

er; but we can understand all that is necessary to our salvation. We can wash in His blood and be clean. We can accept Him, follow Him and enjoy the abundant life which He revealed.

THE UNSEEN HOSTS OF RIGHT
By WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BIBLE TEXT—LESSON FOR FEB. 26
(II Kings, 6:8-17)

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, "In such and such a place shall by my camp."

And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down."

And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, "Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?"

And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber."

And he said, "Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, 'Behold, he is in Dothan.'"

Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?"

And he answered, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Today's Bible Talk deals with a noted incident in the life of the prophet Elisha, again and again described in the Bible as "the man of God." But first a few words about the fate of a faithless servant.

Naaman, captain of the king's host, and a great man in Syria, had been healed of leprosy by Elisha. He had importuned his benefactor to accept the rich gifts which he had brought with him out of Syria, and Elisha had steadfastly refused.

But when Naaman and his retinue had departed a little way, the plan came to Gehazi, Elisha's servant, to turn to his own advantage the gratitude that the Syrian captain felt toward his master. He ran after Naaman and, making up a lie, represented the prophet as having reconsidered his refusal to the extent of accepting a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for two sons of the prophets who had arrived unexpectedly.

Of course, Naaman was only too glad to comply with the request, supposedly from Elisha. He gave Gehazi the two changes of raiment, and he urged upon him two talents of silver instead of one.

When Gehazi returned, Elisha greeted him with a question that showed he knew what had been done, and then he called down upon Gehazi and his posterity the leprosy of which Naaman had been healed. "And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

LEPERS OF MODERN LIFE

The lesson of Gehazi is obvious. He who betrays a trust brings harm not only to himself but to the innocent as well. As no man can live unto him self, so none can sin unto him self.

The business man who lies to gain an advantage over a competitor; the banker who misappropriates funds entrusted to his keeping; the public servant who uses the people's confidence in him to line his pockets with graft—all are Gehazis of modern life. And the terrible punishment that is theirs when, their sins at last found out, they stand in the presence of those they betrayed as lepers white as snow!

And it came to pass that the king of Syria, warring against Israel, discovered that all of his plans became known to the king of Israel. Whenever Benhadad called his captains together and planned the campaign for the next day, Elisha would communicate the plans of the enemy to the Israelitish king, and with this knowledge he was able to escape from the traps set for him.

Benhadad naturally concluded that there was a traitor in his camp and called his servants together that he might find out the guilty party. One of his servants explained that Elisha was able to tell the king of Israel even the words spoken in the bedchamber of the king of Syria.

Then Benhadad started out to capture the prophet. He sent horses and chariots and a

great host; by night they encamped about the city in which Elisha dwelt.

A MEMORABLE ANSWER

In the morning Elisha's servant saw that the city was surrounded and went in alarm to his master with the question, "How shall we do?"

Elisha answered with these memorable words, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

This is the faith that saves from fear. It is the perfect trust that casteth out fear; it is the secret of that courage which nothing can shake.

Elisha prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened. "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

This is just such a defense as David speaks of in the thirty-fourth Psalm, "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

Elisha's servant had made his calculations on the basis of the things that were visible—his were the estimates that are common to those who lack faith in God's justice, in God's power, and in God's willingness to succor those who fight His battles.

Pharaoh was as blind as Elisha's servant; it never occurred to him that there was any way of escape for the Children of Israel. The Red Sea was before them and the Egyptians were following with horses and chariots.

To every eye except the eye of faith the end seemed near for God's chosen people, but Pharaoh was ignorant of the plans of Jehovah—so ignorant that his soldiers followed the fleeing Israelites when the sea opened for their escape. Destiny was not disclosed until Moses and his followers had reached the farther shore and the waves closed over their pursuers.

THE UNSEEN HOSTS OF RIGHT

Time and again that which seemed to be destiny has been turned into disaster, and that which looked like defeat has been converted into victory by some unexpected happening. A storm scatters the Spanish Armada and the history of Europe is changed for centuries; a sunken road at Waterloo turns the tide of battle and Napoleon goes to St. Helena instead of becoming the military master of the world.

