

Christian Messenger.

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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

ELISHA AND ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, June 9th, 1872.

God's Deliverance.—2 Kings vii. 1-11.*

GOLDEN TEXT.—God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For to the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it and they marvelled, they were troubled and hasted away. Psalm xlviii. 3-5.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Isaiah xlii. 1-16.

SUMMARY.—The servants of the Lord must declare the message sent, leaving results with Him. God will honor his own word, often in a most unexpected manner.

ANALYSIS.—1. The prophecy of Elisha during the siege of Samaria, that great abundance would be in the city on the following day. 2. The fulfilment of the prophecy, and the means by which it was brought about.

EXPOSITION.—The hostility between the Syrians and the Israelites in this lesson appears to have become more general, and the warfare more determined. The siege had been predicted in consequence of Ahab's mistaken kindness. The terrible famine experienced by the people of the besieged city was even more distressing than those of modern days. See chapter vi. 24-33. The sudden change from freedom from hostilities in chap. vi. 23 to that of active warfare in vs. 24 may have been occasioned by some act of retaliation inflicted on the armed bands of Syrians which continually made depredations on the Israelites. It would appear that the king of Israel charged the misfortunes of the city on the head of Elisha, and had a design of beheading him, thinking that by that means he would get rid of the trouble. "Elisha sat in his house" (vi. 32) when a messenger had actually been sent to privately execute the king's order, Elisha knowing of this directed the elders then present, perhaps for the purpose of protecting him or for prayer, to arrest the messenger at the door.

Verse 1.—Elisha had previously told the elders, but now gives the king's messengers the prediction that relief would be on the morrow. "In the gate of Samaria" there is still a daily market of cattle, vegetable and country produce. The "measure" was about a peck, "a shekel" was about half a dollar.

Verse 2.—This courtier would not believe that such a change could be effected so speedily. His unbelief was punished by not being allowed to partake of it, although he would see the prediction verified. His unbelief was speedily punished, see vs. 20.

Verse 3.—These lepers according to Jewish law were not allowed to associate with their fellow-citizens, but lived near the gate. Leviticus xiii. 40-46. The famine in the city was starving them as well as the people of the city.

Verse 4.—They had a choice between two evils and chose the one that offered the most likely chance of something arising to relieve them.

Verse 5.—Evening offered them the best chance of getting supplies. Their leprosy might not be discovered, or they might not be recognized as Israelites. "The uttermost" the nearest part to the city.

Verse 6 and 7 give the account of the illusion under which the Syrians had fled and left the whole of their wealth. The noise of wind would favor the approach of an army 2 Sam. v. 24. Their knowledge of Elisha and his miracles would lead them to fear that the Divine power would be brought against them.

Verse 8 and 9.—The hunger of the lepers being appeased they first thought of making the most of their good fortune for themselves, but knowing the dreadful condition of the people in the city, conclude to make known what they had discovered, as they apprehended that some punishment would follow a guilty silence in the midst of such plenty.

Verse 10.—Acting on this they go back, and not being allowed themselves to enter the king's house, they send the message by the king's porter.

Verse 12.—It appears to the king as a stratagem common in ancient and modern warfare. He takes prudent measures to discover whether it was so, but found it a fact and a complete verification of the prediction—according to the word of the Lord.

*ERRATUM.—In our last text was neglected to be changed, and instead of what appeared, it should have been 2 Kings vi. 8-18.

No human arm could have delivered the besieged city, but this panic must be acknowledged as a plain interposition of providence, and a deliverance coming from God only.

QUESTIONS.—What was the cause of the Samaritans' distress? chap. vi. 24, 25. Whose death did the king suppose would relieve them from their sad condition? chap. vi. 31. By what means did he attempt to secure Elisha's death? vi. 32.

What was the meaning of the prophecy? When this message was sent to the king who expressed his unbelief? What was to be his punishment for his unbelief? What were the means of the fulfilment of the prophecy? Why were these four men "at the entering in of the gate"? What was the act they, in their desperation proposed?

