are you, or is Naboth, King of

Israel?" **Let thine heart be merry.** "Do not give yourself any concern about the matter." **I will give thee.** She is equal to any emergency, and ready for any crime.

8. She wrote letters in Ahab's name. Though the king did not enter into the transaction, he tacitly gave his consent to it. (4) *Just so every man is responsible for all the evil done in his name if he can prevent it and fails to do so.* **With his seal.** Which was used where we would now use the signature. **Elders and...nobles.** The "elders," or rulers, were the representatives of the tribe-families having hereditary possessions in the place; the "nobles" were leading men in social position.

9. Proclaim a fast. To atone for some supposed disgrace, and thus give the prosecution of Naboth a religious ground. (5) *Religion has often been used as a cloak for crime.* **Set Naboth on high.** Honor him at the beginning of the proceedings, so as to keep the wicked plan for his death unsuspected, and so, also, as to make his conviction the more startling and his death the more certain.

10. Two men. Two witnesses were necessary for conviction. **Belial.** Not a proper name, but a word signifying worthlessness. These were good-for-nothing fellows. **Thou didst blaspheme God.** Jezebel hated the God of the Jews, but took any means to bring about her victim's death. **The king.** To curse the king would be treason, and probably this was added to secure the forfeiture of his property. **Carry him out.** Death was always inflicted outside the walls of the city.

With this chapter we see the compiler returning to that masterpiece among the narratives before him, the brief "memoirs of Elijah." The historian is about to show us the force which ruined the most powerful of Israelitish dynasties. He has already revealed the secret spring of all this ruin in Ahab's alliance with heathendom—the very snare into which Solomon fell. But Jezebel and her Baal-worship seem not to have been unpopular. It was only when the sin against God gave birth to the inevitable sin against man that the deep-seated indignation of the people prepared the way for Jehu's revolution. In telling the story of this great crime and its sequel the nameless author is at his grandest.

Verse 1. These things. That is, the events of chap. 19, which this immediately follows in the LXX., and probably also in the original memoirs of Elijah. The narrative of Josephus supports the LXX., in thus placing chap. 20 with chap. 22, and there is a possibility that this order may have been changed in order not to make the less terrible judgment of chap. 20, 42, follow the awful curse of verse 19. **Which was.** It is possible that we should read,

Stone him. The usual method of execution among the Israelites. The two witnesses were required to cast the first stones.

11. The men of his city. These officials must have been unusually depraved or else terror-stricken to deal so unjustly and cruelly with an innocent townsman. **Did as Jezebel had sent.** Not a single elder ventured to forewarn Naboth of his danger. (6) *How much more noble is the Christian standard of obedience to God rather than men.*

12, 13. They proclaimed a fast. They act as if accustomed to crimes like this. **There came in two men.** Satan is ready with his tools when they are needed by his workmen. **Stoned him with stones.** From 2 Kings 9, 26, it is evident that his sons were put to death with him, as was common in Oriental countries.

14, 15. They sent to Jezebel. Having imbued their hands in blood at her command, they hasten to send her word, hoping, probably, to receive some reward. **Jezebel said to Ahab.** Her manner of receiving the news and of repeating it to Ahab shows a conscience utterly scared and past feeling.

16. Ahab rose up. His promptness to profit by a crime shows that he, too, was thoroughly unscrupulous. **To go down.** He went in state, in the royal chariot, and behind him rode the very man who in after years was the instrument of his punishment, Jehu, the future King of Israel (2 Kings 9, 25). (7) *So the sentence follows close upon the crime.*

CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

"and he was prince in Jezreel," inserting it earlier. The clause as it stands is rather weak, and a slight alteration supplies the information which explains verse 9, and Josephus's note that Naboth was "of distinguished family."

2. Garden. A pleasure garden, planted with flowers.

3. Jehovah forbid. The example of Obadiah shows that an avowed worshiper of Jehovah was not punished unless belonging to the prophetic order, which was treated as rebellious against the state. But it was bold thus to fling in the king's teeth a refusal based on Jehovah's law. The sacredness of a paternal inheritance was a cherished tradition from early times. Comp. Lev. 25, 25-28; Num. 36, 7.

4. Heavy and displeased. A phrase used only for these characteristic sulks of Ahab. Comp. chap. 20, 43. From verse 18 it appears that Ahab was living in Samaria at the time; the distance from Jezreel is about twenty miles in a straight line.

6. Ahab's petulant childishness reminds us of Haman (Esth. 5, 13). Note how he suppresses

Naboth's reason for refusal. We may observe that after all he had a certain grievance. A fair and courteous request had been met with a rough answer, which seems to show that Naboth, no doubt on religious grounds, was any thing but loyal.

7. The picture of a weak and wicked man forced half willingly into crime by a strong and wicked woman is familiar in history and literature. Compare Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth, and the queen whose savage hatred procured the death of the New Testament Elijah. The contempt with which she bids her miserable husband go back to his revels is curiously like Elijah's own (chap. 18. 41). A man who has just enough conscience to make him unhappy, but not enough to keep him from evil, is perhaps the most pitiable object in creation. An ingenious conjectural reading, suggested by the LXX., is, "And she said to him, Thou art a simple man: now wilt thou make him king over Israel!"

8. Letters. Probably to the representatives of each class, the elders and the nobles. **Sealed.** Of course Ahab gave her the seal, and he knew perfectly well that it was to be used in a way he had not boldness for. Consciences like his found the methods of the ostrich sufficient. **Elders.** The old patriarchal office, which lasted from the exodus or earlier down to New Testament times. **Nobles.** The class of which Naboth seems to have been chief. **His city.** There would have been no question that this was Jezreel but for the difficulty of reconciling chap. 22. 38, with Elijah's curse in verse 19. But we may note that in 2 Kings 9. 26, Jehu, repeating the words which had so tremendously impressed themselves on his mind years before, sees the curse fulfilled upon Ahab's son. Comp. verse 29. So even if our text in verse 19 is quite sound (and the LXX. raises doubts there), we may yet suppose that the curse as modified included for Ahab himself only the dishonor done him after death by the dogs and the devotees of Ashtoreth. **Dwelt with.** A further aggravation of the foul deed in which they were the tools.

9. Fast. As with most of the darkest crimes of history, religious sanction was to be ostentatiously assumed. A public renunciation of God and his vicegerent, by a man of such rank and influence, calls for a general humiliation. Comp. 1 Sam. 7. 6; Joel 2. 12. **At the head** (margin). In the place to which his rank entitled him.

10. Two. As required by long established law. Comp. Deut. 17. 6. **Sons of Belial.** It is unfortunate, perhaps, that this was not regularly translated "base" or "worthless fellows." **Belial,** "worthlessness," was never personified in Old Testament times. These men belong to the type so common in Oriental countries—in Bengal, for instance, at the present day—ready to swear

who ever is wanted with a tongue that betrays itself. Compare especially the "witnesses" against our Lord, procured too hurriedly to instruct them fully. The ninth commandment attests the prevalence of this crime. **Curse.** This word, literally "bless," has a curious history. From blessing at parting it passes into "saying farewell to," and so "renouncing," as margin (better). Comp. Job 1. 5; 2. 9. Naboth's brusque words to Ahab would be interpreted as covert disloyalty, supplying the usual grain of truth which makes the lie more piquant. **Out.** In accordance with the well-known rule that executions must not take place "within the camp." See Lev. 24. 13-16, which further prescribes stoning as the penalty. Stephen's case is an obvious parallel. There is a characteristic cynicism in Jezebel's insisting on the death penalty for "renouncing God!"

13. We must suppose that the people did not suspect the truth till Ahab's taking possession made it clear. Jehu adds that Naboth's sons were included in the judicial murder. The absence of other heirs would make it easier for Ahab to seize the property, and such precedents as Achan's history could be used to justify the inclusion of his family in the sentence.

15. Take. There is no evidence either that Ahab was next of kin, or that the property of a man executed thus was escheated to the crown. There being no claimant left, the king simply took it. **Dead.** Ahab thinks to quiet conscience by not knowing how he died.

16. The LXX. adds that the news produced a short outburst of horror and remorse. But the words seem merely borrowed from verse 27, and Josephus tells us that he hurried off at once on hearing the news. **Down.** Jezreel being considerably lower than Samaria. Ahab took with him Jehu and Bidkar, and went to the fatal field to meet the awful prophet who denounces what the unconscious charioteer will one day perform! Among all the grim stories which tell how sin hunts down her victims, there is scarcely one which so overwhelms the imagination as this of Elijah waiting in that aceldama to speak his last word to the doomed exulting sinner. A light as from a brighter age gleams over the words which tell that even Ahab could repent, and even Ahab, while repentant, be forgiven.

The Lesson Council.

Question 2. *What is covetousness, and why is it in the New Testament spoken of as idolatry?*

Covetousness is the desire for dishonest gain, the inordinate desire to have more. Often the things desired are the property of another, though not always. In either case it is intensely selfish. Whatever the mind is set upon may become the occasion

of idolatry; hence St. Paul, in Col. 3. 5, urges the Christians at Colosse to "kill off" the evil passions, "and covetousness which is idolatry," because they usurp the chief place in the heart.—*Rev. B. W. Hutchinson, A. M.*

Covetousness is the inordinate desire for what we have not. It differs from avarice in that the latter refers to the keeping of what we have, while the former signifies the getting of what we do not have. Idolatry is the worship of created objects, and by a figure of rhetoric is applied to covetousness in Col. 3. 5. Literally, mammon is the object desired, covetousness the desire itself. Covetousness is the estrangement of the affections from their proper object, God, to the improper object, mammon.—*John E. Earp, D. D.*

In its bad sense covetousness is an inordinate desire for some supposed good, a worldly possession of some sort; which desire dominates both reason and righteousness. It is synonymous with avarice and cupidity. It is called by the apostle "idolatry," because in its worse degree it makes money, or some other earthly gain, a supreme good, and sets it up in the place of God to be striven for with all the powers of body and soul. Gold is the miser's god.—*Ross C. Houghton, D. D., L. H.*

Covetousness is the inordinate desire for accumulation. There is a desire which is proper; this we term zeal. There is another which is improper, either in its fervency or in the object toward which it is directed; this we term covetousness. The Old Testament forbade covetousness, emphasizing its outward manifestations in practical life. The New Testament, with its light turned on the inner desires of the heart, calls covetousness idolatry (Col. 3. 5, and Eph. 5. 5). The connection is very close. Where the treasure is, there the heart is also. If our chief treasure is in the mighty dollar, there is our heart also. If our affections are expended upon worldly objects, God is left out and we become idolaters.—*Rev. W. G. Koons.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Covetousness.

I. ITS ROOT—SELFINESS.

Give me.... that I may have. v. 2.

"Be without covetousness." Hab. 13. 5.

"Keep thy heart." Prov. 4. 23.

II. ITS SPIRIT—DISCONTENT.

Heavy and displeased.... no bread. v. 4.

"Pierced themselves.... many sorrows," 1 Tim. 6. 10.

"Loveth silver.... not be satisfied." Eccl. 5. 10.

III. ITS GROWTH—CONSPIRACY.

Wrote letters in Ahab's name. v. 8-10.

"Lust.... bringeth forth sin." Jas. 1. 15.

"Out of the heart.... false witness." Matt. 15. 19.

IV. ITS FRUIT—CRIME.

Stoned him.... he died. v. 13.

"Temptation and a snare." 1 Tim. 6. 9.

"Root of all evil." 1 Tim. 6. 10.

V. ITS RESULT—MISERY.

Hast thou found me? v. 20.

