

with the insolent messages sent by his servants, Sennacherib proceeded to wield his pen against the Lord God of Israel. See 2 Kings xiv, 14; Isaiah xxxvii, 10-14.

17. Then they cried—"rather, *al'othey cried!*" The allusion is to the *al'oth* narrated in 2 Kings xvii 23-35, which occurred before Sennacherib wrote his letter. —*Sp. Com.* To affright and to trouble them etc. "Rab-shakeh and his companions were accompanied by a strong body of troops (2 Kings xvii, 32). If a tumult had arisen among the Jews who manned the walls, a gate might perhaps have been opened, and the Assyrians received into the town." —*Sp. Com.*

THE MIRACULOUS OVERTHROW.—v. 20, 21.

v. 20. For this cause. On account of the contemptuous and blasphemous words uttered. Hezekiah . . . and . . . Isaiah . . . prayed. Hezekiah's prayer is given in 2 Kings xiv, 15-19, and Isaiah xxxvii, 15-30; but, no distinct mention is made of the prayer of Isaiah; we hear however that Hezekiah asked him to pray, (2 Kings xiv, 4).

v. 21. The Lord sent an angel, etc. Here we have the prayers of the king and of the prophet answered, apparently with little or no delay. "The adversaries had spoken scornfully of God. The answer intimated that greater scorn should overtake them (Isaiah xxxvii, 22). They had boasted of their prowess and doings. That prowess and those doings should be brought to nothing. No threat which they had uttered against Jerusalem should be fulfilled (Isaiah xxxvii 29-35). And the event justified the answer. Sennacherib did not reach Jerusalem, and his captains utterly failed to do what they had boastfully said should be done, their vast army perished in a single night," and Sennacherib himself returning with shame of face to his own land was assassinated by two of his own sons (Isaiah xxxvii, 38). Cut off all the mighty men—to the number of 185,000, —see Isaiah xxxvii, 36.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. Whatever the enemies of God may attempt, He has them always in His hand.
2. In times of trouble prayer should be our resort.
3. Those who faithfully serve God will find Him a very present help in trouble, (Ps. xlv).

March 24.—**Manasseh brought to Repentance**—2 Chron. xxxiii 9-16.—B.C. about 677-667.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."—*Prov. ix, 19.*

This Exposition is kindly prepared for us by Prof. Torrance.

CONNECTION WITH THE LAST LESSON.

Last Sunday's lesson taught us how the Lord delivered Hezekiah and his people from the hands of Sennacherib. The next incident of Hezekiah's life recorded by the sacred historian is his deliverance from a sickness which threatened his life. In connection with this we have a striking proof of God's sympathy with us in the weakness of our faith. See Ps. ciii, 13, 14. Notwithstanding all these manifestations of God's favor and the evidences that Hezekiah was a God-fearing man, we soon learn that he was not perfect, nor invulnerable to the influences of sin. See chap. xxxiii, 31. On the whole, however, he was a good man, one of God's chosen ones.

EXPLANATION OF PROPER NAMES.

MANASSEH: This name was evidently given to his son by Hezekiah in order to win over what

remained of the ten tribes, Manasseh being the name of one of the most influential of these tribes. See chap. xxx, 1-11. The name means "forgetting" and its origin will be seen from Gen. xli, 51.

The King of Assyria: Merodach-Baladan was king of Babylon during the latter days of Hezekiah. Hezekiah sought his alliance; 10 forward which, he showed his ambassadors all his wealth. At the same time Esarhaddon was king of Assyria. Against him Merodach-Baladan rebelled and was defeated. Esarhaddon then made Babylon his capital instead of Nineveh, and having learned that Judah had been in alliance with the prince of Babylon, he proceeded to subjugate it also.

Babylon: This was the capital of Chaldean Babylon, which lay directly east of Palestine, across the Arabian desert, and along the western bank of the lower part of the Tigris, while through it ran the lower part of the Euphrates. Babylon was built upon both sides of the river. Assyria lay to the north of Babylon.

The City of David: 2 Sam. v, 7, 9; 1 Chron. xi, 5, 7. There is much difference of opinion as to the part of the city which was called the City of David. There were three or four hills on which the city was built as it increased in size. The first hill occupied by the Jebusites. To the north-east of this was the hill Moriah on which the temple was built. It is now held that this is the same with Zion, and that this was the part called the City of David.

Gihon: This word means a spring or stream of water; but like all the other places in and around Jerusalem it is hard to fix it. Some place it in the valley of Hinnom to the west of the temple. Others place it in the Tyropsean valley which lies between what we have called the City of David and the old city of the Jebusites.

The fish gate: There were no less than about twenty gates to the city. The fish gate was in the north.

Ophel: A part of the city lying to the north of the temple and occupied by the Levites.

THE LESSON.