What did the leprosy men there find? Where had the Syrians gone? Why? How did they suppose the Israelites had sought to strengthen themselves? What time was it when the Syrians fled? After trying to conceal some of the more valuable parts of the treasures, how did these four men feel? To whom did they make known their discoveries? What was the king's theory on first hearing their story? What means did he use to find out if his conjecture was right? How far did the scouts examine the track of the Syrians? What did they find? Was Elisha's prophecy fulfilled? What was the end of the unbelieving lord of the king? vs. 19, 20.

Scripture Catechism, 46, 47.

SUNDAY, June 16.—Hezekiah's Prayer. 2 Kings 20: 1-11.

AN EXERCISE FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONCERT.

THE GARDENS OF THE BIBLE.

First Scholar.

In this summer time of gardens,
As they spread their bright array,
Shall they teach our eyes to wander
Over countries far away?

Through the gardens of the Bible,
For a little while to stray,
While we gather fragrant lessons,
Blooming for us there, to-day.

Second Scholar.

Whose was the first, fair garden,
Bright Eden of delight,
Where grew all plants for food, and trees,
Most pleasant to the sight?

Third Scholar.

"The Lord God planted a garden, eastward, in Eden. And out of the ground, made the Lord to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it."—Gen. ii. 8, 9, 15.

Fourth Scholar.

Tell us what pleasant things are said,
Along the sacred Word,
Of Eden, called for loveliness,
The Garden of the Lord?

Fifth Scholar.

Of the plain of Jordan it is said, "It is well watered, everywhere, even as the Garden of the Lord." It is said of the King of Tyros, "Full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty, thou hast been in Eden, the Garden of God." Of the Assyrian, "The cedars in the Garden of God could not hide him; all the trees of Eden, that were in the Garden of God, envied him."—Gen. xiii. 10; Ezek. xlviii. 13; xxxi. 8-9.

Sixth Scholar.

That garden of the Persian kings,
Where once a feast was made,
What were the bright and splendid things,
That then its court arrayed?

Seventh Scholar.

"Ahasuerus, the king, made a feast, in the court of the Garden of the king's palace; where were white, green and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple, to silver rings, pillars of marble."—Ester i. 5-6.

Eighth Scholar.

Tell us of Naboth's vineyard,
That Ahab tried to take,
Because near by his house it stood,
A garden of herbs to make.

Ninth Scholar.

"Ahab spoke unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs; because it is near unto my house. And Naboth said, The Lord forbid to me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."—1 Kings xxi. 12.

Tenth Scholar.

Tell us what trees and fragrant plants,
Within these gardens grew:
And pleased the taste, and cheered the heart,
And lovely were to view.

Eleventh Scholar.

"Of the vineyards and olive-yards that ye planted not, do ye eat." "The daughter of Zion is left as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." "I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley." "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to gather lilies." "Thy plants are

an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits."—Josh. xxiv. 13; Isa. i. 8; Cant. vi. 11, 2; iv. 13.

Twelfth Scholar.

What garden, near Jerusalem,
Where he was wont to go,
Witnessed the tears that Jesus wept,
And heard his prayer of woe?

Thirteenth Scholar.

"A place that is called Gethsemane. He went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples. Then he said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."—Math. xxvi. 36, 38; John xviii. 1.

Fourteenth Scholar.

Joseph of Arimathea,
What makes his garden known,
Of all the gardens of the earth,
The dear, the sacred one?

Fifteenth Scholar.

"There came a rich man of Armathea, named Joseph; he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus." "Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."—Matt. xxvii. 57; John xix. 41.

Recitation (In Concert.)

The Scripture gardens, all are these,
That flourished, bright and fair.
We have a garden of the Lord,
He keeps with tender care.

His olive plants the children are,
His love shall never cease;
One waters and another plants;
He gives the glad increase.

Train us, Thy tender vines, O Lord,
Upward to grow to Thee,
Like the dear Rose of Sharon,
As sweet and fair to be.

And when no more on earth we grow,
Still keep us in Thy sight,
Up in Thy heavenly garden, Lord,
Thy lilies, pure and white.

School Festival.

THE ART OF QUESTIONING.

