

Our Young Folks.

The Boys.

"Boys will be boys"—but not for long: Ah, could we hear about us This thought—How very soon our boys Will learn to do without us;

A Rapid Traveller.

Last night I looked out of my window, and I saw a great traveller. It had travelled very fast, faster than the steam-cars, faster than the winds, faster than the messengers. It had been travelling almost 200,000 miles every second for many, many years, and it had just reached me.

The Stream to the Mill.

"I notice," said the stream to the mill, "that you grind beans as well and as cheerfully as fine wheat."

Considerate Bears.

A gentleman was once making inquiries in Russia about the method of catching bears in that country. He was told that to entrap them a pit was dug several feet deep, and after covering it over with turf, leaves, etc., some food was placed on top.

Truthful and Obedient.

"Charley! Charley!" Clear and sweet the voice rang out over the common. "That's mother," cried one of the boys, instantly throwing down his bat, and picking up his cap and jacket.

Building Without a Plan.

Walter, on his way to school, stopped in front of a lot which seemed to be graded for building, just as a load of lumber was being deposited upon the spot.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

LESSON XXIV.

JUNE 17, 1877. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL. Ps. cv. 1-19.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 13, 14, 18. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Hosea xiii. 10; Ps. cv. 85-87. SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 6, read 1 Chron. v. 23; with v. 7, read Ex. xx. 2, 3; with v. 8, read Lev. xviii. 25; with v. 9, read 2 Kings xviii. 8; with v. 10, read Deut. vii. 5; with v. 11, read Hosea ii. 13; with v. 12, read Deut. iv. 19; with v. 13, read Isa. ii. 12; with v. 14, read Deut. x. 16; with v. 15, read 1 King. xvi. 18; with v. 16, read 1 Kings xii. 28; with v. 17, read 2 Kings xvi. 8; and with v. 18, read 1 Kings xl. 18, 22.

THE PUPILS SHOULD IDENTIFY HOSHA, Israel, Pharaoh, Judah; the Medes; and also Assyria, Samaria, Halah, Habor, Gozan, Egypt.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God.—2 Kings xviii. 12.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—God forsakes those who forsake him.

The warnings and reproofs given to Israel, which we have studied in previous lessons, prepare us for the national ruin described in the present. The opening verses detail the immediate means by which it came about.

In the reign of Ahas in Judah, Hosha reached the throne of Israel, by the treacherous murder of Pekah (2 Kings xv. 10), and held it nine years (v. 1). His reign was wicked (verse 2). Shalmaneser, of Assyria, attacked him and put him under tribute, here called giving presents.

Hosha tried to get Egypt's aid to throw off this yoke, and the attempt became known to Assyria (verse 4). To withhold the tribute of course was rebellion by a vassal, and was resented. This second invasion was about 723 B. C., and included all the land; the former included only the northern part of it. Samaria stood a siege of three years. (See 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10).

The king who began the siege did not finish it, as is known from ancient history; but "the king of Assyria" (verse 6), another, however (it is not implied that he was the same), took it in the ninth year of Hosha. The exactness of Scripture is here remarkable (see 2 Kings xviii. 10). The Canon of Ptolemy makes this year B. C. 721, as does the Hebrew record.

I. The Captivity (verse 6). The time and manner of the carrying away are not detailed, only the fact. From the researches of Rawlinson, it appears that at first the chief of the people only were removed, and the tribute was continued on the rest, but later, probably to punish rebellion, or refusal to pay it, the rest were removed, and (in this the researches support the Scripture) he settled strangers from Arabia. Assyria then included Mesopotamia, Media, and Babylon, and the region to which the captives were carried is described by the ancient names, and is identified with the country about the Khabour, to which frequent reference is made in ancient inscriptions. The Medes had been conquered, and probably, after the fashion of the time, removed also, and some of their empty territory was filled with Israelites. For prophecies fulfilled in the ruin of Samaria, the pupil may refer to Hos. x. 7; Isa. xviii. 1-6; Hos. x. 14; Mic. i. 6. The city's strength is shown by the length of its resistance. Gozan, Halah and Habor are mentioned together in 2 Kings xviii. 11, and in 1 Chron. v. 26.

