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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

ELISHA AND ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, April 28th, 1872.

Is it well with the Child?—2 Kings iv. 18-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am the resurrection and the life." John xi. 25.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Luke vii. 1-18; Psalm xci.

SUMMARY.—The earnestness of our prayer is proportioned to the strength of our faith and the greatness of conscious want.

ANALYSIS.—I. The child's death. vs. 18-20.

II. The mother's resort. vs. 21-25.

III. The prophet's greeting. vs. 25, 26.

EXPOSITION.—*Geography.*—Two places are referred to in this lesson Shunem and mount Carmel. We can get a clear idea of their situation only as we form a clear idea of the plain of Esdraelon. This plain in its main part is a triangle. Shunem, identified with the village now called Solam, is on the south-west of little Hermon, just at the opening of the valley of Jezreel, which is the central branch of the three just mentioned, and which lies between little Hermon and mount Gilboa. Mount Carmel extended from the western angle of Esdraelon north-west to the Mediterranean sea, to the south side of the bay of Acre. It is about sixteen hundred feet high near its south-western terminus, and was clearly visible from Shunem. The prophet Elisha was doubtless on the mountain near the plain. A cavern called the cave of Elijah is shown at the present day, and is regarded by scholars as near the place of the school of the prophets, which doubtless called both Elijah and Elisha so often to the mountain.

The connection.—See vs. 8-17. These explain the relation of Elisha and the family, and show one reason why the child was specially dear to the mother, aside from his being an only child. The reason why Elisha so often passed by Shunem, vs. 9, doubtless was, that as chief or head of the prophets it was a part of his duty to visit the schools of the prophets frequently, and as there was one at Jericho, and one at Bethel, etc., he would pass this way in making his circuit.

Verse 18.—"Was grown," i. e., to be a lad, old enough to go out into the fields "It fell on a day," or "came to pass one day." The father was by this time quite old (see vs. 14), yet continued active, having the oversight of his workmen, the reapers. He seems to have had a comfortable property, a house and farm. Some think he was rich, because in vs. 8 his wife is called "a great woman," and from the proposal of Elisha in vs. 13. She might have been called great with respect to rank or influence, as well as wealth. The family, however, is not remembered and honored because of its wealth or position, but for the kindness shown to God's prophet. It is a nobler distinction by far to have a godly spirit, than to have even kingly authority. And just this honor, the highest of all, is within our grasp. "Whosoever will."

Verse 19.—"My head, my head." The cry of violent pain, apparently coming with suddenness. It was doubtless a case of sun-stroke, which begins with headache. At harvest-time in Palestine, especially on the plain, or in the valley, or on the southern slope of a mountain, the heat is often excessive. Sometimes there is with it an oppressive south wind, the Sirocco. The record of observations kept at Jerusalem by Dr. Barclay from 1851 to 1855, inclusive, gives as the mean annual temperature 66° 5 F., while at New Orleans for the same time it was only 62°. The time of harvest was not as with us in the autumn, but from April to June. "A lad," read "the servant," possibly one who had the boy in charge.

Verse 20.—"Sat on her knees." Oh yes, just there for the poor sick boy. After an interval it may be of two or three hours,—until noon, and "he died." How suddenly God changes the noon of our hopes and enjoyments into the black blank midnight. See, children, how easily he can smite you down. See, parents, how he can smite down your darlings and your joys. What an hour for that large-hearted, fond, doting, devoted mother, her one only beloved son, given her as he was, torn from her as strangely as he was sent

to her. Ah, what a trial! what agony!

Verse 21.—The mother seems to have been thus far alone, to have sat in a dumb surprise, an amazed suspense, watching the angel of death doing his strange work. And now it is done. What next? A question quickly answered by her, and well answered. One thought controls her. God gave me the child—because of Elisha, and by Elisha he can give him again. This resurrection would be no more strange to her than his birth. And then, no doubt, she remembered how Elijah gave back to the widow of Zarephath her dead boy. 1 Kings xvii. 17-24. Every move now is determined by the one thought: "God by Elisha must give me back my boy." So where else could she put the little form, lifeless, but how precious, where else but on the prophet's own bed, in the prophet's own "little chamber?" vs. 10. "On the bed of the man of God," i. e., not merely of the godly man, but the man who specially as prophet and messenger represented God, and wrought miracles by the power of God.

Verse 22.—Now she seems to think of her husband, not for sympathy, but business. She does not even let him know that anything has happened. She asks of one of the servants to bring an ass to take her to the man of God and quickly back. "This one thing." There was but one thing to be done, and that was to be done quickly.