"Ye rich men, weep and howl." Jas. 5. 1-3.

"Treasure and trouble therewith." Prov. 15. 16.

VI. ITS PENALTY—DEATH.

Shall dogs lick thy blood. v. 19.

"Wages of sin is death." Rom. 6. 23.

"This night thy soul." Luke 12. 20.

Thoughts for Young People.

Thoughts on Naboth's Vineyard.

1. *How much of evil and trouble comes from worldly possessions!* Naboth's vineyard cost its owner a dear price.

2. *How much of harm comes from looking with covetous desire upon the things of others.*

3. *A sin is none the less a sin though done for fear or for favor.*

4. *We may sin by proxy,* but we must suffer punishment in person.

5. *Not even a king* has power to make wrong right or good evil.

6. *He who sells himself to work evil* gets a small price for his pains.

Lesson Word-Picture.

"WHAT a fine vineyard!" Naboth may be saying. "All mine! What music the wind makes rustling the green leaves! Music saying, 'Mine, mine, Naboth's vineyard!'"

Ah, rich and poor Naboth, you don't hear something else—somebody saying to himself, "I wish Naboth's vineyard were mine!" It is a wish in the heart of that man living in yonder palace, a bad man, Ahab. Rich Naboth! Poor Naboth! So poor you will be soon!

Only a wish, a desire in Ahab's evil heart that Naboth's vineyard were his! It is a strong desire, a hot wish.

A leper-spot!

Look out, Ahab! Kill out that covetousness at once. The leper-spot will grow.

"I must have that vineyard," Ahab says. He goes to Naboth. A better vineyard or money Naboth shall have, Ahab tells him. Naboth shakes his head. This vineyard has been in the family so long! Selling it, I dare say, would be like selling his father's grave, and his grandfather's, and his great grandfather's.

O, how sick that Naboth makes Ahab! He goes home. He goes to bed. He turns his face to the

wall. He pines, he mopes, he sulks, he refuses to eat. The leper-spot is spreading.

There is a step in the king's chamber. It is a hard step. You don't like to hear it. Many people wish they had never heard it. It is Jezebel. Ah, Ahab, thy tempter has come. Stuff your robes of purple in your ears. Cover your eyes with your soft, white hands. Don't look. Don't listen.

"Why is thy spirit so sad?" she is asking.

He listens. He tells her about that miserable Naboth. O, that demon, who tells Ahab to get up and be merry. She will get him Naboth's vineyard.

How fast the leper-spot is spreading, covetousness growing right along toward robbery. That Jezebel is writing. She got the king's ink-horn, she got the king's seal, and now the devil's fingers are on her hand, and she is writing so furiously to this one, to that one, to all in power. O, what black devil-marks she has left in those letters! There is to be a fast, and those officials shall order it. Naboth is to be set on high, and then two sons of Belial are to charge him with blasphemy, he is to be dragged out, stoned. Stop her, Ahab! Check that spreading leper-spot! Covetousness inflamed into murder! No; the fast is proclaimed. Naboth is there among the people. He is set on high. But what evil-looking men are those, the two over there just entering, a snake's glitter in their eyes, the spring of a bloodhound in their very gait!

Leave, Naboth, leave! Flee for your life! Ah, you could not be in harder fetters were coils of iron laid about you. Those sons of Belial rise. A lie is on their lips and murder is in their souls. They thrust their deadly fingers like serpent's fangs toward poor, helpless Naboth. They charge him with blasphemy, that awful sin. O, what a clamor there is in the assembly! They are all so holy save Naboth! A blasphemer! They reach out after him. They clutch at him. They could tear in pieces this blasphemous wretch.

Such a holy uproar! Before it Naboth is swept away like one of his vineyard-leaves before a simoom. He is rushed by the mob outside the city, and then they all draw back from him as if he had the plague. They form a circle around him. He is in the center, a death-center. How the stones fly! Does he cry out for pity? Their yells drown his piteous wail. He falls, tries to stand up, drops again, would cover his head and shield it from that horrible rain of stones. It is Jezebel that is stoning him, Ahab that is stoning him. Perhaps he has found this out, knows there is no escape, lies prostrate on the ground, and soon a white, blood-stained, quivering face is turned up in mute appeal to the Avenger in the skies.

"Take possession of the vineyard of Naboth," Jezebel cries to Ahab. And a leper-soul covered

all over with the corruption into which covetousness has spread and festered goes as owner into the vineyard belonging to the still, white, cold face under the heap of stones. O, Ahab, hast thou any belief in a God? What if his messenger, Elijah, should rise up and suddenly confront thee?

By Way of Illustration.

"*Ahab turned away his face and would eat no bread.*" Madame De Pompadour, one of the most famous women of the brilliant French court, said: "There is no peace in ambition; it is always gloomy. The kindness of the king, the regards of the courtiers make me happy no longer. A new possession, however magnificent, can only please me a couple of days. I have no interest in the world. My ambitions conspire to embitter my life."

A covetous man is like a beast of burden. The more he has the more he groans under burdens and hangs down his head in dejection.

"*Wrote letters in Ahab's name.*" One lie needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building upon a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to hold it up, and proves at last more expensive than to have laid a true foundation.—*Addison.*

Golden Text. Not gold, but gold-seeking is unlawful. Dives did not go to hell because he was rich. Abraham was richer than Dives, and died in the faith. Not money, but "the love of money is the root of all evil."

The last commandment is the sum total of the nine others, and is placed so as to foot up the column. Covetousness is the cause of the grinding wage-system, of the dishonesty of stock-gambling and of all other forms of gambling, of the adulteration of foods, and of liquor-selling! It was the cause of slavery when that curse existed.—*H. M. Villiers.*

If I were called to point out the most alarming sins of to-day, I would not mention drunkenness with all its fearful havoc, nor gambling with its crazed victims, but the love of money on the part of man, and the love of display on the part of woman. While open vice sends its thousands to perdition, these fashionable and favored indulgences send their ten thousands! They sear the conscience, incurtise the soul in a shell of worldliness, and make man the worshiper of self. While doing all this the poor victim is allowed by public opinion to think himself a Christian, while the drunkard and gambler is not deceived by such a thought for a moment.—*Dr. Crosby.*

Luther was so afraid he might lose possessions that he prayed for poverty, saying, "I thank thee, O God, that thou hast made me a poor man upon earth." When the elector sent him a valuable present he wrote back he could not refuse what had

been given by the prince, but begged him to send no more, as he already possessed thirty dollars and was afraid he should be numbered with those whose portion is in this world.

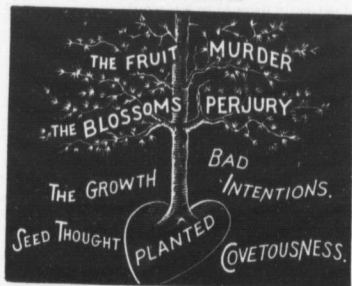
Teachers' Meeting.

First make plain geographical and historic background by means of sketch-map and review.... Ahab's sins: 1. Covetousness. 2. Discontent. 3. Conspiracy, in which Ahab was as guilty as his queen. 4. Falsehood—their charge against Naboth was a lying one. 5. Hypocrisy—for it was in the name of holy religion. 6. Robbery—for it was to obtain the possessions of another. 7. Murder—for it ended in Naboth's judicial slaughter.... A good blackboard exercise is to draw the outline of a vineyard, making dots or crosses for seven vines, and suddenly change it from a representation of Naboth's vineyard to a representation of Ahab's heart, and name each of the vines according to the outline of Ahab's sin given above.... Results of crime and sin are inevitable; Ahab's sentence.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 3; Sale of patrimony, 322. Ver. 8; Scals, 323; Letters, 381. Ver. 13; Executions outside the walls, 727.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 2; Prose, 7595-7606, 8392-8398, 1136-1154, 9753, 9755, 1474, 1475, 1478-1481, 236-246, 8392. Ver. 15, 16; Prose, 4638-4654, 9088, 9255, 9256, 2584, 3760-3763, 7980, 7982, 5099, 6000.

Blackboard.



EXPLANATION. Here is a tree, fruit-bearing, growing out of a heart. This illustrates the rapid growth of sin. First, the seed-thought—Covetousness. How quickly the seed imbeds itself and takes life and begins to grow! What does covetousness develop? It grows from the thought to bad intentions, and then growing and getting stronger the blossoms and the fruit appear. In today's lesson the seed-thought quickly developed

into evil intention, and then blossomed into perjury, and the fruit that followed was murder. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." Do not let the seed get into your heart, for it will grow and take root, and the fruit is crime.

FOUR STEPS IN CRIME.

Envy. Covetousness. Perjury. Murder.
DO NOT TAKE THE FIRST STEP.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT.—The Sin of Self-will.

Make a large heart on the board with a small root in it. Ask what roots in the ground do. Yes, they grow, roots of poison weeds as well as of good plants. Roots in hearts grow too. If this be a root of love, it will grow into good deeds; if it be a root of evil, it will grow into evil deeds. In some such way awaken curiosity as to the lesson-story which is coming.

Uncover a picture-frame which you have made on the board. Tell the children that they may think the picture for themselves. Here is a room in a king's palace. It is a beautiful room. How happy the people must be who live in such a place, you say. But wait; a man is lying upon the bed. He looks troubled and angry. When the servant comes to give him food, he turns his face away and will not eat. If he were a little boy we should say he was pouting. But he is a king. His name is Ahab. He rules a great many people, but, alas! he cannot rule himself. We will see what he is angry about now, and then you may tell if the root in his heart is a good or a bad one.

Come and look out of the window. There is a fine vineyard. It is near the palace, but it does not belong to King Ahab. Naboth owns it. It belonged to his father before him, and he loves it, for it was a part of his old home. King Ahab saw the beautiful vineyard and wanted it for his own. He asked Naboth to let him have it. He said he would give him another vineyard for it, or he would give him money for it. But Naboth was not willing to part with his inheritance. This made the king angry. He wanted to have his own way. So you see him lying here as one sick. Do you think it is a pleasant picture? Ask children if they can name the root in Ahab's heart. Print "Self-will" in the heart, and ask if it be a good or a bad root.

Uncover a picture of the tables of stone, having the commandments indicated by Roman numerals. Ask which of the commandments King Ahab had broken in his heart, and see if children want to know what the root of self-will grew to be. Tell the remainder of the story. Queen Jezebel saw the root of sin, and was glad to help it grow. The king showed it in his face and voice and manner. It would never have been seen if it had not first

been in his heart. (Extend the roots outside the heart.)

Tell what the queen did. Was this Ahab's sin? Yes; for he led her to do it, and yet it was her own sin, too. When we see others doing wrong, we should try to stop them; but if we cannot do that, we should turn away. Make the root of self-will grow into a little tree. Print on one of the branches "Deceit," on another "False Witness," on another "Murder." Let children tell what commands of God were broken by the wicked king and queen.

Tell, very briefly, how little pleasure Ahab found in the vineyard which came into his possession by Naboth's death. God saw and knew it all, and he let Ahab know that he would be punished for it. We never find happiness by breaking God's commands. Teach the Golden Text here, and use Ahab's sin to make plain what covetousness is.



