

who needed a house, they needed more room as a residence. So they said let us go we pray thee, unto Jordan and take thence every man a beam.

The Jewish religion taught that every boy, no matter what his position, that he should be taught some handcraft.

In fact the Jewish law said what is commanded of a father toward his son. First to circumcise him. Second, to teach him the law. Third, to teach him a trade.

We find that the spostle Paul who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and was a distinguished scholar was also a tentmaker. He labored with his hands. He knew what work was.

I think it would do well for all ministers who are entering the gospel ministry to be subjected to some type of work, farm work or some manual labor where they might discover this important work that is carried on by the lay people.

You will note that these students were industrious in their work. They were not lazy. They cultivated the habits of industry. And

The apostle said to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

Second, there was discipline in this seminary. These young students were excellent and well-conducted. There can be little doubt but that they lived in this manner. For they came to Elisha and asked his consent to their proposal. There was disci-

Introduction

There are two natural explanations of this miracle that some would have us to believe. First that Elijah passed a piece of wood underneath the axhead which he could see lying at the bottom of the river. And then lifted it to the surface. And second that he thrust a stick or bar of wood through the hole in the axhead made to receive the haft and so pulled it out. But this is to do violence to the text and is not a true occurrence as to what actually happened.

This took place in the vicinity of Jericho since both Gilgal and Bethel were remote from the Jordan. The school of the prophets at Jericho whereof we have heard in chapter two and verse 5 and verse 19.

We see that from Deuteronomy 19:5 that the Hebrews made their axheads of iron as early as the time of Moses. They probably learned to smelt and work iron in Egypt. This axhead flew off into the water. This could have been a common occurrence as we read in Deuteronomy 19:5 and could be easily restored back onto the handle.

We see several things in this story. I quote from Psalms, "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity. It is like a precious ointment upon the head that ran down unto the beard even unto Aaron's beard and went

down to the skirts of his clothings. Like as the dew of Herman which fell upon the hills of Zion." Thus we see a truth of sweet pleasing community life of the prophets and of Elijah and his followers. They were (bound together) by no vow of obedience and they undertake nothing without their master, And they required a larger place, a dwelling place in which to dwell and in which to live.

There are at (least two angles) to this that I would like to point out to you in this message today. (First) of all, we might well preach a theological concerning a theological school. Or college. Here is information enoughtin this Bible text to lead us to discover a sermon on theological education. And then second I would like for us to look at the practical side of the axhead swimming.

(First) let us note the theological training. Young men are to be trained for the Christian ministry; there must be places of education for them to train. More interest ought to be taken in this kind of education. In fact, there should be greater interest in education in general. The church should show greater interest in the Sunday School training. If some people could hear children repeat their lessons, sing their songs, it would do them great good and they would find great encouragement.

The work of our theological institutions is great to a great extent different from that of the other places of education. The

very nature of the study is such that a general public could be expected to take more interest in them.

Occasionally a rich member of the church leaves a considerable sum to found a scholarship for a seminary. But how little is done by the members of the church generally for theological training. Yet all of the members of the church are interested in having not only a godly young man as a minister but a trained minister. It seems that the day has arrived when the individual members of the church should take a greater interest in theological education. I know that we do to a certain extent through our (cooperative program). But we have (young men) who go to study to dedicate themselves to the call of God to the ministry and yet we do very little to support them in a financial way and in other ways.

The story of Elijah here and the prophets is a story of theological education. It is one that you could very clearly interpret as such. You see several things here. Taking place in this school.

(First) there was [industry]. And by that I mean that these students in this theological seminary knew how to work and I mean that they were not above doing their own work.

Too many times people who feel they have been called of God reach such a high state of civilization that manual labor is considered a (disgrace) to them. But here were a group of students

came when it was needed. But we know that God can make the smallest flower, the snowflake, or tint an ocean shell. One who can bless one as we seen the small troubles of humanity. Many times that go unnoticed by great number and masses of people. The tear that is quickly brushed aside. The hidden anguish of somebody's heart. Yes, we lose sight of these individuals but not our heavenly Father.

