

In view of the plebiscite vote on the liquor traffic, to be taken in the near future, there should be no "ease in Zion." We are servants to serve. The working period is strictly limited. Carlyle says:

"The end of man is an action, not a thought,  
Though that thought were the noblest."

There is a religion of knowledge and a religion of power. Power is knowledge applied. Let your knowledge be applied in power at the ballot-box.



LESSON 12.—SEPTEMBER 18, 1898.

### Captivity of the Ten Tribes.

(Lesson Text: 2 Kings 17: 9-18. Memory Verses: 13, 14.)  
(Read 2 Kings 17: 1-23, Amos 6, Hosea 5.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever."—1 Chron. 28: 9.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: 2 Kings 17: 1-8. Tuesday: 2 Kings 17: 9-18. Wednesday: 2 Kings 17: 19-29. Thursday: Hosea 10: 1-8. Friday: Isa. 1: 1-9. Saturday: Isa. 9: 8-17. Sunday: Matt. 21: 33-43.

#### The Heart of the Lesson.

"God fulfils Himself in many ways," and to trace the order and method of that fulfilment in the tangle of human history requires that we use the single eye which makes the whole body full of light. In the sections of the history of God's people which are recorded for us, we have divine purpose and human freewill blending in a manner which is most instructive if we are content to read the Bible as it is, and find out what it has to say to us, instead of reading it as we think it should be, and finding it our own preconceived views. The division of the kingdom had its divine side in the counsels of God, and its human side in the plans, the follies, and the sins of men.

The consequence of the division was in every way disastrous to the people of God. A wedge had been driven into the heart of the trunk of the national tree, and the branches upon either hand felt the blow. The neighboring nations subdued by united Israel slipped from the grasp of the divided kingdom. The Syrian possessions were lost; the Ammonites threw off the yoke they had borne so long; the homage of Moab and Edom was merely nominal; and the Philistines emancipated themselves from being the servants of Judah. The connection with Tyre was broken off, and the possession on the Red Sea became comparatively useless. The breach once made between Judah and Israel widened with time. If division was necessary, each kingdom might have been ruled in the fear of God, and some (not all) of the worst consequences of the division been averted. The guilt of the sin which God in His wisdom overrules is not thereby palliated.

The lesson for to-day contains a summary of the moral causes that led to the ruin of the northern nation. For two and a half centuries there had been unbroken apostacy from God. The whole of the nineteen kings were bad except one—Ahab—and he was very bad. Of the twenty kings of Judah, eight were good. That half of the nation had a century longer life.

At last the end came to Israel. It had been long delayed; it had been long foretold. Before the people had crossed the Jordan, and while yet in the wilderness, Moses had said that if they turned aside to follow heathen nations, "The Lord shall scatter you among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you." This warning had been repeated over and over again, but all in vain. When Hosea had been king nine years, the king of Assyria besieged Samaria, as it had been once before in the time of

Elisha; this time the city was destroyed, and the king and his people were taken into a captivity from which they never returned. All attempts to identify them with the black Jews of Malabar, the North American Indians, the modern English, or the Nestorians, are a failure. God expressly said, "I will sift you among the nations like as corn is sifted in a sieve."

The disaster was so overwhelming that they not only lost their country, their existence, but also their identity. As human nature is the same in all times, it may be well to enquire into the cause or causes that led to conduct culminating in this disaster. Nothing happens without a cause. In the physical world this truth is everywhere exemplified. Diseases have their germs; panics have their causes. The same law is universal in the world of mind; nothing in either realm happens by mere chance, for all things have their origin in preceding causes. And so it is in things spiritual. God's laws are regular and permanent. He does not have to set up another Sinai and issue a new decalogue to every age and nation.

Israel's sin began with *inconsistency*. They worshipped the calves with a pretence of the worship of Jehovah. They "did secretly those things that were not right," and in their deepest apostacy they claimed to be the servants of God. Then they drifted into *indifference*. "They would not hear." Then with base *ingratitude* they drifted into practical *infidelity*—"did not believe in the Lord their God." They had cut off their communication with God, the source of their strength and victory. The last message of the late Dr. A. J. Gordon to the young Baptists of Boston was, "Never say 'no' to God."

A young physician had determined to reach the summit of Mount Blanc. He accomplished his purpose, and the little village of Chamouni was illuminated in his honor. But after he had ascended and descended in safety as far as the wayside hut, he was tired of the rope by which he was attached to his guide for safety. The guide remonstrated, but had to yield. The young man had gone only a short distance when his foot slipped. The rope was gone; he had nothing to hold him back, and in the depths below he met an awful death. He said "no" to his guide; he refused to be guided. Israel said "no" to God; they threw aside the rope of the law. Are you tired of the restraints of grace, setting yourselves "to do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger"?



LESSON 13.—SEPTEMBER 25, 1898.

### Review.

GOLDEN TEXT—"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Psa. 84: 11.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: 1 Kings 12: 16-25. Tuesday: 1 Kings 17: 1-16. Wednesday: 1 Kings 18: 30-39. Thursday: 2 Kings 2: 6-15. Friday: 2 Kings 4: 25-37. Saturday: 2 Kings 5: 1-14. Sunday: 2 Kings 17: 9-18.

#### The Heart of the Lesson.

For three months we have studied individual character and separate events, covering a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years. We have studied the events microscopically; we now study them telescopically, and learn the lessons which the centuries have taught, and which the Israelitish nation has wrought out in its history.

Because divine epochs are long, we are not to be sick with hope deferred, or deluded in the indulgence of sin because the period of final penalty is protracted. For nations as well as individuals harvest follows seed time, always, always. The period between seed and sheaf may be but days; between the