Ask who would like to be such a man as Ahab, or such a woman as Jezebel. Ask children to name their sins. Yes; they coveted, told falsehoods, bore false witness, and committed murder. We can put it all into one word—"unbelief." They did not believe God, and so bad roots sprung up in their hearts very easily, and grew very fast. The same evil spirit that made them love sin wants to make us love it too. He will tempt us to covet, to love our own way, to lie, to bear false witness against our neighbor. How shall we be saved from all this? There is but one way.—by faith in Jesus. Make lesson symbol, and urge the need of faith in Jesus as the cure for all sin—not faith in word, but in deed. The child who believes Jesus will try in all things to do as Jesus did.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Yield not to temptation.
Dare to do right.
Am I a soldier.
Must Jesus bear.
Work for the night.
Keep to the right.
Stand up, stand up.
Over the ocean wave.
Stand up for Jesus.
Rescue the perishing.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What property of Naboth did Ahab covet? **A vineyard.**
2. Why did Naboth refuse to sell it? **It was against God's law to do so.**
3. What did Queen Jezebel do? **She ordered Naboth's death.**
4. Of what crime was he accused? **Of blasphemy.**
5. By what means was he found guilty? **By false witnesses.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"Take heed,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

10. What does our Lord say of those who reject Him?
He declares that they ought to believe in Him; and that they would believe in Him if they humbly and patiently listened to His words.
John viii. 46, 47; John x. 25-27; John iii. 19; xviii. 37; 1 John iv. 6.
11. What is His warning to them?
That His word shall condemn them at the last day.

B. C. 896.] LESSON VII. ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN. [Feb. 15.]
GOLDEN TEXT. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him. Gen. 5. 24.

Authorized Version.

2 Kings 2. 1-11. [Commit to memory verses 9-11.]

1 And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up E-li'jah into heaven by a whirlwind, that E-li'jah went with E-li'sha from Gil'gal.

2 And E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Beth'-el. And E-li'sha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth'-el.

3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth'-el came forth to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy

Revised Version.

- 1 And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up E-li'jah by a whirlwind into heaven, that
- 2 E-li'jah went with E-li'sha from Gil'gal. And E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Tarry here I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me as far as Beth'-el. And E-li'sha said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So
- 3 they went down to Beth'-el. And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth'-el came forth to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy mast'r from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it;

master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And E-li'jah said unto him, E-li'sha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jer-i'cho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jer-i'cho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jer-i'cho came to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 hold ye your peace. And E-li'jah said unto him, E-li'sha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jer-i'cho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will

5 not leave thee. So they came to Jer-i'cho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jer-i'cho came near to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered,

6 Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jer'dan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not

7 leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by Jer-

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

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

10 be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if

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

TIME.—B.C. 896. **PLACES.**—Gilgal, Beth-el, Jericho, and the Jordan. **RULERS.**—Jehoram, grandson of Ahab, King of Israel; Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The heavenly state.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Elijah translated. 2 Kings 2. 1-11.
 Tu. Enoch's translation. Gen. 5. 18-24.
 W. By faith. Heb. 11. 1-6.
 Th. Watching and waiting. Luke 12. 35-40.
 F. Ready to depart. 2 Tim. 4. 1-8.
 S. "Abundant entrance." 2 Pet. 1. 10-15.
 S. Out of great tribulation. Rev. 7. 9-17.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 134, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Talk with us, Lord, thyself reveal
- No. 130, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Come, ye that love the Lord.
- No. 133, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Now just a word for Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

I. The Journey, v. 1-8.

How did God purpose to remove from earth his fiery and thunderous servant?

What young man accompanied Elijah from Gilgal?

Where was Gilgal?

Where was Beth-el?

Why may we suppose Elijah to have so earnestly desired Elisha to remain?

What may have been Elisha's reason for so strenuously insisting upon accompanying Elijah?

What rival systems of worship had head-quarters in Beth-el?

Did the calf-worshippers believe in Jehovah?

In what direction did the two men walk from Beth-el to Jericho?

What reasons may have led Elisha to shun conversation with the sons of the prophets?

How many men watched the prophets as they advanced toward the Jordan?

What was the emblem of the prophetic calling?

In what sense was the bed of the Jordan now turned into dry ground?

How would this miracle at the close of Elijah's career be of advantage to God's cause?

What lesson may we learn from God's turning the whirlwind into a triumphal chariot?

What suggestions concerning the strength of true affection come from Elisha's conduct?

What may we learn from the fact that God gave his directions to Elijah by installments, not telling him at once to travel from Gilgal to Jordan, but revealing a little at a time?

Can any obstacle hinder God?

2. The request, v. 9, 10.

Had Elijah power to do much for Elisha if he so desired?

If Elijah in heaven could have answered Elisha's prayer from the earth, would he have made this offer now?

What is the meaning of the phrase "a double portion?"

What sort of character did Elisha show by preferring a spiritual blessing to all others?

Why was this request peculiarly "a hard thing?"

How may Elijah have known that if Elisha was permitted to see him to the last his request would be granted?

Was there any doubt about granting this request after God's order to Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor?

3. The Chariot of Fire, v. 11.

What awful spectacle followed this request?

Recall other references of Scripture to heavenly chariots and horses?

What inference may be legitimately drawn from this miracle?

What would have been the result if Elijah's faith had failed at this climactic hour?

What if Elisha's faith had failed?

Practical Teachings.

Wherein does this lesson suggest—

1. That all natural and spiritual forces are servants of God?

2. That men do not often blunder by holding their peace?

3. That he who goes where God sends is not in danger?

4. That God's providence leads us one step at a time?

5. That the reward of heaven fully compensates for all earthly trials?

6. That God turns all stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones for his children?

7. That the tenderest earthly ties must be severed?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Make the "sons of the prophets" a subject of study. Their schools were probably founded by Samuel. Read up in a biblical dictionary, if you

can; follow their history so far as it is traced in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

2. Collate scriptural references to armies of angels.

3. Put in writing what you suppose to have been the impression made at the time on the minds of those who witnessed or heard of this scene by (a) Elisha's persistence in accompanying his master; (b) his steady refusal to talk to the sons of the prophets; (c) the gathering gloom of the coming storm; (d) the manifestly supernatural peculiarity of the whirlwind; (e) Elisha's request; (f) the curling waters, as, for the second time, they retired before the stroke of the sheep-skin mantle.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Journey, v. 1-8.

Where did the Lord propose to take Elijah, and how?

Who went with Elijah from Gilgal?

What request did Elijah make?

What was Elisha's answer?

To what place did they journey?

Who there met Elisha?

What question did they ask?

What reply did he make?

What did Elijah then request of Elisha?

What did Elisha say to this request?

Who here met Elisha?

What did these men say to him?

How did he reply to them?

What request did Elijah again make?

How did Elisha answer this time?

Who stood watching their journey?

What did Elijah do at the Jordan?

What was the result of smiting the waters?

2. The Request, v. 9, 10.

What did Elijah bid his companion to ask?

What was Elisha's request?

What did Elijah reply?

3. The Chariot of Fire, v. 11.

What suddenly appeared as they journeyed?

Where did Elijah go?

What other saint did God translate? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we given—

1. An example of true friendship?

2. An illustration of persistent faith?

3. An evidence that faith is sure of reward?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Of what holy man of God is it said, "He was not; for God took him?"

What prophet was buried by the Lord?

Find a command given to Elijah concerning Elisha?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Elijah's servant and helper the last years of his life? **Elisha.**

Who knew it when Elijah was about to go to heaven? **The sons of the prophets.**

Where did Elijah and Elisha go? **From Gilgal to Beth-el.**

What did Elijah ask Elisha to do? **To let him go alone to Beth-el.**

What did Elisha say? **"I will not leave thee."**

Where did Elijah and Elisha next go? **To Jericho.**

Where did they then go? **To the river Jordan.**

How many sons of the prophets followed them? **Fifty.**

With what did Elijah strike the waters? **With his mantle.**

How did the two cross the river? **The waters parted and they walked on dry ground.**

What did Elijah tell Elisha to do? **To ask for some gift.**

What did Elisha ask? **A double portion of the prophet's spirit.**

What did Elijah say he had asked? **A hard thing.**

How did he say Elisha might know if his request was granted? **"If thou see me when I am taken from thee."**

What then appeared? **A chariot and horses of fire.**

How was Elijah taken up to heaven? **By a whirlwind.**

Was Elisha's prayer answered? **It was.**

Words With Little People.

"I WILL NOT LEAVE THEE."

See how many times Elisha said this to his master. When Satan comes to tempt us to leave Jesus, remember Elisha.

What did he gain by staying with Elijah? A great gift—a double portion of the prophet's spirit and a wonderful sight of the Lord's power and glory.

What will we gain by staying with Jesus?

Whisper Motto.

"Close to thee! Close to thee!"

General Statement.

Ahab, "which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up, and who did very abominably in following idols," seems to have become penitent in his later years. He was killed in a war with the Syrians 897 B. C. He was succeeded by his son Amaziah, who died 896 B. C. Jehoram, or Joram, Ahab's grandson, ascended the throne, and very soon after his ascension the Lord further revealed his will to the prophet Elijah. He led him from Gilgal to Beth-el, from Beth-el to Jericho, and from Jericho to the Jordan. At each of these towns there seems to have been a seminary of the "sons of the prophets," and at each Elijah unavailingly sought to persuade his attendant Elisha to leave him. When they came to Jordan the old prophet miraculously divided its waters by striking them with his shaggy mantle. Then, turning to his youthful companion, he asked what he could do for him before his ascent to heaven. Elisha felt, doubtless, like all the "sons of the prophets," that Elijah stood related to him as a father, beloved and venerated more than words could describe. And as when Jewish fathers died the first-born son received two "portions" of the inheritance—twice as much as the other sons received—Elisha asks that he may be acknowledged, like a first-born son, to be the full heir to the prophetic offices and gifts of his master. Now, Elijah knows that Elisha is to be his successor, but he apparently does not know how far this last request can be granted, and so passes it over to the eternal God, who makes no mistakes. If Elisha be permitted to see the translation of his prophetic master he may know that this request will be granted. Immediately, in full view of both, out of the gathering storm comes the sudden whirlwind, a chariot of fire, and horses of fire! Elisha is left on Jordan's plains, but Elijah is in heaven!

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. The time of this incident is uncertain. The connection would point to about 896 B. C., but from the fact that Elijah wrote a note to King Jehoram of Judah, whose reign began 891 B. C., some think that it was later. **When the Lord would.** When Elijah's peculiar work was fully done. **Take up.** Nowhere in the Bible is such an expression used to mean death. **Into heaven.** The Hebrews believed there were three heavens, in the highest of which was God's throne.

By a whirlwind. A storm; a tempest. Both to Job and to Ezekiel God was manifested in a whirlwind (Job 38. 1; Ezek. 1. 4). **Went with Elisha.** Ten years before Elijah had summoned Elisha from his father's farm in the Jordan valley to the wandering life of a prophet. He had accepted the call, and had been aiding Elijah in lowly service (2 Kings 3. 11), and in the organization of the "seven thousand" faithful ones. **From Gilgal.** Not the Gilgal near Jericho, but an-

other among the mountains, nine miles north of Beth-el, and a seat of idol-worship. Learn from this verse: (1) *That God brings his worker home when his task is complete.* (2) *The trials of a Christian are as nothing compared with his triumph.*

2. Tarry here. Perhaps the old prophet desired to be left alone, perhaps he would test the earnestness of his disciple. **Beth-el.** A city among the mountains north of Jerusalem, hallowed by memories of Abraham's altar and Jacob's ladder; at this time, like Gilgal, at once an idol sanctuary and the head-quarters of a school of the prophets. (3) *Where sin is abounding and sinners are most numerous the Church should be organized.*

As the Lord liveth. A solemn form of adjuration among the Israelites used only in matters of high importance. **I will not leave thee.** Perhaps he felt that in his heart his master desired his presence.