II. The causes of this calamity. "And it was so because" (verse 7), in which is a general statement of the guilt of Israel, in apostatizing from the God who delivered their fathers, to other gods. Their cup of iniquity was full. Their sin was all the greater because of the national blessings, of which the deliverance from Egypt was the beginning.

Particular sins are specified, from verse 8 onward.

(a) They adopted heathen worship, for which their predecessors had been cast out, and they followed their kings in idolatry. (See Deut. ix. 5).

(b) They "did secretly," etc., or dissembled, pretending to worship God when they did not—a common sin still, renewed when men "go to church" for fashion, credit, pleasure, or hope of indirect gain, or to be like their neighbors. God looketh on the heart.

(c) They disregarded the one central place of divinely appointed worship (which was set up as against polytheism), and set up "high places," in the form of shrines, where they pleased (see 1 Kings xiv. 23), and for the number of them see Ezek. xvi. 24. (So in Roman Catholic lands one meets images, pictures or crucifixes in every prominent or picturesque spot, and as of old, painted in bright colors, Ezek. xvi. 16.) The last clause of the verse is a colloquialism to describe the commonness of the custom. Every place, from the meanest hut to the largest city, had them. (See Chron. xxvi. 10 and xxvii. 4).

(d) They adopted image-worship, contrary to the second commandment, and set up "groves" (not a wood or forest; see 2 Kings xxiii. 6), probably the sacred symbolic trees of the Assyrians, in carved wood, with images (2 Chron. xxxiii. 19). Gideon assailed this (Judges vi. 25-31), and it died out for a time. It was forbidden (Ex. xxiv. 18). That it does not mean growing trees appears from "under every green tree,"—favorite places for image-worship.

(e) Their modes of worship were conformed to the heathen, in the burning of incense—an ancient and widespread form of worship. Fragrant resins of various kinds are meant. All this was against express prohibition (verse 12).

(f) They did all this against warning, rebuke and entreaty, often renewed and addressed to both Judah and Israel. It will be found a good exercise to collect the names of the "prophets" and "seers" mentioned, from Abijah (1 Kings xiv. 2) downward. The "burden" of prophetic utterance was now the same as the call of the gospel to men now, namely, to repentance, conversion, faith, and faithful following of the Lord, (See Amos v. 4-15, or Isa.

1. 16-20.) The warning aggravated their sin, for

(g) They persisted obstinately in it, as their fathers did not often (see Ex. xxxii. 9, and Dent. xxxi. 27); and the root of all the evil in both cases was the same—"did not believe" (see Heb. iii. 19) "in the Lord their God" (verse 14).

The course of apostasy is onward and downward. Slavish imitations of heathen worship followed, copying the very sins for which their predecessors were driven from the land. Not in one thing only, but in all the commandments of God did they transgress (verse 10), multiplied molten images, adopted the Assyrian idol, called "a grove" (verse 16), worshipped the heavenly bodies and adored Baal. Deeper still they descended, till their children were burned in honor of Moloch, alleged to be a hollow figure of brass. When God is forsaken in Judea or America, some substitute for His form must be found. Hence augurs, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, necromancers, spiritualists, come into fashion. This is a truth that ought not to be forgotten. When men leave the true God, they do not long continue without a god. They set up a false god. Men feel themselves to be too weak to stand alone. And when they discard the Bible, perhaps calling the belief of it "superstition," it is commonly to become later the slaves of some invention of men. At length the cup of iniquity was full. Israel (i. e., the ten tribes or northern kingdom) was carried away as above stated, and notwithstanding many ingenious guesses, their place and descendants remain unknown to this day. They forgot God. They are "the lost tribes." Less sinful Judah remained longer free, and never lost its identity as the people of God.

THE LESSONS FOR US.

(1) It is with God we have to do. He is a jealous God. He requires fidelity to himself in worship. If he has a right to be served, he has a right also to fix the form of service.

(2) Men do not stop with single sins. They wax worse and worse. So Israel. Where God is forgotten, the devil is followed, and he hurries his victims down a steep place.

(3) National sins bring national ruin; for nations do not exist as such, as men do, to be punished in the next life. If so with Israel, much more with ordinary people.