God never overlooks the multitudes, never overlooks the individual in the multitudes. It is easy for us to sympathize with a nation and to shed to tears over the sufferings of the nation and the sorrows of the nation. Without having a particular interest in one member of the nation. But God cares for the whole race. By caring for every individual member of it. For example today we perhaps may feel for the entire Cuban nation. And yet I wonder if we give little thought to men who sit in prison and who have heartaches there.

The crowd might tramp by but the ears of Jesus will listen to Bartameus as he cries and will bless in that hour.

Amid the thousands of warlike Syrians who surround the city of Dobhan, the Lord did not forget Elisha. And provide a way of rescue and a way of safety for him. Yes, this enterprise needs supernatural help. And God came when he was needed. And we see that the presence of God was there.

It was not just the power of Elisha. For except the Lord

pline. It helped the school.

The same thing is true in the church or in a family. There should be discipline in the family. And in the school regarding what constitutes authority in a church or in a family or in a school.

Dr. Arnold of Rugby once said to a group of assembled scholars that when there had been some disorder in the school the he had had to expel several boys. I quote, "It is not necessary that this should be a school of 300 or of 100 or of 50 boys. But it is necessary that it should be a school of Christian gentlemen." *Same time in ch.*

Theological seminary ought to be a school of God-called men. And who know what discipline is. If we disregard the authority of the nation, if it is not properly insisted on in the home, or in the church. Then what do we have left? The Bible tells us to let all things be done peacably and in order.

Third, there was kindness in this seminary. There was pleasant brotherly relationships between the prophets and the pupils. Now the prophet could have been stern. He could have been hateful. But he was one who knew that how to have authority and yet do it with kindness. There are some we know that authority is never weakened by kindness. There are some people who think that it adds to their dignity if they can influence somebody with a stern hand. They make a grave mistake. Because you

feel that you are superior. It never hurts anyone to be kind and courteous and considerate. And filled with the spirit of Christ. As we find in this theological school.

✓ Fourth, there was growth. The number of students increased.

We know a stone does not grow because there is not life. A tree grows because there is life in it. You know that it is dead if it does not put forth leaves and fruit in the springtime. And in this theological school there was great growth.

The church is stimulated by growth as this school was. We read that although in some sections that the churches are miserably short of the accomodations necessary for the whole population. And yet there are some that are two or three times greater. Than is required by the number of people who attend. On all side empty churches and yet there is money contributed for religious purposes. And there like the one talent, wrapped up in a napkin unused. Fact is that church buildings, many places have ceased and in other places become a business speculation. One church should outgrow or outdo another. But the idea is that here is a church and it grows like a grain of mustardseed. And it creates its own branches. And reaches out. And other churches are formed from it. Instead of churches being built from ignorant zeal and spirit of rivalry, it ought to be done in the spirit of best council. And growth as this theological seminary experienced in the day of Elisha. They

determined to do something about it. As Matthew Henry quaintly says, when they wanted room, they did not speak of sending preceeders and marble stones but only of getting every man a beam to run up a plain hut or cottage with.

Every man it would seem feel his beam, carried it, and adjusts it. How right and honest this is. They never thought of putting up a grand place at other people's expense. How far we fall short in spirit from this. To erect modern churches today there are people who make all kinds of entreaties, addresses that are ignorance, bazaars, questionable procedusre, raffles, and what-have-you in order to raise the money. But here in this institution we discover that every man was to shoulder his part. And this was on the best council that they had.

Difficulties were encountered.

The theological school encountered difficulties. We see here the axhead fell off in the water. What a distress this was. Theological seminaries today encounter difficulties. In recent months we've all been well informed on the message of Genesis and it seemed to be a great difficulty. And yet from time to time these problems come up. But here is a worthy enterprise that these men were in. And the difficulty may turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

These trifling matters are no problem to Elisha. For he will deal with them. And we find here the supernatural healp

the same way Elijah had used it. He smote the waters, he crossed over.

We hear of him sweetening the water. We hear of a certain woman in trouble. Because of debt He goes to her house, he asks her if she has anything in the house. Only a cruise of oil and he tells her to go to the village and borrow all the empty ones and. He tells her to get a great number of them. He pours out the oil. And then she sold the oil, paid her debts, and her home was filled with rejoicing.

