

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KINGS AND PROPHETS.

B.C. 713] LESSON IX. [Nov. 29.

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED.

2 Kings 20. 1-17. Commit to mem. vs. 1-3.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble.—Ps. 20. 1.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God is the hearer and answerer of prayer.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 18. 13-37. Th. 2 Kings 20. 1-21.
T. 2 Kings 19. 1-19. F. 2 Chron. 32. 24-33.
W. 2 Kings 19. 20-37. Sa. Isa. 38. 1-32.
Su. Isa. 39. 1-8.

TIME.—B.C. 713, the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign, and seven or eight years after the end of the kingdom of Israel.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, in the kingdom of Judah.

INTRODUCTION.—One-half of Hezekiah's reign had passed away. He had carried out his religious reforms, and had no doubt accumulated some of the treasures mentioned in 2 Chron. 32. 27-30. In the midst of his reign he was taken very sick.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. In those days—His fourteenth year (v. 28 and 2 Kings 18. 13). Was sick—Of a boil or carbuncle (see v. 7). 3. Wept sore—(1) He had a natural desire to live longer. (2) His work was unfinished. (3) The ancients had no clear assurance of immortality. 4. Middle court—Of the palace. 7. Lump of figs—A usual remedy for boils in the east. 8. Said—Immediately after the promise, but before the recovery. 9. Ten degrees—Or steps. 11. The dial of Ahaz—Obtained, at least as to idea, by Ahaz from the Assyrians. It was probably a column surrounded by steps, on which the shadow of the column marked the time of day. 12. King of Babylon sent letters—Probably with a desire to form an alliance. Babylon was just then rising in power against Assyria. 13. Hearkened—Favoured the alliance. shewed, etc.—Partly from pride, partly to show that he was a worthy ally. 16. Hear the word, etc.—Hezekiah's sin was (1) ingratitude; (2) pride; (3) ambition; (4) alliance with a heathen power, against which Isaiah had often warned him; (5) hence want of faith and obedience. 17. The days come—B.C. 606-588.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Intervening history.—Hezekiah's sickness.—His prayer.—Why he desired longer life.—The answer.—His song of thanksgiving.—The dial of Ahaz.—The shadow moving backward ten degrees. Hezekiah's sin (vs. 12, 13).—Its punishment.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How long after the events of the last lesson was Hezekiah's sickness? What great trouble is described in the previous chapters? In how many books of the Bible is this lesson recorded?

SUBJECT: LESSONS FROM HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.

I. HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS (v. 1).—When did King Hezekiah become sick? (2 Kings 18. 13.) What was the trouble? (v. 7.) How dangerous was it? Why does God allow good men to become sick? What lessons does sickness teach us?

II. HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER (vs. 2, 3).—Why did he turn his face to the wall to pray? What did he ask for? Was it right to desire life so earnestly? What reasons had he for desiring life? What was his plea? What characteristics of true prayer do you find in this?

III. THE ANSWER (vs. 4-11).—How soon was his prayer answered? What was the answer? What more was given than asked? Is this God's frequent way of answering prayer? (2 Chron. 1. 11, 12; James 1. 5.) What means were used? Is it a mark of true faith to use means as well as prayer? (James 5. 16; John 9. 6, 7.) What sign was given to strengthen his faith? What was the dial of Ahaz? What was the miracle in this? What aids to our faith does God give us? What lessons can you learn from this answer to prayer? What song of thanksgiving did the king compose? (Isa. 38. 9-20.)

IV. A TRIAL OF FAITH (vs. 12-17).—Why did God let the following trial come upon Hezekiah? (2 Chron. 32. 31; Deut. 8. 2.) Who sent to congratulate Hezekiah on his

recovery? How far away was Babylon? What was the real object? How did Hezekiah receive the ambassadors? What was the sin in what he did? How was it punished? How long afterwards was this prophecy fulfilled?

LESSONS FROM HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.

1. Sickness teaches some lessons seldom learned elsewhere.
2. It is right to pray for temporal blessings.
3. His prayer was (1) earnest; (2) believing; (3) the prayer of the righteous; (4) pleading the promises.
4. The answer was immediate.
5. The answer was abundant, overflowing.
6. It was accompanied by the use of means.
7. He was encouraged by other proofs of God's love and power.
8. God tries us in various ways to show us our hearts.
9. Even high experiences do not make us perfect at once.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

1. What happened to Hezekiah about the middle of his reign? ANS. He was sick unto death. 2. What did he do in his distress? ANS. He prayed earnestly. 3. What answer did God give him? ANS. He added 15 years to his life, and gave deliverance from his great enemy. 4. What was his one failure? ANS. Pride and ambition in reference to the embassy from Babylon.

B.C. 738.] LESSON X. [Dec. 6.

THE SINFUL NATION.

Isa. 1. 1-18. Commit to mem. vs. 16-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Cease to do evil; learn to do well.—Isa. 1. 16, 17.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Sin is a deadly disease, and can be cured only by repentance in man and forgiveness and renewal from God.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Isa. 1. 1-18. Th. Matt. 21. 12, 13, 33-41.
T. Isa. 43. 1-15. F. Deut. 32. 7-40.
W. Matt. 11. 16-30. Sa. Ro. 11. 1-5, 11-22.
Su. Ps. 51. 1-19.