There is a real art, in knowing where, when, and how to put a good question, that shall quicken the memory, set the mind to thinking, and call back the reflective faculties. Such are the possibilities of a question. A large proportion of all the good teaching in our Sabbath schools is brought about by the simple process of questions and answers. Mr. J. G. Fitch says: "The success and efficiency of our teaching depend more on the skill and judgment with which we put questions than on any other single circumstance."

Youths' Department.

A CAT STORY.

HOW DAN SAVED HIS MASTERS' LIFE.

I once heard of a boy who had a cat that he called Dan. Dan was a great pet; and the little boy was very kind to him in every way. The time came at last when Dan could repay this kindness; and he did so.

One cold winter night all had gone up stairs to bed, and were sleeping soundly. Dan was easily rolled up on his nice warm mat behind the kitchen stove, when, all at once, the room became very light. Dan awoke, and what should he see but the broom, which had been left standing a little too near the stove, all on fire. In a few moments the house would have been all ablaze, but Dan thought of his master; so away he trotted up stairs to his room.

Dan called with a very loud voice, "Mew, mew, mew;" but his master did not hear him. Then he said "Mew, mew, mew," still louder; but that did not awaken him. Then he jumped upon the bed, pulled back the bed-clothes with his paw, and gently struck his master in the face. This aroused the sleepy boy, and he very soon learned the meaning of Dan's strange actions. He jumped out of bed, ran down stairs, and put out the fire before it had got under very great headway.

After the fire was out the boy went back to bed with a thankful heart. He thanked God for giving so much wisdom and kindness to his kitty.—*Little Watchman.*

WHAT WILL HE BECOME.

This question is often asked by parents in regard to their sons; and by the friends of many young men; and although there is no definite rule for ascertaining, we may get some idea, of what a young man will become by observing his actions and works. Solomon said, many centuries ago, that "even a child is known by his works, whether it be good or evil." Therefore,

when you see a boy slow to go to school, indifferent about learning, and glad of every opportunity to neglect his lessons, you may take it for granted that he will be a blockhead.

When you see a boy anxious to spend money, and who spends every cent as soon as he gets it, you may know that he will be a spendthrift.

When you see a boy hoarding up his pennies, and unwilling to part with them for any good purpose, you may set it down that he will be a miser.

When you see a boy willing to taste strong drink, you may suppose that he will become a drunkard.

When a boy is disrespectful to his parents, disobedient to his teacher, and unkind to his friends, it is a sign that he will never be of much account.

When you see a boy looking out for himself, and unwilling to share good things with others, it is a sign that he will grow up a selfish man.

When you hear a boy using profane language, you may take it for a sign that he will become a wicked and profligate man.

When you see boys rude to each other, you may know that they will become disagreeable men.

When you see boys pouting and grumbling when told to do anything, and always displeased when they have any work to perform, it is a sign that they will be good-for-nothing men.

But when you see boys that are kind and obliging to each other, obedient and respectful to their parents, attentive to their studies and duties, it is a sign that they will become good and useful men.

When you see a boy that loves his Bible, and is well acquainted with it, it is a sign of great future blessing from Almighty God.

When you see a boy that stays away from theatres, grog-shops, ball-rooms, and gambling-houses, it is a sign that he will grow up a man in principle, knowledge, and goodness.

When you see a boy practising virtue, morality and Christianity, you may know that he will become an honour to himself and family, useful to his country, and the glory of his Maker.

Although great changes sometimes take place in the character, these signs as a general rule hold good.

TWO AND ONE.

Two ears and only one mouth have you,
The reason I think is clear;
It teaches, my child, that it will not do
To talk about all you hear.

Two eyes and only one mouth have you;
The reason of this must be
That you should learn that it will not do
To talk about all you see.

Two hands and only one mouth have you;
And it is worth while repeating.
The two are for work you will have to do,
The one is enough for eating.

THEORY VERSUS PRACTICE.