A Shumanite woman and her boy was dead. Came down from the mountains across the plain and going up to the prophets chamber, where this boy was. He prayed and the boy lived again.

And so you find that the man has only the axhandle in his hand; the axhead is gone and his only natural for him to go to the man of God. And alas master for this was borrowed. And where fell it?

If this was the only instance in the Scripture, you might say well I question it. But the Bible is full of stories like this. In the New Testament, there was a woman who had for 18 years been bound down with an infirmity. She could not lift herself up and she spent all her living on physicians. She was not healed. And this woman was dwarfed in stature. And there was no eye that would look upon her without pity. And she was trying to lift her poor body up. And Jesus sees her and he

build the house, they labor in vain that build it. And what mockery it is for any man to get in the pulpit and speak about the love of Jesus who is himself a stranger to that love.

What a mockery it is for any man to speak about the grace of God and he has never experienced it in his own heart and in his own life. Thus here is a message of theological education and training.

II. Let us look at the practical side of this text now. Another side. But wait a minute, you say, iron will not swim. You may say that I cast a piece of iron in the water and saw it sink like lead. Well, you might go to this story here and say well now that's not true. But if you take Elisha but of the Old Testament you must take out Elijah and the others too.

Here is a text and the man of God said. We are not dealing today with the natural law, we are dealing with the supernatural. And I am presenting to you the story out of a book in which the marvelous is always coming to pass.

I should think it would be a very easy thing for an axhead to swim. Compared to holding the winds in your hands and as God can do. I would think it was just a trifling matter. As compared to holding the sea in your hands as God can do. The iron did swim. God said in his word and God always speaks the truth.

Look at the setting of this text. The house of the sons of the prophets seemed to be too small. The prophets go out to secure materials for the enlargement. It was kind of cooperative piece of work. This is the cooperative program in our budget at work. And these men as they go along are carrying axes. They are chopping down the trees. One man seems to be poorer than the other. For he is working with a borrowed ax. It may be that the ax was faulty or it may have been that the laborer was a little over-zealous. We do not know. But anyhow he was chopping his tree. And suddenly the axhead skipped away from the handle and bounced into the water and sank out of sight. And the man in great embarrassment turned to the man of God and said that he had lost his axhead. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place, they cut a new stick, he cast it tither and the iron did swim.

The axhead did swim is the first point you want to see. This is a miracle of Elisha. Through the supernatural power of God there is a sharp contrast between the miracles of Elisha and those of Elijah.

Elijah seemed always to do great things. But Elisha the commonplace, everyday things. You will remember they were walking along together, they came to Bethal, to Gilgal, to the Jordan. And Elijah turned and said you'd better tarry here for the Lord is going to take me away from you. And the sons of the

prophets came out and said Elisha you'd better tarry here and the Lord will take your master. He said as the Lord liveth and as my soul liveth, I will not leave you.

So Elisha what will you have me to give thee, Elijah responded. He said oh, master give me a double portion of thy spirit. He said you've asked a hard thing. But if your eyes fixed upon me you will have it. They came to the Jordan and took off the old mantle and smote the waters and dry-shod they went over to the other side and suddenly the skies brightened and a chariot of fire and steeds of fire appeared. And the whirlwind was on and caught up by the whirlwind and Elisha overpowered for the moment stood looking at him. Then he stretched out his hands, I imagine and I could hear him shout, my Father, my Father, the chariots of Israel and the horseman thereof.

And Elijah took off the old mantle, leaned out from the whirlwind and dropped it. It fluttered down through the air and fell upon the shoulders of Elisha. And he was ready. And note he did not take the master's mantle and wrap it around him and say isn't this comfortable? And

Many a man has received the Holy Spirit for power and lost the Holy Spirit because of his spirit. Elisha did not wrap this mantle around him and say I shall take this back and keep it as a matter of pride. Many a man has received a blessing and lost it for that very reason. He used the master's mantle in

gical preachers. And who proclaim Jesus Christ. And yet they may have just a handle. Because people do not come to the mercy seat. There are church officers who have testified of Christ. They have had a family altar. They spoke the name of Christ to their children. They went to church. They rose to speak to somebody. But now the altar is gone, the power is gone. No longer does the church hold interest for them. Prayer meetings are off. And today their experience is just swinging an empty axhandle. You are (without power) today, you are not a soul winner. You have lost your influence over your husband. You have lost your influence over your children. You have lost your influence in the church. You have lost your influence in the city. The axhead is gone and there is no power.