Our lesson contains the following points: 1. Manasseh's *sinfulness*, 2. his being *reproved*, 3. his *repentance*, 4. his *repentance*.

1. MANASSEH'S SINFULNESS.

1. Grace is not transmitted. Many of the Antilabians could trace their descent from God-fearing fathers and mothers, yet Noah alone was found right in God's sight. Laban, Esau, and the sons of Eli were many of the kings of Judah supply illustrations of the same.

2. Kings and those in authority may require submission to the forces of piety, but they cannot change men's hearts. Hezekiah had carried the people along with him in his reforms, but it is quite evident they were not sincere. Manasseh being but twelve years of age when he began to reign, and the wickedness of his reign being immediately introduced, would prove his having been influenced at first by bad advisers.

3. He was exceedingly sinful. (a) He introduced not one form of heathen worship, but every form he could find. The worshipping of the host of heaven, and the using of enchantments, witchcraft, etc., point to the influence of the alliance with Babylon. The altars and groves for Baalism came from the Phœnicians through the Israelites or the ten tribes, while the worship of Moloch was taken from the Canaanitish nations in the country. (b) He had every opportunity to know better, hence the aggravation of his sin. (c) He not only sinned himself, but he made others sin. (d) He put to death the Lord's saints. (e) He profaned the temple, the place of God's presence.

II. HE WAS REPROVED.

See verse 18, also 2 Kings xxi, 10-17. Isaiah,

Joel, and others were sent to him with direct messages from the Lord, but all to no purpose.

The Lord always reproves before He punishes. Every man carries about with him a conscience which cries aloud and gently troubles the sinner.

III. HE WAS PUNISHED.

See Prov. i, 20-33. Let the class read this; also Prov. xix, 1. God makes men carry out His purposes even when they think they are independent. "Among the thorns." The general explanation of this is, that he had hid among the brambles, and was there discovered and taken. The word rendered "thorns," however, means a hook as an instrument of capture, or an instrument for binding or leading captives, as may be seen from Job xli, 2. This mode of capture is alluded to in Amos iv, 2. From the context it would therefore appear better to take the word here as referring to some instrument of capture.

IV. HE REPENTED.

1. He humbled himself, and greatly humbled himself. The first step in coming to the Lord is a hearty confession of sin. Let the class read the 51st psalm. Also recall the prodigal son. 2. We must plead with God for the blessings we require. See Phil. iv, 6.

3. In these ways God is to be besought. The words in the original, translated "besought," literally mean "to strike one's face," and refer to efforts to soothe or please an offended party. If it is true on the one hand that "God is love," it is as true on the other that He "is angry with the wicked every day." Ps. vii, 2.

4. God was entreated of him. There is hope for the greatest sinner if he will only repent. Is. lv, 7; Jer. vii, 37; 1 Cor. vi, 9-11.

5. It is only after we come to experience God's pardoning love that we begin to know Him to the proper sense of the term.

6. We must bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and so prove the genuineness of our change. This Manasseh did: (a) by putting away. (b) By restoring God's worship. (c) By exercising his influence and authority upon them.

MARCH 31.—Quarterly Review.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them."—2 Chron. xv, 4.

FIRST QUARTER.

January.

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| SUBJECT. | GOLDEN TEXT. |
| 1. Roboam, 1st King of Judah | 2 Chron. xi, 12. |
| 2. Amos Faithful to his God, 2 Chron. xiv, 1-11. | 2 Chron. xiv, 12. |
| 3. The Covenant Renewed, 2 Chron. x, 1-10. | 2 Chron. x, 17. |
| 4. Jehoshaphat's Prosperity, 2 Chron. xvii, 1-10. | 2 Chron. xvii, 9. |

February.

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| 5. Jehoshaphat Rep. ved, 2 Chron. xix, 1-9. | 2 Chron. xix, 7. |
| 6. Jehoshaphat Helped of God, 2 Chron. xix, 14-25. | 2 Chron. xix, 20. |
| 7. Joash Repairing the Temple, 2 Chron. xxiv, 1-22. | 2 Chron. xxiv, 4. |
| 8. Uzziah's Pride Punished, 2 Chron. xxvi, 16-23. | Prov. xvi, 18. |

March.

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| 9. Ahaz's Persistent Wickedness, 2 Chron. xxviii, 1-10. | 2 Chron. xxviii, 22. |
| 10. Hezekiah's Good Reign, 2 Chron. xxx, 1-11. | 2 Chron. xxxi, 21. |
| 11. Hezekiah and the Assyrians, 2 Chron. xxxii, 1-21. | 2 Chron. xxxii, 8. |
| 12. Manasseh brought to repentance, 2 Chron. xxxiii, 9-16. | Rev. iii, 19. |
| REVIEW. | 2 Chron. xvi, 4. |