In a certain College in which the Rev. Dr. —, a Presbyterian minister, was the Professor of Greek, there was a quizzical genius of a student, whose name we will call Newlet. Now, it so happened that the reverend Doctor became seriously exercised in his mind by the thought that most of the people in the community entirely misunderstood the meaning and the use of that much-persecuted Greek word, *baptizo*, and he accordingly undertook to enlighten the natives by preaching a series of sermons on baptism. Newlet attended regularly on the ministration of his learned Professor, and in the course of two or three Sundays was pretty well doctored with the statement that *baptizo* really meant to sprinkle or to pour, and not to plunge. But in the course of the regular lessons in the class-room of the College, Newlet was one day called upon to translate a passage from one of the Greek authors. The passage gave an account of a man who became so enraged at another, that he seized a red-hot poker and *ebaptizeis ophthalmion*. Newlet, with a mischievous twinkle of the eye, but with a grave manner, translated it thus: "He seized a red-hot poker and sprinkled it into his eye." "How is that?" said the reverend Professor. "He sprinkled it into his eye," repeated Newlet. "But," said the Doctor, "that word does not mean *sprinkle*." "Well, sir, it did mean *sprinkle* on last Sunday night," replied the mischievous fellow, amid suppressed laughter from the class, who keenly relished the joke. The

Professor looked grave, was silent a moment, and then remarked, "You may translate it *plunge* here, sir."—*Christian Index.*

THIS AND THAT.

On the 25th of January, 1870, Rev. Mr. Koehler, a German Reformed minister, went three and a half miles from Meadville to baptize (?) some children. Before he had finished the ceremony he was suddenly taken ill. Said his wife, "He baptized them, but was not able to say all the words. He could not say the 'amen' any more."

Those near him noticed that he grew very pale and seemed unconscious. He was helped into bed. He never spoke again. On the 20th of January he died.

If he had been a Baptist minister and had been thus stricken while in the act of baptizing, what then?

[The above comes to us from a reliable source at Meadville, under date of March 21st.—Ed.—N. Y. Examiner.]

FISHING IN JAPAN.

The Japanese have rare sport at certain seasons of the year catching fish by the bushel as fast as they can gather them in. In the spring, when the fish are in the rivers and making their way down to the sea, the young men and boys throw into the water the pulverized bark of a certain tree which has much of the spicy qualities of pepper. The poor fish take it in greedily, and then to cool their burning mouths they drink such quantities of water, which is now impregnated with the bark, as to prevent their swimming to purer places in the stream. They drink and drink, making matters worse with every draught, till they die, and are picked up or hauled in by the boys to land. The bark has no injurious qualities, so that the fish thus taken are as nice for the table as if taken with the hook or the net.

Another way to entrap the unwary tribes is to gather a species of green persimmon, which is the strongest possible astringent, and cast them into the river. The fish swallow them, and are instantly affected as if by paralysis. The fins drop down powerless at their sides, as if they were dead; and then the young Japs wade into the stream and help themselves, either by picking up their floating victims or by nets.

This is a season of great sport and fun, which they enjoy as much as our boys do their games; but it is not their usual method of fishing. The net and the line have been used in drawing food for man from the waters for many thousand years and perhaps always.

In the book of Job, one of the earliest of the sacred writings, the question is asked, "Canst thou draw leviathan out with a hook?"

We know that hooks and nets were used in ancient Egypt, for they are portrayed in the hands of fishermen in the pictorial history of the times now found on tablets and monuments; and we know nets were used in the time of the Saviour, and that by them His disciples drew their food from the sea.

This would be called "sport" rather than "fishing," by the Japanese.

Never complain of your birth, your training, your employment, your hardships. Never fancy that you could be something if you only had a different lot assigned you. God understands his own plan, and he understands what you want a great deal better than you do. The very things that you deprecate as fatal limitations or obstructions are probably what you most want. What you call hindrances, obstacles, discouragements, are probably God's opportunities; and it is nothing new that the patient should dislike his medicines or any certain proof that they are poisons. No; a truce to all such impatience. Check that devilish envy which gnaws your heart because you are not in the same lot with others; bring down your soul, or rather bring it up, to receive God's will, and do his work in your lot, in your sphere, under your security, against your temptations, and you will find that your condition is never opposed to your good, but really consistent with it.

A Sunday-school teacher, examining his class, asked "Who was Eutychus?" "A young man who heard Paul preach, and falling down, was taken up dead." "And from this circumstance what do we learn?" "Please, sir, we learn that ministers should not preach long sermons."