Verse 23.—The husband is taken by surprise. Nothing had been said of this trip in the morning, no provision made, and, besides, it is not the day appointed the people to resort to the prophets for instruction. It seems that "on these days, which, according to the law (Num. xviii. 11-25; Lev. xxiii. 3,) were to be religiously observed, the pious in Israel were accustomed to assemble, in order to be edified by the prophets." Compare Amos viii. 5. We are also to remember that since the revolt, Israel, i. e., the ten tribes, were cut off from the temple service at Jerusalem. 1 Kings xii. 27, 28. Did the father suspect that the child was worse, or that there was some other mishap? If so, the answer, "It is well," the same word as in vs. 26, was calculated to set him at rest. At any rate, it showed her wish to go without further words, and that was enough.

Verse 24.—Mark here the power of her one thought. She leaves her boy behind, she must; goes from him, she must; across the plain to Carmel, rising some fourteen miles away. "She saddled the ass," couldn't wait the motion of a servant, and then said drive, drive, and slacken not till I bid you. What earnestness to see the prophet and get the blessing.

Verse 25.—"So," or rather "and," not thus or in this way. "She came to the man of God, to mount Carmel." She evidently knew he was there. Elisha, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon as he did, could easily see "her afar off." He recognized her also at a distance, so well did he know her.

Verse 26.—He shows his grateful good will by sending Gehazi. He knew that she came on some unusual errand, and he would give her cordial welcome and free access. The servant greeted her, asking for the welfare of each member of the household. She says it is well. This was true of herself and husband, and she cannot speak of the child's death to any one but Elisha. She neither intended deception, nor did she refer to the child's state, as dead. She gave a general answer, and pressed on.

QUESTIONS.—State the subject of this lesson? In what town did the child and its parents live? vs. 8, where was that? What mountain is mentioned in our lesson? vs. 25. Where was this? 1 Kings xviii. 42-46. How came Elisha to know the family in Shunem? vs. 8-10. What had they done for him? What had he done for them. vs. 13-16.

What is said of the child in vs. 18? What did he say to his father? vs. 19. What did this mean? At what season of the year was it? What did the father say? In what part of the day was the child taken sick? What did his mother do with him? What happened at noon?

What did the mother do next? vs. 21. What then? vs. 22. Did she let any one know of the child's death? Why? Why did she call Elisha "the man of God"? What was her husband's answer?

Does the woman seem to have been in haste? vs. 24. Does her course show faith? If so, in what or in whom was her faith? Matt. xi. 23.

Where was Elisha? vs. 25. Why probably was he there? What did the prophet do when he saw her coming? vs. 26. What was Gehazi's greeting? vs. 26. What was the woman's answer? Why did she press on to the prophet? What may we expect in going to Christ?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Scripture Catechism, 36, 37.

SUNDAY, May 5.—The Boy restored to Life. 2 Kings 4: 29-37.

Youths' Department.

LIFE.

Little pleasures,
Little pains,
Little losses,
Little gains,
Little trials,
Little cares,
Little troubles,
Little snares,
Little lovings,
Blent with strife,
Little battles,
Make up life.

But how little
Need we care
Little crosses
Here to bear,
If forever
We may rest,
With the blest ones
Ever blest.

—Christian World.

THE FIRST ROBIN.

"O Billy! Billy! Billy!"

I know 'twill soon be spring!"

"And, pray, how do you know it?"

"I've heard a robin sing."

"The snow is in the meadow still,
The wind is piping loud and shrill;
But to the garden cherry-tree
He came, this morn, and sang to me."

"And thus he sang: 'I've come at last,
And spring is following sure and fast;
She'll soon be here (look out! look out!)
So scatter blossoms all about!'"

"Bright daffodils will nod their heads,
And pinks make sweet your garden-beds;
Like stars will dandelions shine,
And red buds swell upon the vine;
And from the green grass will look up
The yellow, yellow buttercup."

"Tall ferns will wave the brook beside,
Thick leaves the maple boughs will hide;
And safe among them, glad and blest,
My mate and I will build our nest."

"O! snows may fall and winds may roar,
But winter-time is almost o'er;
Upon the garden cherry-tree
I've heard a robin sing:
And Billy! Billy! Billy!
I know 'twill soon be spring!"

—Marian Douglas.

CURIOSITIES OF ANIMAL LIFE.

