

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., MAY 29, 1872.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

ELISHA AND ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, June 2nd, 1872.

Elisha's Defenders,—2 Kings v. 20-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalm iv. 18.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Psalm lv. lx. 1-20.

SUMMARY.—The Lord has abundant resources by which he can defend and deliver his servants, and He may be trusted.

ANALYSIS.—1. The king of Syria is conscious that there is some supernatural power, as well as Israel, against which he is at war. Safety is not secured by numbers. 2. The miraculous interposition for the deliverance of Elisha.

EXPOSITION.—The good understanding which appeared in the last lesson between the king of Syria and Israel here seems to be broken up, and a condition of hostility has succeeded. It may have been that the Syrian king was encouraging the attacks of the companies spoken of in chap. v. 2. The king of Syria having failed to discover who had informed King Jehoram of his movements, he suspects the prophet and wishes to capture him. "Not once nor twice." This had been frequently the case, and now he suspects that some collusion exists between his own servants and the Israelites.

Verse 13.—Dathan, a town a little north of Samaria. Genesis xxxvii. 17.

Verse 14.—The gathering of this host promised to be a most effectual mode of arresting the prophet.

Verse 15.—"The servant." Probably a servant who had been with the prophet ever since the dismissal of Gehazi. He was not perhaps aware of the power the prophet held, and his faith was therefore but weak, and he became alarmed at the threatened destruction.

Verse 17.—"Elisha prayed, &c." It may be that this was altogether a spiritual vision, and that there was no appearance of angelic visitations except to themselves, so that he might perceive that there was no cause for alarm. "Horses and chariots of fire." These were symbols of the Divine power. The term fire may indicate their supernatural origin. Psalm xxxvii. 7.

Verse 18.—"Blindness." This could not have been total and physical blindness or the army could not have followed Elisha. See vs. 19. It was probably some mental hallucination so that they did not recognize the prophet.

Scripture Catechism, 44, 45.

SUNDAY, June 9.—God's Deliverance. 2 Kings 7: 1-11.

Youths' Department.

MADELINE'S SONG TO THE STAR.

Little star Off so far, In the sky Up so high, Shining bright All the night, Gone away All the day, Do you see Little me Watching thee? I see you Looking through The dark blue!

Congregationalist.

SCATTERED BUT NOT LOST.

BY MRS. E. V. HILL.

Kate and May were as busy all the morning in their garden as two little golden-headed bees, and though they gathered not honey, they drank in health and gladness from the bright sunshine and their cheerful exercise.

How happy they were in arranging their own little garden bed, and how absorbed in deciding where they should set out the pinks, the pansies, the nodding violets, and other clusters that promised sweet flowers. And then came the pleasant task of sowing the seeds. "Did this kind run up high, or was it of lowly growth, and would it look best here or there," were to them matters as important to rightly decide, as questions of state.

Finally their stock was disposed of; the roots set out in their proper places, and already sending up fresh green leaves, which gave their garden quite a thriving appearance; while all the little seeds they had carefully buried in the earth, in the hopes of a speedy resurrection in a more glorious form.

The small plot was now filled, except one corner, and the busy little gardeners hurried to the house for a package of seeds that came in a letter to them from Aunt Mary, anxious to get them planted soon, as they fondly hoped a shower would water their garden before night.

"I wonder if there are enough to fill the corner?" asked May. "Let us look at them, Katie."

The eager little girls sat down in the shade of an evergreen, and carefully opened the paper.

"Oh, what tiny little things," cried Katie. "They are smaller than any we have planted yet."

"Aunt Mary said the flowers were not so very pretty, but that they were very sweet, and I am glad of that, for I don't care much for a bouquet that don't smell nice," said Mary. "I wonder if they will be in bloom when we have our fair?"

Just then a little mischievous breeze puffed around the tree, and caught up the paper and overturned the seeds.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried the children, as they saw their treasures that embodied so much fragrance, scattered to the wind. "Now what shall we do? We can never find them again. It is too bad, for I know Aunt Mary wouldn't have sent them if they hadn't been something nice," and many other expressions of regret.