Another thing to note is what is the axhead. We ll, I should say the axhead may be conscious presence of Christ. Or it might be the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. The word of God. And you have lost it.

Now the searching question is, where fell it? What if the man who had lost the axhead had said to the man of God, I do not know where it fell. Down here, possible over yonder, the man of God would have been at a loss. When you find out where it fell, (come and tell me.) And the man of God said, where fell it.

And he showed him the place. There is a lesson for you.

heals her. And he says woman thou art loosed. And she stood up. Yes the iron did swim. He is always bringing these things to pass.

You see a woman in sin being hounded by men who are professing great virtue themselves. She is running like a frightened deer. And she comes and hastens to Jesus. And as she comes to Jesus, the law said stone her. But Jesus forgave her. Bending down he began to write in the sand, this impure woman standing by. He bowed his face and he wrote because he was a pure man. Now, I do not know exactly what he wrote. But an old legend says that when Jesus bent over to write, he was writing the name of a man who stood in the crowd. And as this man leaned forward, he read his own name and the rest of the sentence was this - "so and so is himself an extortioner". And the man drops the stone in his hand and goes. Jesus writes another name. "So and so is himself an adulter". And he dropped his stone and leaves. So and so has tempted a young maiden and 50 men dropped the stones in their hands and flee away. He continues to write name after name and man after man leaves until at last, lifting up his eyes and seeing only the woman at his feet and the men all gone, he says woman where are thine accusers. Doth no man accuse thee? She said no man, Lord. And he said neither do I condemn thee. And she stood up and she was free. And the iron did swim.

Yes, there are incidents like this that happen everywhere. In Canada there came into the audience a man blinded by drink, held captive by drugs for 29 years. A slave of the opium and the morphine habit. A worker spoke to him, his heart was touched and that man walked down in the presence of 4000 people, climbed up on the high platform and said friends I am climbing up out of hell. And you must help me. And although he was in rags, there came up to him a beautifully dressed woman who said, my husband will take you home to our house this evening. Sometime later that man wrote a letter to a Presbyterian minister and he said, I wish you could see this man. His face is shining and I wish you could hear him speak. He is filled with the power of God. I wish you could have heard him lead our meeting last night. Scores of people were impressed and many were converted. The iron did swim.

Not only happens in Canada. But in Melbourne, Australia. There was a knock at the evangelist's door. "Come in" and a frightened face appeared for a moment at the door. And a note was handed to him. It said, dear sir, I have been a drunkard for four years. I have tried my best to overcome the problem and the powerful passion but I cannot. Please pray for me. Then the person appears at the door again for a moment and she said I came just to see that you got it in your hands. And was gone. He said that he scarcely passed a day or night without seeing

that face. But one night he saw her stand in one of the churches and trembling say that though the day she had gotten the victory. That under the power of the singing she had seen Jesus. And with the memory of her sweet mother she had made one great effort by the help of God. She was there clothed in her right mind. And all the look of womanhood back, all the power of virtue back, all the strength of Christian grace. And the iron did swim.

Another thing to note is the handle only. This man had lost the axhead and he was holding the handle only. Friends there are members of the church; there are many who are in the church today - many men and women who are in the same predicament as the man who lost the axhead. The man with the ax-handle in his hand could have gone on apparently chopping wood. He could have raised the ax-handle and brought it down. And the man 50 feet away would not have known that he was working without an axhead.

But if your've ever used an ax you know the difference in swinging an axhandle and an ax with an axhead on it. And it is a great deal more difficult to keep up my friends. You can keep up a good form of religion than it is to live the real thing. And many are keeping up just in form only. You are working with out an axhead.

There are some who have been called of God even as theolo-

your political conditions. You have not lost the axhead. Somebody else would say as the (socialist) we need a better system; let's change that. And that would be better for you. Others would tell you that the axhead is not off but that we only think it is off. They would tell us to think its on and to proceed to use the (axhandle) and we will be alright. But I know only one way to get the sinner up and if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. To lift the sinner up except by the drawing power of Jesus Christ we need to preach to live, and that's the secret and that is the hope. And that is the sort of salvation that you need. You are held captive.

