

March 20.

REVIEW.

Lesson, Isa. Jer. Ezek. Golden Text, Ps. 101 : 1.

The lessons of this quarter are from the three great prophets ; Isaiah, who prophesied from 760 to 697 B.C. ; Jeremiah, from 622 to 586 B.C. ; and, Ezekiel, from 593 to 571 B.C. The lessons themselves cover a period of probably 150 years, from 720 B.C. to 570 B.C. or from about the time that Samaria was overthrown and Israel carried captive by the Assyrians, to return no more, until shortly after the downfall of Judah and the carrying away into Babylon.

The burden of all these lessons is, warning, and promise.

I. *Warning.* Israel had sinned and suffered through many long years, and at length God gave them over into the hands of their enemies. For the next hundred and fifty years, the fate of Israel was an object lesson to Judah, to warn her of the danger of sin. In addition to this she had the warnings of the prophets, she had threatened dangers and marvellous deliverances, as in the destruction of Sennacherib. Even the final destruction came by degrees. There were three sieges by Nebuchednezzar, 605, 598, 588, and each time some were destroyed and taken captive, but all the warning and chastisement was in vain, nothing short of complete overthrow would answer the purpose, and they were given over to captivity and death, while their city and temple were destroyed. This was effectual, for after their return, 530 B.C. from the seventy years captivity, whatever their other sins might have been they never again fell into idolatry.

II. *Promise.* In the darkest hours the prophets ever kept before them the future glory of the Church, the kingdom of God, which they then represented ; and the triumph of the Messiah, the promised king. This was done for two ends, to cheer them in their sorrow, and to stimulate to live worthily of their destiny. These promises were made in terms of the Old Testament Dispensation. In so far as they were fulfilled under the Old Test. Dispensation, in their return from Babylon, they were fulfilled in terms of the Old Test. Dispensation. In so far as they were or are to be fulfilled under the New Testament Dispensation, in the coming of Christ, in the gradual extension of His sway, and in the final triumph of His Kingdom, that fulfilment must be in terms of the New Test. Dispensation. "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise," Gal. III. 29.

REVIEW QUESTIONS,

Lesson I. How is Christ's coming foretold ? What shall be the nature of His laws ? What the character of His Kingdom ?

II. What is the burden of song in that kingdom ?

III. What has no place in that kingdom ? Rev. XX. 13. How do the drinkers like reproof ? What are the results of drunkenness ?

IV. What privilege have the subjects of that kingdom ? What assurance have they ? What notable instances of answered prayer ? What instances in your experience ?

V. How is the kingdom ushered in ? How is the king received when He comes ? Contrast the beginning and the ending of it ?

VI. What is the attitude of the king ? What the portion of the kingdom ? What the results of being in it ? What its effects upon the world ?

VII. What features of the kingdom given here ?

VIII. How does hatred to the king shew itself ? How is it shewn to day ? What the results to him who thus hates ?

IX. How are its subjects treated ? Give parallel cases.

X. How is God's justice shewn ? What the object of His judgments ? How are you trying His patience ?

March 27. THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL.

A MISSIONARY LESSON.

Lesson, Is. 40 : 1-10.

Golden Text, Is. 40 : 5.

Memory vs. 3, 4.

Catechism Q. 65.

Isaiah prophesied, B.C. 760-697. The events to which this lesson points are towards the close of the exile, 150 years later, B.C. 530. But this is no proof that it was spoken at a later date and by another prophet. Transported in vision into the future, Isaiah speaks of the coming captivity. Then he speaks of its ending and joins in the joy of the returning exiles. He gives them God's message to be recorded for their consolation in the hour of trial, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God." Then borne on by the Holy Spirit he speaks of things beyond his ken, things which are fulfilled only in the gladness and blessing of the gospel day. In the opening of the lesson we hear a voice from heaven bidding the prophet speak comfort and promise to the Jews. Then vs. 3-5, we hear that same voice speaking far off in another direction, bidding others help them in their return. Then, vs. 6-8, we hear that same voice saying that this deliverance does not depend upon changeable men but upon an unchanging God, and the lesson closes, vs. 9-10, with the prophets own glad shout of cheer to God's people as he listens to these things.

I. The voice of the prophet bidding him comfort Jerusalem, vs. 1-2.

II. The voice bidding others help in the deliverance, vs. 3-5.

III. The voice proclaiming the unchangeableness of him who makes the promise, vs. 6-8.

IV. The prophet bidding Jerusalem watch for the coming joy, vs. 9-10.

I. vs. 1-2. *Comfort ye* ; A voice from God speaks to the prophet. *Warfare* ; Her hard conflict with trial. *Iniquity* ; She had suffered and is now forgiven. *Double* ; This was the penalty for trespass, Ex. 22 : 9. The words of comfort apply to the church yet in all her discouragement and trial.

II. vs. 3-5. *Prepare ye the way* ; Roads are bad in the East and when a king journeys, a special preparation of the road needs to be made for him. The power of Babylon, the difficulties of the journey had to be renewed. God gave power and will to Cyrus to help in the work. So great difficulties, giant sins and wrongs, "mountains of pre-*judice*, of selfishness, of heathen customs and castes, mountains of worldliness, the foothills of which still remain in the church, mountains of unbelief, of indolence, to be levelled ; *rallies* of omission of duty, of depleted treasures, of neglected prayers, of failures of faith and love ; *crooked places* of disposition, of contentions, of business methods, of Christian governments dealing unjustly with heathen nations, of commerce carrying ruin and ruin, of uncivilized dwellers among the heathen showing an unchristian spirit," are still obstacles in the progress of Christ's kingdom. *Mouth of the Lord* ; Great are the obstacles but they shall vanish for He hath spoken it.

III. vs. 6-8. Human power and beauty and purpose all transient ; the word of God unchanging, therefore these promises cannot fail of fulfilment.

IV. *High Mountain* ; Proclaim the good news from the heights so that all may hear. So should the glad tidings that have come to us be proclaimed that all may hear. Let the Church ever shout aloud the glad tidings.