Meanwhile they were deploring their loss, they made careful search for the scattered seeds, but they were so "tiny" they could find but few of them in the grass at their feet. These they immediately planted in that "vacant corner," but still there was room to spare, and they had to ask something of their mother to make their garden complete.

Katie and May counted all the months of spring and summer by the budding and blooming of their different flowers, and their garden was to them a source of ever fresh delight; a book of wondrous beauty.

They not only studied botany in watching the growth of plants, from the springing of the tender blade to the unfolding flower and perfecting seed, but they learned to admire the works and love the great Artist who painted such beautiful colors, and blended such sweet perfumes. Where the honey-bees drew their stores of sweets, they gathered rich lessons of instruction for both mind and heart.

They had forgotten all about the scattered seeds, until one day, late in the fall, they happened to go to the very tree, where they had so eagerly unfolded their little package. They had not been there long, when May exclaimed, "What is it that smells so sweet? I do believe it's my mignonette." And sure enough, in looking about they found several clusters of that lowly plant, in full bloom, protected from the cold by the sheltering branches of the evergreen.

"How in the world did it get here?" asked Katie in surprise. "Oh, I know," answered May. "It's the seeds, Katie! It's the scattered seeds. Don't you remember how the wind upset our paper, when we sat under this very tree last spring?"

"Oh, yes," replied May. And we could find only just a few little tiny seeds in the grass. We thought he had surely lost all the rest, but only see here! We can gather more than we had at first."

"And some of the sweet flowers too," interrupted Katie. "I am glad, for they have been gone from the garden this long while."

With delight they gathered a handful of the fragrant blossoms, and took them into the house to their mother.

After listening to the recital of how they lost and how they found their treasures, their wise mother used the incident to illustrate the undying power of God.

"You thought the seeds scattered to the winds and for ever lost to you," she said. "But you find them again, after many days, increased a hundred fold in beauty and fragrance; and so it will ever be, my dear children, with kind words, kind deeds. They never die. Scatter the seeds of kindness all along your pathway, and your after-life shall be fragrant with blessings. Speak words of truth, of love, though they may at the time seem to make no impression, or even be met with ingratitude, yet they are never given in vain.

Like the little seed hidden in the dark soil, whose germ develops in secret; so their influence develops in the secret workings of the heart, and must spring to new life.

"There is that scattereth, yet increaseth." God directs the seeds where to fall, and gives his sunshine and shower to develop and perfect their growth, and will he do less for words spoken for him?

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand," and God will most surely give the increase. We may not reap the harvest here, but in heaven there will be flowers of unfading beauty, and rich sheaves of gathered souls, for our offering to the Lord of the Harvest."

GRATITUDE.

I was appointed to lecture in a town in Great Britain, six miles from the railway by which I came from my last engagement, and a man drove me in a fly—a one-horse hack—from the station to the town. I noticed that he sat leaning forward in an awkward manner, with his face close to the glass of the window. Soon he folded a handkerchief, and tied it round his neck. I asked him if he was cold.

"No, sir." Then he placed the handkerchief round his face. I asked him if he had the toothache.

"No, sir," was the reply. Still he sat leaning forward. At last I said: "Will you please tell me why you sit leaning forward that way with a handkerchief round your neck, if you are not cold and have no toothache?"

He said very quietly: "The window of the carriage is broke, and the wind is cold, and I am trying to keep it from you." I said in surprise: "You are not putting your face to that broken pane to keep the wind from me, are you?"

"Yes, sir, I am." "Why do you do that?" "God bless you, sir, I owe everything I have in the world to you."

"But I never saw you before." "No, sir; but I have seen you. I was a ballad-singer once. I used to go round with a half-starved baby in my arms for charity, and a draggled wife at my heels half the time, with her eyes blackened; and I went to hear you in Edinburgh, and you told me I was a man; and when I went out of that house I said: 'By the help of God, I'll be a man;' and now I've a happy wife and a comfortable home—God bless you, sir! I would stick my head in any hole under the heavens if it would do you any good."—Gough's Autobiography.

ECCLIASTICAL VIEW OF HATS.