(4) Yet God is patient, uses means, and only strikes when his forbearance would be an evil.

(5) He can find even in ambitious and selfish men the means of executing his judgments, without approving their pride. (See Isaiah x. 5, 7.)

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The doom of the ten tribes—how executed—when—in what manner—whither carried—the grounds of it—the great original error—how it defeated its ends—the succeeding transgressions—forms of idolatry—cruelties in worship—the divine warnings—how sent—the substitutes for God's word—the contrast between them and Judah—the lessons to us.

In Duty's Path.

An English Sunday-school paper has the following on the importance of faithfulness to the work God has given us:

In the backwoods of Indiana there lived a pioneer mother and her family. They had hewed themselves a place in the wilderness, and there they were making themselves a home. The nation knew not what that mother was doing, and she knew nothing of what was passing in the great world outside. She only knew she was doing her present duty. There she lived year after year, unknown and unappreciated, and wholly unconscious of what she was doing. She brought up her son to habits of industry and integrity, never suspecting what was in store for him, or what history would say of her. There, in obscurity, she prepared him to lead the nation through a civil war. But who will now say that the mother of Abraham Lincoln, in her log-cabin, obscure and unconscious, did not do the country a service as real and as valuable as that of any man that ever drew the sword in battle, or ever made a speech in Parliament? Had she been less faithful in her cabin home, there would have been less fidelity in the White House. The mother of Queen Victoria has often been praised for so carefully training her daughter. She expected her daughter would be a queen, and she trained her for the position and its duties. How much more honor is due to the "Queen of the Backwoods," who, without suspecting to what her son would be called, or how the eyes of the future would be turned to her simple home, yet fitted that son for his lofty calling. So well did she prepare him, that when the emergency came, it found the man ready trained for the work his country required of him.

Every mother's work may not be made as public as this, but every mother's work is just as vital. Her work may be "real service" none the less, because never published to the world. If every father and mother did faithful service, there would be little need of soldiers. If those in private stations were all true, failures in public life would be rare and could do little harm. If those in private stations are un-sound, fidelity in public place can do little good.

The workers in Sunday-schools have a like responsibility. The nation's future depends really more on them than on those that make the laws. They can do more for the country than Parliament can. The world may never know what they have done, but the world will be blessed by their work, none the less. The best work is done in obscurity. The grandest work is that wherein "the left hand never knows what the right hand has done." The work is done in secret, but tested in public. When your scholars go out into the world, and battle with temptation, it will then be shown whether your work has been well done or not. As you teach your class from Sunday to Sunday, you may ask yourself often, "What good will it do?" But if you can make a dozen men and women better, as you certainly will if you are faithful, "the good it will do" is very easy to be seen, but not easy to be measured; for no one can measure the force of a dozen streams of purified life, sent out among men.

The Upbuilding of the Spiritual Life

The scholar having been brought to Christ, and led to trust in Him alone for salvation, and yield himself up to Him as his Lord—the Lord of his will and of his way—a very important question arises as to how he should be treated by his teacher. He having been used of God to his conversion, will have an interest in him such as none other can feel. He is by this brought into the closest possible spiritual relations with him. The scholar has become, to use Paul's phrase, his "Son in the Faith." And this suggests the duties that now devolve upon him—duties in advance of any yet performed by him. He was a sinner before, he is a saint now. He was outside the kingdom before, he is inside now, and under obligations to live a life becoming the gospel of Christ. His acceptance of Christ as the Saviour from sin is but the beginning of the Christian life, the entrance upon it, the first step of it, not the end of it, as many seem to think. The life received is instrumentally to be built up, to be nourished, and its powers developed, and the teacher is to gird himself to this duty. He may be assisted in it by parent or pastor, but only assisted, for he cannot without the rudest violence retire from his spiritual relations, or break away from the position of power in which God has placed him. He must hold the first place in the scholar's regard, and he must use it for the upbuilding of his spiritual life.