3. Sons of the prophets. In the days of Samuel these prophetic schools were first established, and from them had arisen many teachers. They may have died out until Elijah's day. They were not quite like monasteries, for some of the "sons" were married men; but they formed religious communities which kept shining the flame of the true worship. (4) *In our time every Sunday-school should be a school of the prophets. Knowest thou.* In some way—how it is needless to conjecture—the revelation of Elijah's departure had been received by both Elisha and the other disciples. **From thy head.** Teachers sat on elevated seats, the pupils on the ground at their feet. **Hold ye your peace.** The subject was too sacred to be discussed.

4, 5. Jericho. A city in the Jordan valley, near the head of the Dead Sea. It had been recently rebuilt and was a center of prophetic influence. For a while it became Elisha's home. It is now desolate. **They came.** A journey of twelve miles.

6. Sent me to Jordan. About five miles from Jericho is a bend in the river Jordan, where the ascension of Elijah may have taken place. **I will not leave thee.** For the third time the same request and the same answer; and then persistent faithfulness has its reward. **They two went on.** Picture the scene as the two walk together—the white-haired old prophet and the younger man.

7. Fifty men. A large school it must have been to furnish so many, as well as another fifty men afterward sent out. **Stood to view.** Perhaps on

the hill near Jericho, from which the plain, the river, and the mountains of Moab are all distinctly visible. They expected to see some miracle, but not the ascension of the prophet.

8. His mantle. A sheep-skin cloak, the badge of his prophetic office. (Trace its history.) **Wrapped it.** Folded it. **They were divided.** We have not Elijah's mantle, but we can have the faith without which it would have been only a sheep-skin. (5) *O, for a faith that will not shrink.*

9. Ask what I shall do. The departing saint thinks not of himself, but of his steadfast companion and his needs; and he gives him a test to show whether his aims are spiritual or material. (6) *What would be our answer to such a question?*

Before I be taken away. Whatever Elijah is to do for Elisha must be done before his rapture; so there is no warrant for the Romish doctrine of the intercession of departed saints. (7) *We have but one Advocate before the throne, and we need no other.* **Let a double portion.** The portion of a first-born. Elisha asked not for greater power than his master had, but to be regarded by him and by his God as the old prophet's rightful heir. The "double portion" is used merely as a figure of speech.

10. A hard thing. It depended not on his will, but on God's and on Elisha's personal fitness. (8) *Not even a prophet can always infallibly forecast God's will. If thou see me.* It would seem as if some special endowment was needful to secure this sight. The words have deeper meaning than we can now explain.

11. Still. Apparently with difficulty, for already the tremendous storm was gathering. **Talked.** Every minute must have seemed more precious than the last, for they were soon to be parted. **Chariot of fire.** Do not spend time on the interesting but unpractical question of whether this was a real chariot or simply a semblance. Learned commentators have said much on both sides, and it really matters little which is right. God would have revealed to us all the characteristics of heavenly society with the same distinctness that he has revealed to us the terms of our own personal salvation if he had desired us to understand these characteristics as fully. **Into heaven.** This phrase also has been variously interpreted by various writers. In view of the later and fuller revelation of divine truth we cannot doubt that Elijah was at once transferred to the blessed abode of God's saints, to rest in mental and spiritual delight from the arduous labors of earth.

CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

Once only after the death of Ahab does Elijah appear in our story before the closing scene. A prophet of judgment to the last, he has called down vengeance on two bands of soldiers, who through their captains have presumed rudely to dictate to

the servant of Jehovah, and has sent the message of death to Ahab's idolatrous son. And now for the third time in that strange life the fire of heaven is to descend, completing the symbolism which made it the emblem of his mission. It had asserted

Jehovah's Godhead and reclaimed his people to his service; it had consumed his enemies in sudden and awful destruction; and now it was to consecrate a prophet to serve God in a sphere where love gloried over judgment. All these were aspects of Elijah's own work on earth. But in his case we are permitted to see his mission transformed in a higher world. When next he came to earth at Jehovah's word it was to avert the divine curse and not to pronounce it, to reconcile and not to judge; and when for the last time the eyes of men beheld the Prophet of Fire, he stood before the Saviour and discoursed of the love unto death which should redeem the world (Mal. 4. 5, 6; Luke 1. 17; 9. 31).

Verse 1. The chapter is inserted fitly after mentioning Jehoram, King of Judah, to whom Elijah wrote (2 Chron. 21. 13). Chapter 81 resumes at an earlier point. **Whirlwind.** It was believed that during his life-time the breath of Jehovah used to catch him up and set him where no eye could follow. Comp. verse 16, and 1 Kings 18. 12. **Gilgal.** Not that of Josh. 4. 14, which was close to Jericho, but a place now called Jiljilia, west-south-west of Shiloh. The name "rolling" seems to have originally denoted some aboriginal cromlech, like our "Druidical circles." From the high ground here Elijah could take a last survey of the scenes of his labors, from Carmel and the western sea to the hills of Gilead whence he came. And now the irresistible impulse is on him again, and he must see the land of his birth once more before he passes. So he journeys south-east toward the place where Israel had crossed Jordan in the olden time, pausing for a moment at Beth-el and Jericho to see for the last time the prophetic communities whose zeal did so much to maintain the true faith in those dark days. If, as seems probable, the Gilgal of chapter 4. 38, is the same as this, Elijah and his destined successor had been living with such a colony before starting on the final journey.

2. Elijah's motives in thus urging Elisha to leave him may have included not only the craving for solitude at this supreme moment (comp. 1 Kings 19. 3, and note), but also the wish to test Elisha by endeavoring to spare him the strain of the impending trial. We can feel in these next verses how Elijah was "straitened till" his baptism of fire should "be accomplished." In awe-inspiring silence he leads his servant on; and the sons of the prophets coming to bid him farewell dare not break upon his reverie; and only when Jordan is passed are the prophet's lips unsealed to bestow his blessing and his last counsels. **Tarry here.** Among these kindred spirits, who would mitigate by sharing with him the pain of loss. **As Jehovah.** See note on 1 Kings 17. 1. The double form of the asseveration found also in 1 Sam. 20. 3, and 25. 26, expresses the most intense earnestness. **Went down.** The western Gilgal, in the hill-country of Ephraim, is considerably higher than Beth-el.

3. The "sons of the prophets" were not schools of young men destined for the prophetic order, but actual members of that order, living together in corporation near several ancient sanctuaries. They answered nearly to the clerical order in the Christian Church. In both there have been men who are called prophets in the highest sense—Samuel and Elisha, Paul, Luther, Wesley. But there have always been such prophets who have had no connection with the order—Elijah himself and Amos (see his words in chap. 7. 14), and in the Christian Church many who have never received ordination of any kind apart from self-evidencing credentials sealed by God alone. And just as the Christian clerical profession has included, alas! very many whom God never called—has sometimes (witness *Lycidas* and its preface) been openly irreligious for a generation—so in a yet more degenerate age the prophetic order became a very plague-spot. Comp. Jeremiah's frequent denunciations. **Thy master.** In a sense he was their master, as prophets, but the relationship with Elisha is unique. **From thy head.** So the disciple is described as sitting at the master's feet (Acts 22. 3). **To-day.** If this is literal they must have traveled more than twenty miles further that day. **I know.** Either from an unrecorded word of Elijah or by the prophetic inspiration itself, which may well have belonged to Elisha as much as to these others.

4. Jericho. The prophets seem to have chosen for their settlements places occupied by idolatry or otherwise connected with the apostasy which their lives protested against: Gilgal (if the same) appears as a seat of idolatry in Hosea and Amos, Jericho had been rebuilt under a curse, and Beth-el was the shrine of the calf-worship.

6. They too. Compare the very similar journey of Gen. 22. 6.

7. This verse, with verse 15, seems to indicate that the writer of this narrative was among these fifty who followed at a reverent distance to see the end. Apparently the number represents all who were not kept near home by the infirmities of age. **Over against.** On the high ground of Jericho, whence they could watch the descent and the (probably short) ascent on the other side of Jordan.

8. The miracle was wrought on the same spot as in Joshua's day, but the manner of it recalls the parting of the Red Sea, the waters being "divided," rather than the bed for miles being laid bare. The mantle used as the symbol of the wonder-working power reminds us of Aaron's rod.

9. Gone over. Into Elijah's native land, where he had longed to be. The Revised Version, margin, taken by the LXX., is about equally probable. They were now near the scene of the passing of Moses, and in the near presence of the end Elijah breaks the silence which was so hard for Elisha's love to bear. He grants him a boon, and the measure of the petitioner's faith would be the measure of its

reward. **Double portion.** See Revised Version, margin. The custom which gave the first-born two portions and the other sons one each was of high antiquity. Elisha's portion would be the smaller according as Elijah's spiritual sons proved more in number. But his request is not to be the Elijah of the new generation, but to be gifted so as to take the lead in completing his work. **Thy spirit.** Comp. verse 15; 1 Cor. 14. 32. It denotes the prophetic gift as "inspired."

10. Hard. Because for God alone to give. **If thou see.** Elijah had been already told that Elisha was to be "prophet in his room." But this was conditional on his faithfulness, and now the last test that Elisha's heart was "right with his heart" was his winning the prophetic vision, enabling him still to behold his master as he rose.

11. Still. Indicating, perhaps, a toilsome ascent after the long journey of the day. **Chariot.** Chap. 6. 17, is a profoundly striking parallel. The unique and awful appearance which crowns the life of Elijah is around all who fear God, if they could but see. All will remember Bunyan's magnificent application to describe the passing of a martyr. Mendelssohn, as throughout this wonderful story, makes the scene live as no commentary can do. **Whirlwind.** Perhaps this storm and cloud were seen by the watchers "afar off," only Elisha seeing the chariot and his ascending master. How striking in their resemblances and contrasts is the story of the ascension of One greater than Elijah!

The Lesson Council.

Question 3. *Wherein did the translation of Elijah differ from death? Did any change in his condition take place at this time?*

The cause was different. Death is the consequence of some organic lesion; translation was only a local change produced by external forces. The translation was probably accompanied by a change of condition from the natural to the spiritual body in order to adapt him to the environments of the life which all God's people are to enjoy in the hereafter. This is a matter of speculation, with few data from which to form an opinion.—*John E. Earp, D.D.*

Like Enoch, Elijah did "not see death." He passed through the resurrection change without experiencing the agonies of dissolution. Comp. 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. His was undoubtedly such a transition as all men, had not sin entered into the world, would have experienced when "entering on their full immortality." The very mortal body of Elijah, that lived at the time of his exaltation, "put on" incorruption and immortality (1 Cor. 15. 53). No new material was brought in; it was a divine change wrought upon the old material. The mode is a mystery.—*Ross C. Houghton, D.D., L.H.D.*

Elijah's translation involved (1) a sudden cessation of natural fleshly powers, that is, death; (2) an immediate transformation into the celestial spiritual body, that is, glorification. It was the process of the corruptible putting on incorruption. We believe Elijah was taken to heaven; that is, to the home of God's saints. Now, as flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, his translation involved the changing of his mortal body into that spiritual body suited to his new home. The body with which he entered heaven was the same as the redeemed will have after the resurrection; that is, a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15. 48). With this he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was no long process; the twinkling of an eye was sufficient (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52).—*Rev. W. G. Koons.*

Any answer here must be largely opinion or speculation. 1. Death is the separation of soul and body. It does not appear that any separation occurred in the case of Elijah. He was probably in that condition which the soul reaches after it has passed through death and has been united with the glorified body. 2. The change in Elijah was probably that "this mortal put on immortality," that he was "changed in a moment." His body may have been of the same nature as the glorified body with which Christ ascended, or the same as he took on at the transfiguration.—*Rev. B. W. Hutchinson, A.M.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Elijah and Elisha.