An American lady, the other day, in London went to church in a hat, not knowing the English prejudice concerning that article being worn in the sanctuary. All her friends looked at her very gravely, and spoke coldly. She could not imagine what was the matter, and asked her husband if there was anything wrong about her head. He scrutinized her, and told her no, but still she could see that it was the object of attention, and that many looked at her askance. Glad when church was out, and not satisfied that something was not out of place or awry, she stepped in at a friend's who had lived lately in London, and told her of her embarrassment.

"Why," said her friend, "it is that hat." "The hat! What is the matter with the hat?" said the young wife, taking it off her head. "My bonnet did not come from Paris, and the hat is a real beauty."

"So it is," was the reply, "but it is a highly improper head covering to be worn in church,—an abomination to Englishwomen. Your wearing it was a serious misdemeanor,—the veriest miss is not allowed to wear a hat to service. Seeing that your hat was wrong, people supposed something was wrong, with you. You can wear a hat almost anywhere else, but if you want to go to church in England and be thought respectable, you must put on a bonnet."

THE GRATEFUL ROBIN.

About twelve years ago, during a very severe winter, I went one morning to spend the day with two ladies, who were staying for a time at the pretty watering place of C—. The snow was lying on the ground outside, but they were sitting by a bright fire in a snug parlor, and had just finished

breakfast. The younger lady was crumbling some bread in a saucer, and told me she was preparing a meal for a visitor who came every morning.

I wondered who it could be that was to eat such a breakfast, and when Miss J. said, "Hush! I hear him," I looked towards the door, expecting to see their friend enter. I found, however, that they were looking towards the window; and on its being opened by Miss J., in hopped a beautiful little robin, and began to pick the crumbs, not only from the saucer, but from her hands.

He did not seem to have the least fear, but every now and then lifted his little jet black eye to her face, chirping merrily. When he had finished his meal he gave one loud chirp, as if to say, "Thank you," and flew away into a wood near the house.

There are some pretty walks in that wood, and later in the day my friends invited me to go with them there. Miss J. took some crumbs with her for her "little friend," as she told me, and scattering them on the ground, began to call "Dickey! Dickey!" I had hidden myself, that he might not be frightened at the sight of a stranger. As soon as his friend called, there was a rustling noise in the bushes, and down came Dickey, and began to eat the crumbs at her feet. I was astonished at this, and said, "After all, he only comes for what he can get. It is the crumbs he loves, and not you."

"Well, we shall see presently which he loves best," said Miss J. She walked on some distance from the crumbs, and again called, "Dickey! Dickey!" at the same time holding out her hand. Instantly the faithful little bird, leaving its crumbs, first perched on a little branch just over her, looking curiously as if to see if she were alone, and then hopped down and settled on her hand, seeming quite at home and happy. "Certainly," said I, "he loves you better than the crumbs."

We left the wood, and walked a mile or more into the country, when I perceived, as I thought, another robin watching us from a tree. "I think all the robins in the neighborhood know you," said I to Miss J. She looked where I pointed, and, after a moment's hesitation, exclaimed, "Why, that's my own little darling Dickey! Dickey!" The little bird directly began chirping and fluttering his wings, as if quite delighted to be noticed by his friend. We now observed him more particularly, and found that wherever she went he followed, flying from bush to bush, and always keeping near her, until she reached her home, when he gave a chirp, as if to bid her "good bye," and flew away to his home in the woods.

During my stay with my friends, this occurred not once or twice, but whenever they left the house for their walks; and when they left the place at the end of the winter, they were very sorry, as you may suppose, to part with their faithful and loving Dickey; and I dare say he missed them, too, though he could now find food in the woods, and did not so much need the crumbs.—Loving Words.

AN ECCLIASTICAL CURIOSITY.

The following account will amuse some of our readers. An increase of the number of such curiosities is not desirable:

THE LATE REV. W. H. BLACK.