TIME.—Probably about B.C. 738.

PLACE.—The kingdom of Judah.

INTRODUCTION.—The first chapter of Isaiah is probably a general introduction to the first series of visions (chs. 1-12), which was completed in the third or fourth year of Ahaz. It gives a general view of the state of the nation.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—v. 1. This is the title of the whole book. 2. Hear, O heavens—That which he calls attention to is so astonishing, that heaven and earth are summoned to witness it. I have nourished—All the life and blessings of Israel had been through God's care. He had been as a father to them. 4. A seed of evil-doers—Children of bad parents. Get away backwards—Chosen to be the holy, happy people of God, they became idolatrous, wicked, and suffering. 5. The whole head is sick—The nation is now compared to a sick man. 7. Your country is desolate—See 2 Chron. 28. 5-8, 18, 20, 21. 8. Daughter of Zion—Jerusalem. Collage; lodge—Rough, lonely shelters, put up for the keepers of the vineyard and garden. The country surrounding Jerusalem was laid waste. 9. Been as Sodom—As bad in character, as sad in fate. 10. Ye rulers of Sodom—Rulers were like the people of Sodom. 11. I delight not—The sacrifices and feasts spoken of were commanded of God, and good in themselves, but God hated their insincerity and hypocrisy in them. He could not delight in religious services which were mere forms, without heart, without obedience. 13. I cannot away with—I cannot endure. 16. Wash ye—Cleanse yourselves from your sin by repenting of it, and putting it away. 18. Sins as scarlet—Glaring; stains almost impossible to remove.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Isaiah.—The book of Isaiah.—The state of Judah at this time.—The ingratitude of sinning against God (v. 2).—Vain religious services.—Man's part in salvation (vs. 16, 17).—God's part in salvation (v. 18).

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What do you know about the prophet Isaiah? During whose

reigns did he prophesy? (v. 1.) In what country? What can you tell about the book of Isaiah? To what part of Bible history does it correspond? To what portion of that history does this lesson apply? When was it written?

SUBJECT: SINFUL CHARACTER AND THE WAY OF SALVATION.

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE NATION (vs. 2-4).—Why does the prophet call on heaven and earth to hear? What had God done for this people? How had they treated him? What has he done for us? How do we treat him? Is all sin mean and ungrateful? How are the people contrasted with the animals? How is the wickedness of the nation described? What is "a seed of evil doers"? Are all sinners corrupters of others? They had gone away backward, from what? (Ps. 33. 12; Ex. 19. 5; Deut. 7. 6; 28. 9-11.) To what? (2 Kings 16. 3, 4, 8, 17; 2 Chron. 28. 2-4, 22-25.) To what is the sinful nation compared? (vs. 5, 6.) Are all men sinful by nature?

II. THE FRUITS OF THIS CHARACTER (vs. 7-9).—What had befallen the nation? Who is meant by "the daughter of Zion"? Why is Jerusalem compared to a cottage in the vineyard? What saved them from being like Sodom? What was the character and fate of Sodom and Gomorrah? Where had they been warned that these evils would come upon them if they sinned? (Deut. 28. 15-22, etc.)

III. FALSE EFFORTS FOR RELIEF (vs. 10-15).—What things are condemned in these verses? Were not the sacrifices, Sabbaths, and feasts appointed and commanded by God? What was there wrong in their doing them? What like condemnation from Christ in his day? (Matt. 6. 1-7; 23. 13, 14, 23, 25-28.)

IV. THE TRUE WAY OF SALVATION (vs. 16-18).—What was their first duty? What is meant by "wash ye"? What must they put away? What should they do? What would God do for them? In what respects are sins like scarlet? What must be done to make the sinful heart white as snow?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Sin against our heavenly Father is not only wicked, but mean and ungrateful.
2. Sin is like a deadly, all pervasive disease.
3. It affects both our thinking and our affections, our doctrines and our character.
4. No forms of religion are pleasing to God as substitutes for love and obedience.
5. The first duty of the sinner is to repent of his sin, and to forsake it.
6. God cleanses the soul (1) by forgiveness; (2) by giving a new heart.
7. Religion appeals to the reason.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

5. What great prophet lived in the times of Hezekiah? ANS. Isaiah, who prophesied for nearly sixty years under four different kings. 6. What had the Jewish nation become? ANS. Very sinful. 7. What had they suffered on this account? ANS. Great desolations and troubles. 8. What did God call upon them to do? (Repeat the Golden Text.) 9. What did God promise them if they would do this? (Repeat v. 18.)

USE makes practice easy, and practice begets custom, and a habit of things to facilitate what thou couldst not conceive attainable at the first undertaking.—Fuller.

A FULL-BEADED grandfater recently had his beard shaved off, showing a clean face for the first time for a number of years. At the dinner-table his three-year-old granddaughter noticed it, gazed long with wondering eyes, and finally she ejaculated:—"Grandfather, whose head you got on?"

"WHERE did you get this French Bible?" asked Smith, taking up a book from Black's table. Black: "French Bible! I haven't got any French Bible. The only Bible I have is the one you have in your hand. Had it ever since I was married." Smith (holding up the book): "What do you call that but French?" "Well! so it is! Funny I never found that out before!"

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