I. SAINTLY FELLOWSHIP.

1. *Elijah went with Elisha.* v. 1, 2, 4.
- "Two walk . . . agreed." Amos 3. 3.
2. *They two went on.* v. 6, 11.
- "That they all may be one." John. 17. 21.

II. OBEDIENT FAITH.

- The Lord hath sent me.* v. 2, 4, 6.
- "Whoever he saith . . . do." John 2. 5.
- "My friends, if he do." John 15. 14.

III. SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

- Knowest thou? . . . I know.* v. 3, 5.
- "Walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Cor. 5. 7.
- "The secret of the Lord." Psa. 25. 14.

IV. MIRACULOUS POWER.

- Smote the waters.* v. 8.
- "Greater works . . . shall he do." John 14. 12.
- "I give you power." Luke 10. 17.

V. HOLY AMBITION.

- A double portion.* v. 9.
- "Covet earnestly the best gifts." 1 Cor. 12. 31.
- "Seek that ye may excel." 1 Cor. 14. 12.

VI. GLORIOUS VICTORY.

- Went up by a whirlwind.* v. 11.
- "Who hath abolished death." 2 Tim. 1. 10.
- "Giveth us the victory." 1 Cor. 15. 57.

Thoughts for Young People.

God's Leadership.

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

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

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

4. *God guides to heaven.* A train or a steamer is known by the name of the place it is destined to reach. We talk of the Liverpool packet and the St. Louis express, and we judge the value of the trip almost entirely by the value of its destination. So in secular life. A man sets out to amass wealth; if he succeeds, he and we make little of the self-denials necessary in attaining it. So of scholarship. We do not ask how many headaches Huxley and Darwin had, but how much they discovered. Why not so of heaven? The success of a man's spiritual life is after all dependent on where it leads him to.

Lesson Word-Picture.

Elijah going to heaven this very day! Does he know it? Yes; he knows that in some strange way, up the path of the whirlwind, he will mount the steps of heaven. When will this path disclose itself? Where will it start? Would it not be well then to anticipate all this, to spend the intervening time in seclusion, in meditation, waiting for this rough stairway that will whirl down from the skies? No; the path of duty is always the path to heaven, and the Lord summons him to Beth-el. If the whirlwind swoop down upon him while traveling to Beth-el and sweep him away, Elijah's God will care for him.

He will go alone. He tells Elisha to tarry behind. No; Elisha will go. He wants to be with his master when the big, roaring trumpets of the whirlwind may sound.

So on they go to Beth-el.

And here come flocking out the sons of the prophets. They have something important to tell Elisha. They take him aside. They whisper in his ear. Does Elisha know that Elijah is going to heaven this very day? Yes, he knows it, and he bids them be silent. Will not Elijah wait among

these brethren at Beth-el for the coming of that whirlwind? No; the Lord has work for him at Jericho, and the path to Jericho is the path to heaven. Elisha insists upon going. They hasten across the country. And there is Jericho nestling among its green, leafy palms. And there are the Jericho prophets. They too ask if Elisha may know that his master is going to heaven this very day. Yes; and he promptly hushes them. Would not Jericho make a good stepping-stone from which to mount the back of that whirlwind? No; Elijah has a work at the banks of the Jordan, and Elisha persistently follows. They stand by the river. How will they get over? Will it not do to wait here for that whirlwind? No; Elijah must go over Jordan that very day, and how? How did Israel conquer the swellings of Jordan in the olden times? The two prophets stand side by side and face those angry swellings. Elijah removes his mantle. He folds it. With it he makes a staff, a rod, a wand. Shall he simply raise it even as Moses lifted his rod by the murmuring sea? No; Elijah draws back this mantle-rod and smites the stream. See how the waters run off? They hasten this way and that. They retreat in every direction, and, lo, a broad path to the other shore! Over Jordan Elijah goes that day. Elisha follows. The end is near. Its mystery presses upon Elijah. That whirlwind may drop any moment. He asks Elisha what he can do for him. Quick! Elijah is going! It's a will he makes, a testament he fills out, a legacy he is about to bequeath. Shall it be money, lands, fame? No; only to be like Elijah, a double portion even of Elijah's spirit resting upon Elisha. A hard thing to grant, but if Elisha see him departing, it shall be; and if not, it will not—and—and—and—look, look, Elisha! Lose not thine inheritance! While Elijah is talking, lo, a great, blinding glare of light, a whirl of wheels, a rush of feet, and there by Elijah's side is a chariot of fire! Horses of fire too are there! And all in one little moment! Elijah is not only in the chariot, but he is receding. Look, Elisha, look! Thou wilt lose that legacy! Put thy soul into thine eyes and look, look, look! Another moment, and there is nothing to be seen. Those noiseless wheels are bearing Elijah over unseen roadways to heaven, and by Jordan's banks Elisha stands alone.

By Way of Illustration.

Elijah was obscure in his origin, springing probably from the herdsmen or vine-dressers of Galilee. His person was held in contempt by the wicked court. Notwithstanding, he received large revelations, performed stupendous miracles, and at last, tired of the world, went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. How has this story been repeated? Men have looked at the trappings of the messenger, not at the import of the message. Columbus received the scoffs of the courts of England and Genoa and Port-

ugal, but he discovered America. Harvey was hated and ridiculed by physicians, but he discovered the circulation of the blood. John Bunyan was sneered and dubbed "the Bedfordshire tinker," but his name to-day is with the shining ones on the roll of fame. William Carey was called in derision "the consecrated cobbler," but he evangelized India. The fiercest abuse was heaped on Calm-browed, high-souled John Wesley, but the whole world to-day has rejoiced in the light kindled by "that Methodist." Our blessed Master was called a Nazarene, and there was the scorn of a world couched in the contemptuous word.—*W. M. Punshon.*

Verse 1. In the twilight of a summer evening, a pastor called at a home and found seated in the door-way a little boy with both hands extended upward holding a line. "What are you doing here, my little friend?" inquired the minister. "Flying my kite, sir." "Flying your kite!" exclaimed the minister; "I can see no kite." "I know it, sir," responded the boy; "I cannot see it, but I know it is there, for I feel it pull." "So does heaven attract us, if our affections are set upon things above.

Verse 7. There is a power in noble character to attract men. Lamartine in 1848 introduced a speaker to the riotous populace with these words: "Listen, citizens! It is sixty years of a pure life that is about to address you." At once the multitude became attentive. Integrity and purity have power.

Verse 11. Two boys were conversing about Elijah's ascent in the chariot of fire. Said one, "Wouldn't you be afraid to ride in such a chariot?" "No," was the reply; "not if God drove."

Bishop Hannington, the martyr-bishop of Africa, wrote this as his last message to his friends in England, just before he was put to death: "If this is the last chapter of my earthly history, the next will be the first page of the heavenly."

Golden Text. Rowland Hill tells of a poor man who said that the way to heaven was short and simple; in fact, only three steps long—"Out of self, unto Christ, and into glory."

A little girl was heard to say to her playmate, "I've found out the way to heaven." "Tell me how to get there," said the listening child, eagerly. "Just commence going up, and keep on going up all the time, and you'll get there. But, Johnny, you mustn't turn back."

Teachers' Meeting.

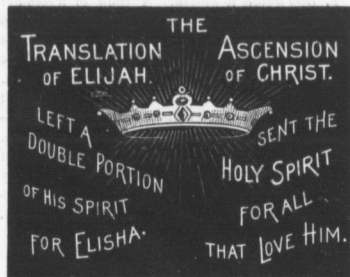
Time and place....Sketch map; trace journey....Study of personalities: 1. Elijah. 2. Elisha. 3. Sons of the prophets....Symbols of lesson: 1. Turning whirlwinds into triumphal chariots. 2. Turning barriers into highways. 3. Virtue of silence. 4. Symbol of the mantle....State briefly

Elijah's achievements: what his life had really effected for Israel....New times demand new men....Define "Sons of prophets."....Show character of Elisha from his request and of Elijah from his answer....To each man was given all he could take. Elisha's inheritance was made dependent on Elisha's vision. "The sons of the prophets stood to view, but only Elisha saw."

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 8: "Sons of the prophets," 326....FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 750, 739, 11816, 5485-5490, 785, 2968, 2976, 12189-12191; Poetical, 3402, 3388-3385. Ver. 1: Prose, 4654, 4655, 11163. Vers. 7-11: Poetical, 1052. Ver. 8: Poetical, 8640. Ver. 11: Poetical, 530; Prose, 1734, 2488, 10435, 11768.

Blackboard.



The blackboard brings before the school this truth: that when Elijah was translated he left with his followers a double portion of his spirit that the work of God might be continued by Elisha. The mantle was that of faith and obedience. When our Saviour ascended in a chariot of clouds he sent the Holy Spirit that he might guide and comfort each disciple of his ever afterward, and that you and I might receive a portion of his Spirit, and continue the work he came to do—the salvation of sinners. Let us, each one, be faithful unto death, that we may receive a crown of life.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|------|
| ELIJAH | { | FEARED TRUSTED OBEYED HAD POWER WITH | } | GOD. |
| I CAN DO THE SAME. | | | | |

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT.—*God's Chariots.*

If you can secure a picture of Elijah, pin it to the

board, and give time for a little familiar talk about the grand old prophet. Let children recall incidents in his life, and especially encourage them to put into words their thought of him as a man.

Tell that now God wanted Elijah in heaven, and so he sent for him to come. Has God sent to your house for someone? Perhaps father or mother has gone; maybe little brother or sister. Maybe he will send for you some day soon. We do not know, but God knows, and he never makes mistakes. If we try to please God in our lives as Elijah did we shall not feel afraid when he sends for us.

Make a path with flat crayon, and marks to stand for two men in the path. One is Elijah, the other his servant Elisha. They are going from Gilgal to Beth-el. Elisha was not willing to leave his dear master, though Elijah told him to tarry behind. He was a faithful servant, and wanted to follow his master wherever he went. That is the way we should feel about following Jesus, our Master.

Make a square for Beth-el, and many marks to stand for the sons of the prophets. Who were these men?

Explain that Elijah was not only a great prophet, but a great teacher. He taught many young men how to serve God and how to teach others to serve him too. These young men loved their good friend and teacher. They seemed to know that he was about to be taken to heaven, and they wanted to look at him once more. [Make another square farther on.] Here is Jericho. Some of Elijah's friends and pupils are here. [Make more marks.]

Here is the river Jordan. [Broaden the path and make strokes to look like flowing water.] Here are more sons of the prophets at a little distance, fifty of them, watching to see their teacher. How can these two men get across the wide river? There is no boat to carry them. God will take them across. See; Elijah takes off his mantle, folds it together, and strikes the water. It rolls back [the crayon will help children to see it], and Elijah and Elisha go over on dry ground. They were following God's command, so it is not strange that he led them in the right way. The fifty men who were watching could see it all. Do you not think they saw the power of the great God?

Tell of the offer Elijah made to Elisha, and Elisha's request. Help children to see how wise Elisha's choice was. No treasure can be so great as the gift of the good Spirit! The poorest man is rich if the Spirit of God be in his heart, and any one may have this Spirit who will really seek for it. If a picture of the chariot can be secured, show it here. If not, help children to imagine the wonderful scene. God sent for his faithful servant. We may never know what the fiery chariot was, but it was good and safe, and we are sure that Elijah was not afraid.