Out in (Montana) they have crosses to mark where people have died along the way. That means that some traveler has met with death. I've noticed on some of those crosses raised and in fact I have a slide with three of them, they are aluminum colored. But two or three of them have red tips painted on the end of the crosses. And I wonder in the place of those crosses if we could raise Jesus Christ cross that there men might say yes, I yield.

An evangelist was telling once the story in the Alps of the black cross. What does it mean? It means that a traveler slipped to death. And as he told that a man in the service began to sob and say, (I yield, I yield, I can hold out no more.) I wonder if we couldn't place the red cross, the cross of Calvary in the place of the black cross.

So. Norfolk - Dec. 9, 62 P.M.
Plana Dec. 9, 62 P.M.

You know the place where you lost the power. No preacher is required to tell you. No evangelist is required to tell you. You know the place. You lost it when you neglected the Bible. You lost it when you crowded prayer off into the corner. You lost it when you did not confess your sins. You lost it when you neglected the church. You lost it when you were in league with the world. You lost it at the card table. You lost it at the dance. You are the only person in the world who knows where you lost it.

There was a man where a service was being held who entered a building clad in rags. The man went on with the service. And suddenly the man sat up and said sir may I speak? Certainly said the preacher. This is my father's church. He was an officer here. This is his paw. With six other boys I was in Sunday School here. Our Sunday School teacher used to have us in her home on Saturday afternoons. She taught us the names of cards. Up to then we never knew them. Later she taught us games of cards. Then after a while we said to her, not so much lesson and more cards. Then we forsook the Sunday School and while the others were at the school, we were away playing cards. Sir, he said of the seven boys, two died on the gallows, three of them are in prison for life, one of them is a fugitive from the justice and I am the other. Sir, if the officer of the law knew that I was here, I would be put in prison. / Then for a moment,

standing perfectly still he said, all I have to say is that I would to God that my Sunday School teacher had had different influence. He walked out of the church and the preacher said he never saw him again. But there (arose) up a woman dressed in black who as she started out into the aisle staggered and fell and as she fell she said, "my God, Sir, I am the teacher."

You know where you lost it. But please let me say if you are out of fellowship with God, I cannot be unkind to you. I know my own weaknesses too well.

If you are out of the way away from Christ, I am just a preacher of the gospel. If you have lost your power, God loves you. He loves you.

Commander (Eva Booth) tells in the Western part of our country where a boy was arrested for a crime of murder. His old mother followed him to the cell. And sitting down beside him said to him, tell me now, did you do it. And the boy looked up into his mother's face and his lips trembling and his face growing white, he said, "mother ^{not} I did do it."

When the (time of the trial) was come the judge said to the mother, can you persuade your boy to plead guilty. We will be easy with him. But your honor, she said, he did not do it. The neighbors came in to sympathize with her and she would smile and say, but he did not do it. The prosecuting attorney said to her, if you tell Jim to change his plea, the judge will be easy on

him and the mother said, thanks sir, but he didn't do it. The boy was convicted and the day of the execution came, and made his way into his cell and the shadow of the gallows was already upon the boy. The (chaplain) said to him, Jim, you are facing eternity, tell me did you do it. The boy was perfectly still for a moemtn, then raising his face he said, "I did do it." You go and tell my mother."

One of (Dr. Wilbur Chapman's) friends who knew him said that the chaplain went over to the house and the old mother knew what day it was. The shadow of the gallows was touching her too. And when the chaplain entered the room, her head down in her arms, and when he spoke to her she made no sigh. And she heard him. And then he said mother listen, Jim did it. He said he did it. And the mother did what my mother would have done, or your mother would have, she gave one shudder and dropped her head a little lower in her hands and raised her face, covered with tears and said, Chaplain, "go back as quickly as you can and tell him that I love him." And that is God. Infinite in his mercy, matchless in his love. He loves you and I would call you back today.

Now perhaps there would be some who would say but you have not lost the axhead. My message to you today is to the man who is not a Christian. Who is deep down in sin, How are you going to get up? The political reformer would say to you, just better