This spring has been fatal to many pulpit notabilities. One of the most remarkable of them was the Rev. William Henry Black, who for some thirty or forty years had been pastor of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Millyard, Goodman's-fields. All life had long since left the place. There was a form of worship gone through, because otherwise an endowment had been forfeited. The preacher appealed to empty benches. Cold and dull, as voices of the dead, sounded in that spectral chapel the accents of prayer and praise. Outside there was the fever and fret of London life in its lowest and most repulsive forms. Inside there was the quiet of the grave. From first to last the pastoral career of Mr. Black was an anomaly. During his illness Unitarian ministers supplied his pulpit. One of his executors is a Roman Catholic, and he was buried by a clergyman of the Church of England. Even the endowment which kept his chapel open was dependent on tithes. Alone he lived, and alone he died. No one knew his ways; no stranger intermeddled with his joys or sorrows. One relative was at his funeral, and that was all. Three daughters survive him. One was too unwell to be present; another, who is married, was on her way to America; another lives with her husband in China. There is no monument, says

the old Norse proverb, to the man who has no sons. There will be no monument to the memory of Mr. Black. It was hinted to the writer that either the Rev. Mr. Mills or the Rev. Charles Stovell would bury the deceased, and perhaps say something at the grave. In reality neither of these gentlemen were there. Of the Baptist body there was but one representative present—a decent man who had lived in Mr. Black's neighbourhood, and had known him for forty years. Perhaps they had been as much connected as any. He had known Mr. Black when he was a member of a General Baptist church in the Borough, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Stevenson. He has been associated with him as one of the managers of the General Baptist Fund; he had also been asked by him to become a trustee of a Seventh Day Baptist church in Wiltshire, which he declined. He had also something to do with a trust property of which Mr. Black had been treasurer, and respecting which he and his co-trustees had to go to law. They were right, and Mr. Black was wrong, yet such was his pugnacious and self-willed character that it was not till they had thrown him into jail that they could get him to come to terms. It seemed to me that the good man in question had come to the funeral to make sure of the fact that Mr. Black was dead, and would trouble him no more. It must have been no easy thing to have worked amicably with Mr. Black. He would always have his own way, and he would always have the last word. Business was invariably delayed when Mr. Black was present. He had great capacity for business, he had a deep knowledge of law, but if my informant may be depended upon, he out-talked everybody else,—there was no getting home early when Mr. Black put in an appearance.

Mr. Black had a dual existence. He had married the daughter of the previous pastor of the Seventh Day Baptists, and on the death of his father-in-law had stepped into his shoes. But he had a secular vocation as well. In the art of deciphering ancient documents, he was unrivalled, and in this pursuit, in the Court of Rolls, under Sir Francis Palgrave, he had spent many years. Retiring on a small pension, he still followed his favourite studies for a time, and was distinguished amongst antiquarians for his enthusiasm, his research, his power of disputation, and the pace at which he rode his hobby. He was a rare Hebrew scholar, and his habit of tracing everything, Irish round towers, and almost every visible object in creation, to the Romans, was, to say the least, singular. As a member of the Middlesex Archaeological Society, as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, he was much esteemed. No one was more regular at their assemblies, and no one had more to say. A Dissenting minister so learned was to many of them a rare phenomenon, and it was they, and not sectarian adherents who had been trained by a master whom they loved and honoured, that followed him to the grave on Friday last, in Abney Park Cemetery.

In his private capacity Mr. Black was almost a stranger to them all. It was as an antiquarian and archaeologist that they esteemed him, and had come there in the middle of the day, most of them professional men with business engagements, to see him laid in his narrow cell. Rarely are ministers so buried. A hearse, a mourning coach or two, and then came the Antiquarians. There were no females present. As to deacons and church members to whom he had administered the bread of life, and brother ministers with whom he had taken counsel how best to quicken the spiritual energies of his people, and deputations from other churches,—there were none such there. His last legacy to his age was—one knows not whether to write it with a smile or a tear—the history of the Leather Sellers' Company; and now the busy brain is turned to dust, and no more does the patient hand hold the untiring pen. London knows him no more for ever. Another of the celebrities of Fleet-street is vanished. Few who have seen or heard him will forget the grey-haired, prematurely aged old man, who, with his body bent and his head on one side, was always at loggerheads with some one or other, who preached half his sermons in Hebrew, who had accumulated stores of knowledge of which few of us in this utilitarian age have any idea—whose energy and indignation perverted by his vehement egotism were of little avail in battling with the evils of the world, but told with terrible effect upon himself. He looked eighty—he was but sixty three when he died.—Christian World, April 26.

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