God has chariots now which he sends to meet his children. One came to Nellie's house this morning. The baby was cross, and mamma was sick. Harry teased the baby, and would hurt her dear kitty. When Nellie was just ready to cry with vexation her thought flew to Jesus in a little prayer, and she was lifted right up into a chariot of patience and courage which made it easy to soothe the baby, to help and comfort mamma, and to be kind to Harry. No one saw the chariot, but Nellie rode happily in it all day.

God has plenty of chariots waiting for us—chariots of good-will, tenderness, love—all waiting to carry us into his heaven of peace, even here on earth. Who will get up into them, and be carried across the dark river of self over into the sunlight of God's dear love?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

I'm but a stranger.
My days are gliding.
How happy every child.
O when shall I sweep.
I would not live alway.
On Jordan's stormy.
Shall we gather.
We shall meet.
What a meeting.
Shall we know each other.
Sweet by-and-by.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who accompanied Elijah? **Elisha.**
2. Who came out to watch Elijah's ascension? **The sons of the prophets.**
3. How did Elijah make the waters of the Jordan divide? **He smote them with his mantle.**
4. What did Elisha ask? **A double portion of his master's spirit.**
5. What appeared while they talked? **A chariot of fire, and horses of fire.**
6. Where was Elijah carried? **Into heaven.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

12. What blessing does He pronounce on believers? **To Peter He gave it thus:
And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.—Matthew xvi. 17.
And to Thomas He gave it.—John xx. 29.**

B. C. 896.]

LESSON VIII. ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR.

[Feb. 22.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4. 6.

Authorized Version.

2 Kings 2. 12-22. [Commit to memory verses 12-14.]

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

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

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

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

16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

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

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

19 And the men of the city said unto E-li'sha. Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground barren.

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

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

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of E-li'sha which he spake.

Revised Version.

12 And E-li'sha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Is-ra-el and the horse-men thereof! And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jor'dan. And he took the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord, the God of E-li'jah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they were divided hither and thither: 15 and E-li'sha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were at Jer-i-cho ever against him saw him, they said, The spirit of E-li'jah doth rest on E-li'sha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he 17 said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three 18 days, but found him not. And they came back to him, while he tarried at Jer-i-cho; and he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

19 And the men of the city said unto E-li'sha, Behold, we pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is 20 naught, and the land miscarrieth. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. 21 And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast salt therein, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or miscarrying. 22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the word of E-li'sha which he spake.

TIME.—B. C. 896. Following closely the incidents of the last lesson. **PLACES.**—The Jordan and Jericho. **RULERS.**—Same as before. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The indwelling Spirit.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The prophet Elisha. 2 Kings 2. 12-22.
 Tu. The prophet's mantle. 1 Kings 19. 19-21.
 W. Miracle of the water. 2 Kings 3. 14-20.
 Th. The bitter waters healed. Exod. 15. 23-27.

- F. Christ's ascension. Acts 1. 6-11.
 S. Greater works. John 14. 8-14.
 S. The Lord is near. Psa. 145. 14-21.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 132, New Canadian Hymnal.
 All praise to our redeeming Lord.
 No. 138, New Canadian Hymnal.
 My hope is built on nothing less.

No. 141, New Canadian Hymnal.
My Shepherd will supply my need.
DOMINION HYMNAL.
Hymns, Nos. 255, 251, 269.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **A Prophetic Token**, v. 12-14.
Why did Elisha call Elijah "father"?
What did he mean by his exclamation about chariots and horses?
Why did he rend his clothes?
What did the mantle of Elijah signify to him?
What did the parting of the waters indicate to Elisha?
What did it indicate to the sons of the prophets who watched from afar?
What does it typify to us to-day?
2. **The Prophetic Spirit**, v. 15-18.
Why did the sons of the prophets talk of the "spirit" of Elijah instead of his mantle?
What did they believe had happened to Elijah?
Why did Elisha decline their offer?
What incidental advantage may have come from this three days' search by fifty men?
3. **Prophetic Power**, v. 19-22.
What was the matter with Jericho?
What is the meaning of the word "naught" in this place?
What is a cruse?
Why did Elisha want a new cruse?
What does salt stand for?
Of what is a spring emblematic?
Why did God work frequent miracles in ancient days?
Why is not the same force working to the same degree to-day?

Practical Teachings.

Wherein does this lesson teach—

1. That leaders are more in demand than followers?
2. That character is shaped in its beginnings?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Mark the difference in character and calling of the class of prophets represented by Elijah and Elisha, and the class represented by Isaiah and Jeremiah.
2. Make a list of the test miracles of the Bible—those which, like Elisha's parting the waters of the Jordan, were wrought as demonstrations of the divine power to strengthen human faith.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **A Prophetic Token**, v. 12-14.
What did Elisha say when Elijah disappeared?
When and where was Elijah again seen? (See Matt. 17. 3.)

- What did Elisha do in token of grief?
What did he have that belonged to Elijah?
What did he do with the mantle?
What question did he ask?
What was the result of smiting the waters?
What Christian grace did he show in this act?
2. **The Prophetic Spirit**, v. 15-18.
What did the sons of the prophets say about Elisha?
How did they show him honor?
What request did they make about Elijah?
What was Elisha's reply?
Why did he at length yield to their request?
How long did they search, and with what result?
Where did Elisha wait for them?
What did he say to them?
 3. **Prophetic Power**, v. 19-22.
What did the men of Jericho say about their city?
What did Elisha bid them do?
What use did he make of the salt?
What did he say?
What was the result of his acts and words?
When before had bitter waters been sweetened? (See Exod. 15. 25.)
How was this miracle wrought? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That God answers prayer?
2. That God rewards fidelity in his service?
3. That God gives power to his servants?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

How many times in Bible history were flowing waters divided so as to form a passage across?
By what miracle did the Lord Jesus change the nature of water?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- Who saw Elijah carried up to heaven? **Elisha.**
What became of Elijah's mantle as it fell from him? **Elisha caught it.**
What did he do with it? **He smote the waters of the Jordan with it.**
What followed? **The waters divided again.**
Who saw this? **The sons of the prophets.**
What did they say? **"The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."**
What did they do? **They bowed before him.**
What did they ask him to let them do? **Go and look for Elijah.**
What did this show? **Their doubt if God had taken him.**
Why was Elisha not willing to have them send? **He was sure that God had taken Elijah.**
What did he finally let them do? **Search for Elijah.**
How long did they look? **For three days.**
Of what did the people of Jericho complain? **Of poor water and barren land.**

What did Elisha do? **He healed the waters.**

What did he put into them? **Salt.**

Whose power made the waters sweet? **The Lord's power.**

Words With Little People.

LITTLE THINGS.

Elijah's mantle was not a great thing, but it worked a great work in the hand of faith. A little

salt in a cruse seems a small thing, but the bitter waters were made sweet by its use, and the barren land became fruitful.

It is faith in God's power that brings great good out of little things.

Whisper Motto.

"I believe in God."

General Statement.

The vision of the horses and chariots of fire showed plainly to Elisha that his prayer for prophetic power was granted. In the sudden awe with which he saw his master removed to heaven he rent his garments apart. Taking up Elijah's sheep-skin mantle, he tested the divine power with which he now believed himself to be endowed. Imitating the elder prophet, he, too, smote the waters of Jordan, and again they divided. This miracle was immediately accepted by the "sons of the prophets" as a divine demonstration of Elisha's inheritance of Elijah's spirit. Against Elisha's will a company of these young men searched the mountains and valleys for Elijah's body, but they found it not. For a while the newly commissioned prophet abode in the beautiful but unhealthy city of Jericho. The elders of that town complained to him of the bad waters, which brought disease and death to all who partook of them. Elisha called for a new cruse, and, filling it with salt, went forth to the spring of the waters, and, casting the salt in there, healed them in the name of the Lord.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 12. My father. A title given to the prophets by the "sons of the prophets." It has been used in all ages and countries for religious teachers. That Elisha used it with a fuller meaning is shown by his request for the first-born's share. **Chariot....horsemen.** "The standing army of the nation." As if one said, at the death of some great patriot, "There lies our army and navy." (1) *One strong heart is equal to an army.* **Saw him no more.** This shows the suddenness of the translation. The two were walking and talking together in the gathering gloom of the storm; there came a sudden burst of wind, a flash that seemed like a flaming chariot, and the older man was gone! **Rent them in two pieces.** His intensity of feeling was expressed in true Oriental style. In "rending clothes" they tear the front of the garment downward from the opening at the waist. (2) *It is no sin to mourn if one be submissive to Providence.*

13, 14. Mantle. Probably sheep-skin. Prophets in all nations have worn as an emblem skins dressed with the hair on. **Smote the waters.** "As if he had said, Lord God, it was thy promise to me by my departed master that if I should see him in his last passage, a double portion of his spirit should be upon me. I followed him with my eyes in that fire and whirlwind; now, therefore, O God, make good thy gracious word unto thy servant; make this the first proof of the miraculous power wherewith thou shalt endow me. Let Jordan give the same way to me as it gave to my master."—*Bishop Hall.* He acts just like his venerated master. (3) *We must confide in God to carry us through.* (4) *We must confide in our own mission if we would be effective.* (5) *God never fails.*

15-18. Sons of the prophets. These young men apparently lived together in a sort of monastic institution. **Saw him.** They may not have fully understood the conditions, but what they saw convinced them that God was now with Elisha. **Bowed themselves.** Recognized him as their chief. (6) *It is a great talent to be able to recognize a leader. Let them go.* They appear to have thought that Elijah's corpse might be discovered somewhere. **Cast.** "And yet could they think that God would send such a chariot and horses for a less voyage than heaven?"—*Bishop Hall.* **Ye shall not send.** They did not understand what had really occurred; he did. **Send.** He weakened under their pre-sure. (7) *"Nothing will teach some men wit but disappointments."*

19-22. Men of the city. Leading citizens. **The situation.** Jericho, near the passage of the Jordan, was very beautiful in its surroundings; but, like many a beautiful spot, it was both malarial and troubled by the unhealthfulness of its water. Now that a prophet had come in person as a resident they looked for relief. (8) *"It is good making use of a prophet while we have him."*—*Bishop Hall.* **Pleasant.** Jericho's surroundings had been described (Gen. 13. 10) as "the garden of the Lord." **Naught.** Naught or bad. It is an old use of the word. **Ground barren.** As a result. **A new cruse.** A vessel which would typify by its purity the miraculous work which was to be wrought by its contents. **Salt.** "The noxious qualities of the water could not be corrected by the infusion of salt, for supposing the salt was possessed of such a property, a whole spring could not be purified by a dishful for a day, much less in all future time. The pouring in of the salt was a symbolic act with which Elisha accompanied the word

of the Lord, by which the spring was healed."—*Kel.* The spring still exists. It is now called

Ain es Sultan, and the flavor of its waters is pleasant.

CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

It is very instructive to observe the circumstances under which the great prophets of Scripture received their call—to see how the eternal diversity emphasizes the unity of the Spirit which comes to them. In Elisha's case we find its medium is the intense spiritual sympathy between him and his predecessor. It seems at first strange that out of this beginning should spring a career in every respect so different from that which inspired it. Dwelling in towns like an ordinary citizen, honored and consulted by kings who owed their throne to him, working miracles of simple beneficence, he seemed deliberately to contrast his own "voice of gentle stillness" with the rugged grandeur of Elijah. At the outset of his career he had to vindicate the majesty of Jehovah against the mockery of young Baal-worshippers, and we shall see later how he had to call a terrible judgment upon the liar Gehazi. But with these exceptions his activity is spent in doing good. The preparatory work of destruction was done, and Elisha was to follow Elijah even as the stern Baptist was followed by the gentle Son of man. And although among those born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than the first or the second Elijah, yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven has higher privileges and a more blessed work than they.

