

INTERNATIONAL
Sunday School Lesson

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24th, 1915

ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS

Motto Text:—
"The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, And delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7.)

Lesson Passage, 2 Kings 6:8-23.
Memory Verses, 16, 167.

It seems very evident that the king of Israel had some reason to suspect the evil intentions of his neighbor of Syria when he received the letter which Naaman brought asking him to restore the leper. If it is so that this incident occurred shortly after the healing of Naaman it would indicate that the Syrian monarch experienced little gratitude for the healing of his chief captain. Yet gratitude is always short lived with despotic rulers who regard their own interests as the most important affairs of life. How much the world has suffered from kings! There is something about the craft of monarchs that makes them intrinsically selfish. When the reign of the King of kings is established in this revolted earth we shall see an entirely different method of administration.

God was certainly taking good care of Israel through his preacher Elisha. To him were shown the plans and counsels of the Syrian invaders. There are various ways by which God brings to naught the crafty designs of those who oppose his will. History and experience confirm this. The Babel builders, Pharaoh, Herod were all outwitted by human instrumentalities and by the very simplest means. If it should be argued that Elisha had a natural wit to penetrate the possible tactics of the enemy it would be no argument against God's agency in the matter, since the prophet never made any mistakes in what we should have to call his shrewd guesses; and to err in the judgment is certain to the best of men. There have been great military men who have been possessed of keen insight, and yet the most notable of them made mistakes when the evident purpose of God was contrary to their wishes; as consider Napoleon at Moscow and at Waterloo. It is certain that God cannot be mocked, and it is absurd to imagine that he can be outwitted. For his purposes a little maid is made efficient in this story, and now it is his prophet who is made his instrument for carrying out his will.

The man who will not know God or cultivate relations with him is always at a loss to understand God's strange movements. There were many wise and capable men in the army of the king of Syria, but they did not seem to know that against them was the God who had promised protection to his people. To the king the only possible solution of the failure of his well-planned schemes was that some of his trusted officers had proven treacherous. He could understand how that could be, but he could not understand the silent and unobserved movements of the Almighty. Those scholars who think they see in this transaction the presence of Naaman, place confidence in the fact that this officer hit upon the solution of the riddle must have had some experience with the ways of God. He certainly had seen the wonder-working of Elisha, and it was easy to conclude that he had something to do in this matter; that is, if he was in the king's retinue.

Elisha was at Dothan, where poor Joseph had his sad experience (Gen. 37:17.) Eusebius locates it ten or twelve miles north of Samaria, and in the Apocrypha it is described as being on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon. The prophet makes no attempt to escape, and his equanimity would indicate that the tactics of the king of Syria were made as clear to him in this instance as in the others.

For this reason he was quite calm and composed when his dismayed servant cried out in his distress. It is not needful to suppose that he saw that the young man did not. He was a man of large faith that had received much corroboration in his past history. He knew the purpose of God in his life, and that he was immune from any attack of God's enemies until his task was accomplished. That is the value of religious experience. The God who has given us his dear Son for our salvation is not unmindful of such less important things as our temporal safety. If we can trust him for our souls eternally we ought to be willing to trust him for our lives in time.

Let us by no means ignore the fact that Elisha was a man of constant prayer. We shall lose the chief point of this story if that is overlooked. God honored his petition, endorsing the plan he had formed, if indeed it had not been suggested to him by the Lord. The eyes of the young man were opened and those of the Syrians were closed. The crafty are taken in their own craftiness, and are led into Samaria, a spectacle of their own impotence. When their eyes were opened they saw themselves captives instead of being captors. Then we have a glimpse into the royal philosophy that the Christ has taught us. They are spared at the intercession of the minister of God. They are fed and permitted to go

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away securely to their homes. That is the treatment that the gospel enjoins. It is a great pity that so-called Christian nations have not yet learned how to kill enemies with kindness, and to head coals of fire upon the heads of their adversaries rather than dash them to pieces with exploding shells.

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Geraldine Farrar wept when she saw herself in the movies as Carmen. This information leaves a wide margin for the imagination.

THE DAUGHTERS AND DRESS

Their Failing, if Any at all, is Not a
Lack of Sound Sense

(Charlotte Observer.)

The editor of The Sampson Democrat has heard it said and does not question the correctness of the report, that "the annual convention of the Daughters of the Confederacy which met in the city of Charlotte the past week was more of an occasion for the display of beautiful clothes than anything else." It is also told that "some chapters find it hard to get delegates to attend these meetings because of the expense of providing one's self with such an equipment that will not look 'country,' or 'small-towney.'" Well! Well! The Observer has attended many a campmeeting in the back woods at which the display of Worth gowns was as much in evidence as at the recent meeting of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. We judged from the make-up of the average daughter that she did not care whether or not the rain should spoil her clothes. The prettiest woman in the bunch wore a dress designed and woven in a North Carolina cotton mill and made on the household sewing machine. The daughters, coming to their convention, paid no more attention to dressing up than the men do going to a political convention. If the Daughters of the Confederacy have any failing at all, it is not a lack of sound sense. As individuals they may have some of the weaknesses common to the sex, but meeting as Daughters of the Confederacy they present a presence into which the spirit of vanity has never dared intrude.

Our Christmas Money

Christmas looms up before us, and the problem must soon be faced of what to spend and where to spend it. There should be no answer to this question.

THE HEALTHIEST MONTH

When People Go In Doors Sickness
Begins to Climb

Undoubtedly October is the healthiest month as applied to Granville county. November is its close second. In December the sickness rate rapidly begins to climb. October has the lowest sickness rate of all months in the year, especially from baby diseases. It is the month people enjoy most and feel the best. Why? The summer heat has passed, and closed, ill ventilated houses have not yet been entered. People live more in the open air; they walk, play tennis, foot ball, and other out door games. They keep up their summer habits of bathing and living in the open.

In November colds and infectious diseases are more prevalent. People now live more inside and the windows have not been kept as wide open, especially at night. All the summer sleeping porches have been abandoned and winter has been accepted in full form. The consequence is there are more colds and a spread of contagious diseases.

In December the pneumonia rate begins to climb, reaching its maximum in February and March. Other hot-house diseases flourish accordingly, at this season of the year. In the same proportion as people closely house during the winter, in the same proportion does the pneumonia rate rise, and not until people begin to unhouse in the spring does the pneumonia rate fall. The same is true of other impure air diseases. It seems that a little wisdom exercised at this point would be both practical and sensible. Live outdoors as much as possible all winter long. Get the habit now. Have abundant fresh air where you work and where you sleep. Keep up a strong resistance to colds by a daily morning bath, though it be only a sponge bath, and cultivate right living habits.—State Board of Health.

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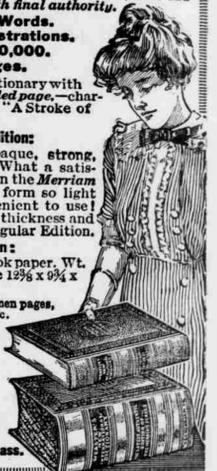
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