"There can be no doubt," writes Mr. Darwin, "that dogs feel shame as distinct from fear, and something very like modesty when begging too often for food. A great dog scorns the snarling of a little dog, and this may be called magnanimity. Several observers have stated that monkeys certainly disliked being laughed at, and they sometimes invent imaginary offences. In the Zoological Gardens, I saw a baboon that always got into a furious rage when its keeper took out a letter or book and read it aloud to him, and his rage was so violent that, as I witnessed on one occasion, he bit his own legs until the blood flowed." All animals feel wonder, and many exhibit curiosity, the latter quality affording opportunity for hunters, in many parts of the world, to decoy the game into their power. The faculty of imitation, so strongly developed in man, especially in a barbarous state, is present in monkeys. A certain bull-terrier of our acquaintance, when he wishes to go out of the room, jumps at the handle of the door and grasps it with his paws, although he cannot himself turn the handle. Parrots reproduce with wonderful fidelity the tones of voice of different speakers, and puppies reared by cats have been known to lick their feet and wash their faces after the same manner as their foster-mothers. Attention and memory also are present in the lower animals, and it is impossible to deny that the dreams of dogs and horses show the presence of imagination, or that a certain sort of reason is also present. Animals also profit by experience, as any man realizes who sets traps. The young are much more easily caught than the old, and the adults gain caution by seeing the fate of those which are caught. Tools also are used by some of the higher apes. The chimpanzee uses a stone to crack a nut resembling a walnut, and the Abyssinian baboons fight troops of another species, and roll down stones in the attack before they finally close in a hand-to-hand encounter. The idea of property is common also to every dog with a bone, to all birds with their nests, and notably in the case of rooks. Nor can a certain kind of language be denied to the brutes. The dog communicates his feelings by barks of different tones, which undoubtedly raise in his fellow dogs ideas similar to those passing in his own mind.—*Edinburgh Review.*

TAME CODFISH.

Mr. Buckland, in a recent number of *Land and Water*, gives an interesting account of a visit paid by him to a pond containing codfish at Port Logan, Wigtownshire. The property in question belonging to a gentleman by the name of McDougall, and consists of an amphitheatre about one hundred feet in diameter, hollowed out of the solid rock by the sea. All egress from this is prevented by a barrier of loose stones, through which water passes freely. On approaching the shore of the pond, codfish of great size were seen, and when a servant woman who had charge of the fish, approached with some muscles, the surface of the water was perfectly alive with the struggling fish. They came close to the edge, and after a little while permitted Mr. Buckland to scratch them on the back, and play with them in various ways. Among other experiments tried by him was that of holding a muscle in his hand, and allowing the fish to swallow his hand in the effort to obtain the muscle. These fish furnish to the proprietor an ample supply of food, the flavor being considered much superior to that of the cod taken in the open sea. Whenever needed for the table, a selection can readily be made from the most promising of those at hand, and the fish secured without any difficulty.

THE GENTLENESS OF JESUS.

The conversation of Christ with His disciples, when He took leave of them at His last supper, was most sweet, loving and friendly, talking with them lovingly, as a father with his children, when he must depart from them. He took their weakness in good part, and bore with them, though now and then their discourse was very full of simplicity: as when Philip said "Show us the Father," etc.; and Thomas, "We know not the way," etc.; and Peter, "I will go with thee unto death;" each freely showing the thoughts of his heart. Never since the world began, was a more precious, sweet and amiable conversation. Is it not a shame that we are always afraid of Christ, whereas there never was in heaven or earth a more loving, familiar or milder man, in words, works and demeanor, especially toward poor, sorrowful and tormented consciences? Hence the prophet Jeremiah prays, saying: "O Lord, grant that we be not afraid of thee." I expect more goodness from Kate, my wife, from Melancthon, and from other friends than from my sweet and blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ; and yet I know for certain that neither she nor any other person on earth will or can suffer that for me which He has suffered; why then should I be afraid of Him? This my foolish weakness, grieves me very much. We plainly see in the Gospel how mild and gentle He showed Himself toward His disciples; how kindly He passed over their weakness, their presumption, yea, their foolishness. He checked their unbelief, and in all gentleness admonished them. Moreover, the Scripture, which is more sure says: "Well are all they that put their trust in Him." Fie on our unbelieving hearts that we should be afraid of this man who is more loving, friendly, gentle and compassionate toward us than are our kindred our brethren and sisters; yea, than parents themselves are toward their own children.—*Luther's Table Talk.*

IT CAME TOO LATE.

Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains I was walking with some of the passengers to relieve the overlaid stage, and one of them gave me his history. He said: "With my wife I came to California twenty years ago. We suffered every hardship. I went to the mines but had no luck. I afterward worked at a trade, but had no luck. Then I went to farming but had no luck. We suffered almost starvation. Everything seemed to go against us. While we were in complete poverty my wife died. After her death I went again to the mines. I struck a vein of gold which yielded me forty thousand dollars. I am now on my way to San Francisco to transfer the mine, for which I am to receive one hundred thousand dollars." "Then," said I, "you are worth one hundred and forty thousand dollars." He said: "Yes I but it comes too late. My wife is gone. The money is nothing to me now."

So there are those whose entire life is made up of poverty and misfortune. When success comes it comes too late, and they cannot enjoy it. But, glory to God! the path of tears has a terminus. The storm will not blow on forever. Child of God!

you are not far from the last disappointment and the last groan. The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall lead you to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.—*De Witt Talmage.*

PRAYER MEETINGS.

"Only a prayer meeting!" said Bro. Lake. Too often, indeed, these prayer meetings are so dull as to almost to justify Bro. Lake's reference to them. How may we improve them?

1. Put more thought into them.
2. Come with more will to the service.
3. Put more Bible into them.
4. Have more Children present.
5. Let the prayers be shorter.
6. Let the singing be more spirited.
7. Don't let them drag.
8. Let the air of the room be purer.
9. Make the room lighter.
10. Last, and first and all important, let them be full of faith in God and his Word.

—Sunday School Journal.

THE VICTIM.

I saw a mother gently fold
An infant to her breast,
Whose father in the coffin cold
Was laid away to rest.
She kissed her baby's pallid cheek,
And strove to lull its pain;
Silent, she watched its breathings weak,
"Will it not breathe again?"
But angels soothed the infant's pain,
And tended life's dim fire,
Till, mirrored from her babe again,
The mother saw its sire.
Days, weeks, and months, and years rolled round,
The babe became a boy;
With laugh, and shout, and merry bound,
The mother's only joy.
The years still pressed more swiftly by,—
The boy became a man;—
The fire that lighted up his eye,
Thro' all his features ran,
And kindled up a manly face,
That spoke a soul within,
Possessed of every noble grace,
That could affections win.
Time rolled—one crime with clearer eye,
And purer soul than stream
That glides its pebbly bottom by,
With glassy glint and gleam.
The coils of love began to twine
More firmly round his heart;
I saw him, at the altar, smile
Upon his better part.
Honored and loved, and sought by all,
As if by magic spell,
Hate, passion, pride, and self, and all,
Before his presence fell.
The centre of each social ring,
The wooed in every seat,
It seemed as tho' all graces would bring
Their homage to his feet.
But winningly, with witching glance,
With fictitious garb, and name,
The demon of Intemperance,
Among his courtiers came.
He listened,—to the enchantment blind,—
He yielded to the charm;
From dreams of bliss, he woke, to find
The fetters on his arm.
He strove to burst asunder then
The iron on him bound,
But writhing in delirious pain
He sank upon the ground.
His widowed mother o'er him bent,
And wept her garnered tears;
His broken-hearted wife gave vent
To her long gathering fears.
His little ragged children, near,
With brimming heart and eye,
And quivering lip, and smothered fear,
Beheld their father die.
The drunkard slumbers in his bed,—
But scarce his shrieks had died,
Than on my spirit from the dead,
They echoed back more wild.
And louder, wilder, rose the cries
That on my spirit fell:
"This is the worm that never dies;
This is the fire of hell."

"No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."—1st Cor., 6: 10.

Yarmouth, 1872. W. H. PORTER.
—Yarmouth Herald.

"AS A LITTLE CHILD."

BY PEARL FORREST.

A pastor was in his study, absorbed in preparing for the Sabbath, when he heard little feet patter up to the door, and try to knock. At first he took no notice, but by-and-by, thinking there might be some important message, he rose and opened the door.

"What do you want, my little boy?"
The little fellow looked up and faltered out, "I came—to be in."
Who could resist that plea? The door was opened wide, the little boy climbed in to an easy chair, and nestled down quiet and unobtrusive, perfectly contented "to be in," in his father's presence.

There are Christians who seem to keep their piety put away, like their best clothes for Sunday use. They want no Christian love, save at the sacramental table. But there are others who bear that love always in their hearts; whose delight it is to be in the company of Jesus. Like the child, they come to Jesus wanting "to be in"—in his spirit, in his presence, constantly.

Happy they whose contentment is undisturbed because they abide with him they love.