Verse 12. Father. For Elisha was now receiving the due of the first-born son. **Chariots.** The words were applied to Elisha himself on his death-bed by the sorrowing Joash (chap. 13. 14). Psalm 20. 7, suggests the meaning: The man of God, as such, was more to Israel than all her chariotry. There may possibly be a hint of the feeling that horsemen and chariots were essentially an un-Israelitish institution (comp. Dent. 17. 16; Hos. 14. 3, etc.), whose place was more than supplied by superhuman aid. **Saw him no more.** The purpose of the vision being attained. (Comp. Acts 8. 39; Luke 24. 31.) **Rent.** Going beyond the usual sign of grief, which did not involve tearing the garment through. The act with an Oriental would be perfectly spontaneous.

13. Mantle. It is very unlikely that Elisha wore it; to reproduce the characteristics of Elijah was just what he would avoid. The ascending prophet once more casts his mantle upon his successor, and this time in token of the bestowal of what had before been promised only. Even though it had just been the instrument of a miracle, it was a thing of earth which could not share the exaltation of the man who wore it.

14. The God of Elijah, even he (margin). This translation is the least unlikely, but has serious difficulties; versions and commentators are hopelessly disagreed. Klostermann's version may be quoted: "Where Jehovah is.... there also is he"

(Elijah). There was an old interpretation preserved in the Vulgate and one text of the LXX., that Elisha smote once without effect, his appeal to Jehovah bringing the answer. This misinterprets Elisha's question, which has no hint of doubt or dis-appointment in it.

15. The band of prophets had apparently watched him from his emerging out of the storm-cloud. **Bowed.** Though prophets themselves they recognize instinctively the headship of one who succeeds Elijah.

16. Fifty. Apparently the same as those in verse 7 (see note), if we may assume that only a few of these watchers went to meet Elisha. The "Go not" below shows that those he addressed were among the fifty. **Cast him.** His dead body. They knew that Elijah was to be taken from the earth, but naturally they did not expect an ascension in the body. They thought the Spirit of Jehovah had taken him as aforetime into some lonely height or valley, where he died like Moses.

17. Ashamed. Comp. Judg. 3. 25, and chap. 8. 11. He did not like to discountenance so urgent a petition, though he knew it would be useless.

19. This gracious act for the settlers in a town with such a history is characteristic of Elisha. Some of them had been of those who defied the curse of Joshua, but Elisha ignores this and bestows the divine blessing to draw them to Jehovah's service. It was his constant policy to start from an imperfect present toward a purer future. No unpractical and narrow scruples hindered his large-hearted work. **Pleasant.** Comp. Gen. 13. 10, for the fertility of this situation. **My lord.** Comp. Obadiah's deference to Elijah (1 Kings 18. 7). **Naught.** That is, bad, a common word in Shakespeare. The spring is apparently represented as making the herbage noxious, so as to cause sterility in animals.

20. The miracle is like that of Marah (Exod. 15. 25). We note throughout Elisha's fondness for using visible instruments for his works, such as our Lord himself sometimes used. The new cruse, filled with the purifying salt, typified purity, while at the same time to add salt to bitter water was as unlikely a cure in itself as to anoint a blind man's eyes with clay.

21. One spring still waters the plain of Jericho, and may well be the same.

22. This day. Probably added by the editor of the whole book.

The Lesson Council.

Question 4. *Who were the sons of the prophets?* The pupils or disciples of the prophets. It was

customary for the Hebrew to call his teacher "father" and his pupil "son" (1 Sam. 10. 12; 2 Kings 2. 12; Prov. 1. 8, 10, 15; 2. 1; 4. 1). These titles were especially appropriate in this case, since the relations between the prophets and their pupils, as, for example, between Elijah and Elisha, were of the most confidential and intimate character. See also 1 Sam. 8. Following this custom, and at the same time explaining it, Paul calls Timothy and Titus his sons in the faith.—*Ross C. Houghton, D.D., L.H.D.*

The students of the prophets were called their "sons," as teachers are sometimes called fathers. So Elisha called Elijah "My father" (2 Kings 2. 12), and was in turn called "father" by the king (2 Kings 6. 21). The "schools of the prophets," in which these "sons" were trained, are supposed to have originated with the prophet Samuel, and flourished in the times of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha. These sons were not monastics. Some married and had houses of their own (2 Kings 4. 1, 2); others were not married and dwelled together (2 Kings 6. 1, 2). They were under training of the prophets, and in time became their assistants and finally their successors. Such schools were located at Beth-el, Ramah, Jericho, Gilgal, and probably other places.—*Rev. W. G. Koons.*

The sons of the prophets were probably the young men being trained in the law, in music, and sacred poetry in the "schools of the prophets." Such schools existed at Ramah, afterward at Beth-el, Gilgal, and Jericho. They were probably under the direction of one of the older prophets. It does not follow that all these young men had the inspired gift of prophecy; and we know that some were called to the prophetic office from without the schools.—*Rev. B. W. Hutchinson, A.M.*

Institutions for training prophets were first established by Samuel. The senior members gave instruction, while the pupils were called "sons of the prophets." Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha are mentioned as heads of such organizations. The spiritual fathers traveled from place to place to visit these schools. The pupils lived in common as to board and dwelling, and remained members after marrying and leaving the schools. It was the office of the prophets to keep vigilant watch over the conduct of the nation and of public officers, to bear testimony against every declension from God and his law, to proclaim the divine judgments against the obdurate, to promise when needful deliverance and blessings, and to write the theocratic history.—*John E. Earp, D.D.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Prophet's Anointing.

I. HIS SORROW.

1. *And Elisha saw.* v. 12.

"If thou see me." 2 Kings 2. 10.

2. *My father.... the chariot.* v. 12.

"Of whom the world was not worthy." Heb. 11. 38.

3. *Took hold.... rent them.* v. 12.

"That ye sorrow not." 1 Thess. 4. 13.

II. HIS INHERITANCE.

1. *Took up.... the mantle.* v. 13.

"Cast his mantle upon him." 1 Kings 19. 19.

2. *Where is.... God of Elijah?* v. 14.

"We trust in the living God." Psa. 20. 7.

3. *They parted.... went over.* v. 14.

"So will I be with thee." Josh. 3. 7.

III. HIS AUTHORITY.

1. *The spirit.... on Elisha.* v. 15.

"The Spirit.... rest upon him." Isa. 11. 2.

2. *Bowed.... before him.* v. 15.

"Obey them that have the rule." Heb. 13. 17.

IV. HIS FAITH.

1. *Ye shall not send.* v. 16.

"Natural man receiveth not." 1 Cor. 2. 14.

2. *Did I not say.... Go not.* v. 18.

"Spiritual judgeth all things." 1 Cor. 2. 15.

V. HIS POWER.

1. *Thus saith the Lord.* v. 21.

"Not by might.... by my Spirit." Zech. 4. 6.

2. *The waters were healed.* v. 22.

"A new creature." 2 Cor. 5. 17.

Thoughts for Young People.

Elisha's Actions as Object-Lessons.

1. *His insight.* To most men of that day Elijah was simply a shaggy old prophet with a strange gift of working wonders and a horror of wrong. Elisha sees deeper, and recognizes in this strange man the truest earthly defense of Israel. It had few forts and fewer chariots and horses, but it needed few so long as it had Elijah.

2. *The parting of the waters.* It was of no great personal advantage to Elisha to re-cross the river by a miracle, for there was a ford not far off. But it was of prime importance to test his strength with God, not as a mere curious experiment, but as an evidence to himself that his prayers were answered, and that he had inherited to the full Elijah's miraculous gifts.

3. *The spring of the waters.* It is at the springs of life that work must be done for God. Not salt, but God's power, really healed these waters, and that might well have been exercised anywhere; but Elisha conveyed a delicate lesson by "casting the salt in there."

Lesson Word-Picture.

There has been a marvelous manifestation before Elisha's eyes, a chariot of fire, horses of fire, and his old master, Elijah, was the central figure in that

vision, caught up in an instant and rapidly borne away! It was done so suddenly. And yet Elisha knew that Elijah was going to heaven that very day! When, when do we feel ready to see heaven's great gates of pearl falling back and admitting our beloved? Why, one moment Elisha is talking with his master. Another moment, Elisha is alone and Elijah is in that dazzling chariot, rapidly, noiselessly rolling up through the sky! So sudden! Elisha is overwhelmed with breathless awe. He holds out his hands. He turns heavenward his astonished eyes. He cries pitifully, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" How can he live without Elijah! He beats upon his breast. He rends his robes. He sobs anew.

But look, Elisha, at that mantle fluttering down through the air!

Elijah may have purposely dropped it.

O, how entrancing that sight, the very mantle with which Elijah had smitten Jordan's trembling waters! It flutters lower, lower, even as a wing, and a wing it shall be to bear up in a new hope Elisha's sinking heart. He runs to it, eagerly seizes it, clings to it, and with it in his hands soon stands by Jordan's rushing stream. How can he cross its turbulence? So weak, helpless, alone! But does that mantle mean nothing?

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" he cries, as he smites the proud river. And, lo, it yields, it retreats, it parts, and in triumph the disciple crosses over the bed that his master's feet had so recently trodden. Elijah is gone, but Elijah's God stays. Yes, that mantle is a wing to waft Elisha over Jordan.

But all this time there have been fifty of the sons of the prophets watching from afar. They saw Elijah and Elisha cross together the Jordan divided by Elijah's mantle. They now see Elisha coming back alone, the mantle in his hands. They watch every movement. They see the mantle lifted, waved, descending on the water. Will it part? They strain their eyes to catch any sign of the receding of the water. Yes, yes; it goes back! The spirit of the old master is on Elisha, and he will be the new master. They come eagerly to meet him. They bow before him. They salute him. They are ready to acknowledge his power as if he were a king and that mantle were his scepter.

But the old master? May he not be alive yet? Would it not be well to search on the lonely mountains, down in the far-off, secluded valleys? He may have been dropped there.

That golden chariot halt and drop Elijah this side of heaven's gates! Never! Elisha will not send a searching party. But they ask him again. They entreat. They urge. "Send!" he says at last. He will not waste another word on their plans. They send. The wild mountains are traversed. The lonely valleys are visited. They come back

wearily and with empty arms. They ought to have hunted in heaven.

And now the men of the city have a prayer. Their water is naught. Their ground is barren. Elisha asks for a new cruse. He asks for salt. He stands by the spring of the waters. He casts in the salt. Lo, Elijah's spirit of power is on his successor and the waters are healed.

By Way of Illustration.

Elijah's Mantle. It was used by God as a symbol of his power. A few years ago a man left England and went to America. He was an Englishman, but he was naturalized and so became an American citizen. While taking a tour through Cuba the civil war broke out there, and he was arrested by the Spanish government as a spy. He was tried, found guilty, and ordered to be shot. The trial was conducted in Spanish, and he knew nothing of what was said till the verdict was announced. He sent at once for the American and English consuls, proving his innocence and claiming protection. They found the man innocent and pleaded his case before the Spanish general. The general said, "He has been found guilty by our law and must die." There was no cable communication between the consuls and their governments, and the case seemed hopeless. The morning appointed for execution the man was brought out and placed on his coffin, and the Spanish soldiers were ready to fire, when the American and English consuls rode up. The English consul took the British flag and wrapped it around the man and the American consul shook out the "stars and stripes" and folded it about him, and turning to the Spanish officers said, "Fire upon those flags if you dare." They did not dare, and the prisoner was saved. The flags were only common bunting, but they represented the two greatest nations in the world. So did Elijah's mantle represent God's power.