Here is an important lesson of our Talk—unseen hosts fight on the side of righteousness; God's invisible army waits in reserve to bring victory to His side.

Not in great crises in history only, but every day and in every life, faith can, in man's extremity, summon light and reinforcements from the Almighty's exhaustless storehouse.

"Faith in the wisdom of doing right" is a practical virtue. It is this faith that leads God's servants to attempt the seemingly impossible; they rely upon infinite wisdom, love and power. That is why one with God shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight.

We are traveling toward the dawn when we walk in God's way. He is our pillar of cloud by day and our pillar of fire by night. He gives us strength for every hour of need.

"THOU SHALT NOT SMITE THEM"

Elisha prayed that the Syrian army, sent to take him for betraying Benhadad's movements to the king of Israel, might be smitten with blindness and, his prayer being answered, he went among the troops and offered to lead them to the man whom they were seeking.

They followed him until they were in Samaria, the capital of Israel. Then their eyes were opened and they found that they were surrounded by the enemy's army.

Israel's king, elated at the success of Elisha's ruse, wanted to kill the Syrians. "My father, shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?" he eagerly asked. Note the answer of the prophet: "Thou shalt not smite them. Wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master."

He made "great provision" for them and sent them away indebted to him for their lives as well as for food and drink.

Then follows a sentence that might well serve as a text today in every pulpit in Christendom: "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

Solomon put self-restraint above military achievements—"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." The world never needed more than it does today the spirit with which Elisha conquered the enemies of Israel.

THE ONLY FOUNDATION FOR PEACE

If the king had been permitted to carry out his plans of slaughter, there would have been

retaliation and retaliation in return, and so on, generation after generation. The only way to put an end to war is to invoke the spirit that Elisha manifested, the spirit that Christ exemplified—the only spirit that can insure peace.

It is not a question of punishing the sins of the past; there has been sin enough to justify any amount of punishment. But this story shows that the security of the future depends upon a change in the spirit of the world, and that change must begin with the substitution of love for hatred.

Friendship and co-operation are the only foundations upon which universal and perpetual peace can rest.

The old method—an eye for an eye—has been tried and found wanting.

The method that the prophet of God employed nearly 3,000 years ago—the method that Christ taught in His life—is the only one for today. He proclaimed it from the cross when He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

THE POWER OF REPENTANCE

By WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BIBLE TEXT—LESSON FOR MARCH 5

(Jonah III:1-10)

And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.

Who is the first missionary of whom the Bible gives us an account?

Jonah; and, like all Bible biographies, his sets forth both his virtues and his faults.

The story, contained in the four short chapters of the Book of Jonah, begins with, "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.'"

But Jonah, instead of obeying the call, fled from the presence of the Lord, and at Joppa took ship for Tarshish. There follows the account of the storm sent by the Lord, "so that the ship was like to be broken;" the fear that came upon the sailors; the casting of lots, and the selection of Jonah as the one to blame for the tempest.

It must be said to Jonah's credit that in the hour of trial his conscience resumed command. He admitted his sin and was willing to be cast into the sea. The sailors hesitated, but finally choosing between the sacrifice of Jonah and their own safety, cast him overboard.

THE BIBLE'S MOST DISCUSSED VERSE

Then follows the one verse in all the Bible most frequently quoted by those who reject the miracles recorded in the Bible. If there is one miracle at which the skeptics scoff, it is the miracle that saved Jonah.

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

Thus the first chapter of Jonah's biography ends.

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly." Thus the second chapter, which gives his prayer, begins; and it concludes with this verse:

"And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

The texts of our Talks so far this year have contained a record of numerous miracles, and the rejection of one is hardly possible except upon grounds that would lead to the rejection of all. Acceptance of some of these miracles requires a much stronger faith than is necessary