But how shall he do this? We answer first of all by fellowship. The teacher is to take the scholar to his heart, and unfold him in the mantle of his sympathy, and give him to feel that one, at least, cares for him and has a deep interest in his welfare. He is to surround him, as much as it is in his power, with a warm atmosphere—an atmosphere of love; he is to impart to him the realization that he is not alone, but that he belongs to a family—the household of faith. And this is not a matter of small importance; it is rather one of the greatest importance, one of mighty and far-reaching influence. How many bright and hopeful Sunday-school scholars have been chilled to death without this, and have at length dropped off from the class and the church, and every good association? How many? These first days and weeks and months of Christian life, when the battle with sin is a new and unaccustomed fight, are to be cheered, and strengthened and upheld by a living, loving fellowship. This is one of the first conditions of the spiritual life. For as the early morning hours of the Christian determine the character of the day, so these early days of Christian experience determine the character of the young convert's after life. They stamp it with the impressions it will always afterwards bear.

The second thing required in the teacher is a watchful oversight. He must shepherd his sheep. He, of course, knows something of his temperament, and of his circumstances, and of his temptations. In his previous life and character he has the key to unlock the great possibilities of his future, both bright and dark. And he is full of anxiety to guard him against the devices of the devil on the one hand, and to lead him into the green pastures of holiness and happiness on the other. His relation to him necessitates this. See how the horticulturist deals with his plants! He prepares a proper soil, he provides an atmosphere of a certain temperature, he plucks out the weeds and destroys the insects that are wont to infest them, that they may grow luxuriantly and bloom abundantly and beautify the garden or the home. And such attention do the souls of young believers require. Surely we would not allow plants to be better cultured than immortal souls! And yet, alas! they often are. The weeds of sin are permitted sometimes to entangle them and choke them, the insects of doubt are allowed to prey upon the life, or a chilly atmosphere is suffered to depress the spirit and damp its joyous and bounding enthusiasm. How many things arise to interfere with the free action of God's Spirit in the soul! Now, the teacher, like a faithful friend, will keep watch against these as he is able, and stir up the scholar to intelligent and wise action. Young believers are fiercely tempted, and what is more, frequently tempted—their temptations abound. Let this fact be fully recognized. How shall the teacher come at his peculiar temptations? No better plan can be adopted than that employed by Martin Luther in his visitation of the sick; he was accustomed to ask: "Have you any temptation?" and finding it out, apply suitable words of promise to the soul. How shall the teacher deal with his doubts? Thomas Carlyle suggests a valuable consideration. He says: "No error is fully committed till we have seen not only that it is an error, but how it became one." Every Christian knows how doubts arise, how they grow to strength, and also how they are exercised by the magic touch of the Word of God. How shall the teacher increase the love of his heart when it has grown cold? By presenting Christ in all his attractive sweetness and grace. The more clearly Christ is seen and apprehended by the soul, the warmer the heart grows, and then love flows out to all around. This care and culture, reaching out to and compassing all the difficulties and discouragements of the new life, is a service urgently called for, and always blest to the soul.

The third thing required in the teacher is to give an introduction to work for Christ. The sooner this is done the better. Yet there is to be a fitness for the work he is asked to undertake. It must be such as he is able for and can do. Let the "first works" be the easiest, as, for instance, the distribution of tracts, asking others to religious meetings, etc. Quiet work will exercise all his graces of prayer, faith, love, courage, etc., without exposing him to the danger that comes of ostentatious service. There must be some kind of work engaged in to keep the soul in a healthy and vigorous condition, else it will soon be cumbered and oppressed with disease. But let him be sure strongly to dissuade the young disciple from speaking of what he does, to impress on him constantly that word of a certain heathen: "Talk not of a good life, but let thy life speak." This will conserve his energy, and cause it to eventuate more richly in action. Many get into the habit of talking of work, and soon imagine, be-

cause they have talked of it, that it is done. This caution is given by Dr. John Owen in reference to talk, and is of wide application. He says: "Have a care that your head in motion and your tongue in talk do not soon empty your heart of truth. We are apt to lay up in our heads by notions and bring it forth in talk, and not let it be in our life, and this weakens spiritual life greatly." Every observer of men has noticed this again and again. As fitting him for work, he will be encouraged to be instant in prayer, and as a "now-born babe to desire the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby." The relation of this to the upbuilding of the spiritual life is of vast importance, and cannot be dismissed with a word; they demand a larger consideration, which for the present we cannot enter upon. Work for Christ calls for the word of Christ. And as that grand old Puritan, Thomas Brooks, has it: "Soul opportunities are worth more than a thousand worlds; mercy is in them, grace and glory are in them, heaven and eternity are in them."—Rev. J. A. R. Dickson, Toronto, in S. S. World.