Verse 13. Elisha's faith accepted at once the promise that he should receive the double portion of Elijah's spirit, and his faith was honored. At a convention of Christian workers this question was asked: "Suppose I do receive the baptism of power and no good results follow, what must I think?" The question was answered with this incident: A few years ago a young engineer was being examined for graduation, when his examiner proposed the following question: "Suppose you have a steam-pump constructed for a ship, and know that every thing is in perfect working order, yet when you throw out the hose it will not draw. What would you think?" "I should think, sir, there must be a defect somewhere." "But the supposition is that every thing is perfect, and yet it will not work." "Then, sir, I should look over the side to see if the river had run dry." So the

answer to the question is, "Supposing such a condition possible, you may expect that God has vanished from the universe."

Verses 21. "Thus saith the Lord." Early English history informs us that some blood-thirsty persecutors were marching on a band of Christians. The Christians, seeing them approaching, marched out toward them, shouting, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" (Praise Jehovah). The persecutors retreated before the name of the Lord. Josephus says that when Alexander the Great approached Jerusalem on his triumphal march he was met by the Jewish high-priest, on whose miter was engraved the name Jehovah. "Alexander approached by himself and adored that name, and was dis-armed of his hostile intent." There was significance and power in that name Jehovah as written by the Jews.

Elisha received power as it was needed. Spurgeon says: "Do not give me ready money now. Give me a check-book and let me draw what I need day by day. This is what God does with the believer. He does not immediately transfer his inheritance to him, but lets him draw what he needs out of the riches of the fullness in Christ Jesus."

The Teachers' Meeting.

Ascertain time and place, with details of background.... Call out from class information concerning "sons of the prophets," Jericho's strange history up to this date, apparel of prophets, etc.... Review Elisha's previous history.... He was not without preparation for his high office: 1. His self-sacrificing choice (1 Kings 19, 16-21). 2. His lowly service (2 Kings 3, 11). 3. His holy companionship; he consorted with Elijah for nearly ten years. 4. His aspiration.... A fully equipped prophet: 1. His prophetic insight. 2. His prophetic power. 3. His prophetic authority. 4. His prophetic healing.... (See "object-lessons" in Thoughts for Young People.)

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 26: Formal salutation, 336. Ver. 29: The girdle, 314; formal salutations, 767. ... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 1813; Prose, 7916, 9192, 9195, 9564. Vers. 11, 12: Poetical, 3368, 3369, 3384, 3385. Vers. 11-14: Poetical, 3383. Ver. 13: Poetical, 654, 655; Prose, 3967. Ver. 14-17: Poetical, 3380. Ver. 15: Prose, 3372. Ver. 16: Prose, 12343, 12344, 12347. Ver. 17: Prose, 1795, 8245.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. Following.

Review. Whom did Elisha follow? Call back the last lesson. Why did Elisha follow Elijah? What did he ask Elijah to give him? Who will give the Holy Spirit to us if we ask?

Make a prophet's staff on the board; by its side a cross. Tell of the crusaders who carried the cross and conquered by that sign. Tell that this lesson teaches that we have no power to do good works only as we bear the cross, wear Jesus's name, and walk in his steps.

To be taught: 1. What faith did. 2. What unbelief said. 3. How Christian love heals.

1. Tell the story of Elijah crossing the Jordan on his return. Now his teacher and friend had gone. Was he left alone? No; for God was with him. He showed his faith in Elijah's God by his acts. When Elijah went away in the chariot his mantle fell from him. Elisha took it up and struck the waters of Jordan with it. Was it the mantle that made the waters roll back? No; it was the power of God. Elisha saw the power of God manifested when he had faith to follow the holy prophet God had sent to be his teacher.

Teach that Jesus is the teacher God has sent to us. If we have faith in him we shall show it in our acts. Lizzie learned that because Jesus loves us we should love one another. When a little girl was rude and unkind to her she repaid her in love and kindness. Lizzie showed her faith in Jesus's love by her acts.

2. Did any one see Elijah go away in the chariot besides Elisha? How many sons of the prophets stood looking on? They could not believe that God had really taken him away. They thought he might have been cast upon some mountain or into some valley. They lacked that thing which made it easy for Elisha to understand that God had taken the prophet. Print "Faith" in large letters, with lines of light going out from it. Tell what these men wanted to do, and how hard they worked to find Elijah. Teach that unbelief has to work very hard, and then does not find what it seeks. Faith walks in a light way; unbelief goes in the dark. Which is better?

3. Print in colored crayons, "What are Christians for?" Tell of the little girl who said she knew Hattie was a Christian, because she played like one. The people who knew Elisha saw that his acts were good; so they believed in him. Tell how they came to him with the story of bad water and poor land. They thought he could do something to make it better. Teach that God's children ought to make every thing better around them. Tell what Elisha did and the result.

Teach the text, "Ye are the salt of the earth." The little children who follow Jesus are salt, and may do the same kind of healing work that Elisha did. Love, peace, unselfishness, good-will—all these are the salt which heals bitter waters.

Little Johnny lived in a home where angry words were often spoken and unkind deeds often done. Johnny grew to be quarrelsome too. It was a sad place to live, and father, mother, and Johnny were all unhappy. One day God sent a dear baby

sister to Johnny. She was so little and had a heart so full of love that no one could speak harshly when she was near. She grew to be the salt that healed the bitter waters of strife in that home. It is love that heals.

Where can we get this love? Jesus came to earth to bring it. He brought enough for the whole world.



He has enough to heal all the troubles in the world. How shall we get it? Print "Follow." Do as Jesus did. Elisha followed Elijah, and God honored his faith. If we follow Jesus we shall receive the love that will enable us to heal bitter waters of envy and hatred and self-love. Who will begin to-day to follow Jesus?

Blackboard.



WHAT THE BLACKBOARD TEACHES—[Repeat the Golden Text.] It was not Elisha that did the wondrous things set forth in this lesson, "but by my Spirit saith the Lord!" The heart gets to be like the spring of water mentioned to-day. It is the fountain from whence flows good or evil, but though it be bitter with sin and barren of good, yet God can heal the waters, and by his grace renew a right spirit within it, changing it from barrenness to good fruits, from bitterness to the sweetness of Christian love, from a wasted life to one of usefulness, from evil to blessings. Resist not God's messengers. Harden not your heart. Christ came to heal and give life, but unbelief on your part or on mine, and his rejection, will cause death. Life or death rests with each one of us.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

The Christian's hiding-place.
The young Christian.
Happy day.
I need thee every hour.

If on a quiet sea.
Keep thou my way.
Will Jesus find us watching?
Child of a King.
My youth is thine.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Elisha receive when his master was taken to heaven? **The mantle of Elijah.**
2. What did he do with it? **He smote the waters of Jordan.**
3. What happened to the waters? **They parted hither and thither.**
4. From what did the pleasant city of Jericho suffer? **From bad water.**
5. What did Elisha do? **Cast salt into the spring.**
6. What did God then do? **Healed the waters, so that they did no more harm.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

Feb 22

13. How does our Lord teach us His religion?
By His word and by His Spirit.

14. What is His word?

The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, which are the sacred books of the Christian Faith.

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

Feb. 1. Have I Been Born Again? John 3. 5-7; Rom. 8. 2; 1 Cor. 2. 12.

Feb. 8. Blessed Assurance. 1 John 5. 10; Rom. 8. 16; Eph. 1. 13, 14.

Feb. 15. For What Were We Created? Eph. 2. 10; 1. 4; 1 Pet. 2. 9.

Feb. 22. Entering into the Work of Others. John 4. 38; 1 Kings 19. 19-21; 2 Kings 2. 14, 15.

THE *S. S. Times* tells of a child-waif who found her way into a Sunday-school, and asked the superintendent, who happened to meet her at the door: "Is this the way to heaven?" That question is said to have set the superintendent at thinking about his Sunday-school; whether or not it were the way to heaven. A Sunday-school ought to be the way to heaven; but is it so in every case? Both superintendent and teacher can set scholars at thinking by wisely directed questions.

In Darkest England.—(Continued.)

December number of the *Methodist Magazine*, of the methods already adopted, at the food and shelter depots of the Salvation Army. During the year 1889, at these depots in London, were sold 496 tons of provisions, besides 116,400 gallons of soup and 14,300 quarts of milk, at prices within the reach of the very poorest—such as soup per basin a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for a child and $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for an adult, also supper, lodging, breakfast and a bath for 4d., and if they have not 4d., a chance to earn it. Many thousands have found temporary succour, and many of them salvation as well in these refuges of the Salvation Army. He instances, as a type, the commander of an ocean steamship, who was saved from abject wretchedness and vice, and in a year re-appeared in the uniform of the steamship commander.

He proposes that a salvage corps shall gather up the fragments that are wasted in London, "that nothing be lost." The old bones he would convert into knife-handles and bone dust; the old rags into paper, of which the Salvation Army uses for its periodicals over 30 tons a week; other animal refuse into soap; old tin into children's toys and the like. In like manner he purposes to gather the human refuse, waifs and waste and off-scourings of society, and in rural farms, under wholesome and happy auspices, seek their moral and physical regeneration. After suitable training he would draft them away to homes prepared beyond the sea, in South Africa, Australia and Canada.

He proposes to utilize the thousands of square miles that like long ribands line the railways. For raising market produce, he would establish an "employment bureau," which, in connection with his farms and factories, would find work for the great army of the unemployed. He would have an advice-bureau for giving counsel to the multitude of the poor, ignorant and friendless—as for instance the 50,000 poor widows of England and Wales. He proposes an organization to labor under captains of industry, as never before attempted.

To realize this grand dream he asks for £1,000,000—a mere trifle, he says, compared with the sums that Britain lavishes wherever Britons are in need of deliverance if they are imprisoned abroad—as the £9,000,000, spent in the Abyssinian campaign; the £21,000,000, in the Afghan wars. If he receives the sum of half a million dollars he will consider it a sign from God, like the dew on Gideon's fleece, that he is to undertake this work. Already within a month, half of that sum has been secured, all classes, from the Prince of Wales to the costermonger, contributing thereto—statesmen like Mr. Gladstone and the Earl of Aberdeen, archbishops and bishops of the Anglican Church, and representative ecclesiastics and laics of every denomination.

The thorough organization of the Salvation Army gives it extraordinary facility for such work. It is the only religious body in the world based upon the principle of implicit

obedience. At the command of the General the soldier must go to the slums of London or of Melbourne. He may leave the Army any day, but while a member of it he must obey like a soldier on the field of battle.

The sway of Ignatius Loyola, was never more absolute than that of General Booth. He has ten thousand officers at his command who will carry out with enthusiasm his orders. By the self denial for a single week of these poor people, as most of them were, there was raised last year \$100,000.

The Anglican Church with its thorough parochial organization, might possibly attempt such work, but it could never command the sympathy and co-operation of the nation as this body, belonging to none of the churches yet commanding the respect of all.

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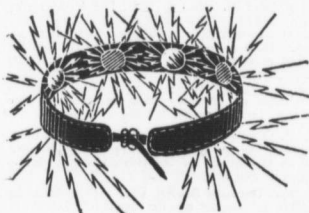
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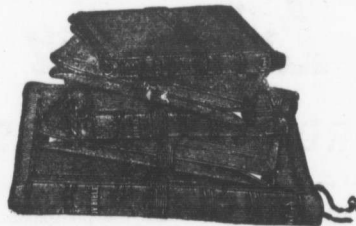
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