"Don't Talk to the Man at the Wheel."

These words are painted in large letters where every one who walks the deck on any steamer of a great Atlantic line can read them. They mean something. They mean that the man who holds the helm of a great ship must give his eyes, ears and thoughts to the work assigned him. He must be quick to hear, quick to understand, and quick to act, for through him the captain governs the vessel. When the lesson bell rings, every teacher takes the wheel. Great interests are at once dependent upon his watchfulness and wisdom. Through him the Master directs a class. The waters may be dangerous, and his full thought should be upon the work. There are schools in which a pleasured, "D. n. T. Talk to the Man at the Wheel" might well be put over each class. We have now in mind such a school, and there are hundreds like it. Its teachers are no sooner fairly at work than the librarian comes for the returned books. While the steersman's attention is taken with him, the class (vessel) runs wild or is caught aback. No sooner are things again under way than the penny collector comes round, and there is further interruption. Then the new books are brought on, the papers are distributed, etc., etc., etc. Continual interruptions hinder the work of the teacher by taking not only his attention, but that of the scholars, from the lesson. A little care and planning in advance will leave forty minutes in an hour for undisturbed teaching. The books, papers and primers can be looked after before or after this hour. We recommend schools which have not already done so to try the plan of "No Talking to the Man at the Wheel."

Winning a Soul.

A Christian man, deeply devoted, and wise to win souls, made it a rule to speak to some one unconverted person every day on the subject of his soul's salvation. One night as he was about retiring to rest, he thought himself that he had not fulfilled his vow that day. He immediately put on his attire and prepared to go in quest of a soul. But where should he go? was the question. He concluded to make a visit to a grocer with whom he was in the habit of trading. He found him engaged in closing up his store. When the errand of his customer was made known he was surprised. He said all sorts of Christian people traded with him, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc., but no one had ever spoken to him about his soul. The night visit of his customer and his earnest pleadings made such an impression upon his mind that it led to his speedy conversion. Reader, go thou and do likewise. There are many souls that sit in darkness waiting for life from above. Can you not lead some of them to see the light of life?

The Penitent Thief.

Now that is what that thief did. Just look at him. In the morning condemned, in the evening in paradise with God; in the morning cursing, in the evening singing hallelujahs to God; in the morning in company with thieves, in the evening in company with God; in the morning with his hands dripping with his fellow-creature's blood; in the evening drenched with the saving blood of the Lamb. Arm and arm with Christ he walked down the crystal pavement of heaven. He asked for mercy, and he got it. If you ask for it, you can have it now. Will you be like that unbelieving thief, or will you accept His gift as did the other thief, and not let prejudice keep you from Christ? A prominent man said yesterday, going out of the city, that "rather than be converted in the Tabernacle he would go down to hell with full sail and colors all flying." Well, if you would rather be lost you can. Choose this day which you will serve—God or the devil. Which side will you be on? Will you take your side by that repentant thief, or the other? Will you take Christ as your Saviour, as your Redeemer, or will you reject Him tonight? May God bring hundreds to a decision, and now.—D. L. Moody.

An Old Course.

Drunkness and its attendant evils are by no means confined to our own day and age, or the use of distilled liquors. Says Dr. Eadie: "Ephesus was a commercial town and a busy seaport, and its wealth led to excessive luxury, and Bacchus was the rival of Diana. The women of Ephesus, as the priestesses of Bacchus, danced around Mark Anthony's chariot on his entrance into the city. Drunkenness was indeed an epidemic. Alexander the Great, who died a sacrifice to Bacchus, and not to Mars, offered a prize to him who could drink the most wine, and thirty of the rivals died in the act of competition. Plato boasts of the immense quantity of liquor that Socrates could swallow unharmed; and the philosopher Xenocrates got a golden crown from Dionysus for swallowing a gallon at a draught. Cato often lost his senses over his choice Falernian wine."