



## A Preview for the Half-Year.

Under the International System, which undertakes to complete the circuit of the Bible once in seven years, a return is now made to the Old Testament after six months spent upon the life of Jesus. The narrative is taken up just where it was dropped; namely, with the history of Judah, which is brought down to the latest date. The kingdom of Israel had passed out of existence through the Assyrian conquest. Rome was only half a century old. Kings had ceased in Greece, and the chief magistrates (archons) were ruling in their stead. Assyria was the supreme world-power. The discovery of the royal library at Nineveh, with its ten thousand inscribed tablets, furnishes remarkable confirmation of the sacred records. Sennacherib, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Zechariah, Esther, Nehemiah, Malachi, are some of the characters, good and evil, that will pass in review. The Assyrian invasion, the finding of the Bible (the book of the law), the Babylonian captivity, the return from exile, and rebuilding of the temple are some of the events.

### LESSON I.—JULY 2.

#### Sennacherib's Invasion.

II. Chronicles xxxii., 9-23.

#### Golden Text.

With us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. II. Chron. xxxii., 8.

Commit verses 19-21.

#### Home Readings.

Monday, June 26.—II. Chron. xxxii., 9-23.

Tuesday, June 27.—II. Chron. xxxi., 20-xxxii.

Wednesday, June 28.—Is. xxxvi., 1-11.

Thursday, June 29.—Is. xxxvi., 12-22.

Friday, June 30.—Is. xxxvii., 8-20.

Saturday, July 1.—Is. xxxvii., 21-36.

Sunday, July 2.—II. Kings xviii., 1-12.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

The Nile was Sennacherib's real destination. But to reach Egypt he must needs pass through a tiny realm of the Hebrews. Nothing there could prove more than a momentary impediment. So thought the Ninevite. He was ignorantly omitting, however, one invincible factor from his calculations. That factor was the religious faith of the people whose country he was invading.

One courageous, patriotic soul stood out against the threatening tide of invasion. The accident of royal office gave him added prestige. It was Hezekiah the king. He proceeded with utmost discretion, taking into his counsel the princes and other men of influence. While he increased the water supply of the city, he destroyed that of the district in which the enemy must needs camp. He strengthened the outer and inner fortifications of the city, and filled the arsenals with newly-made armor, offensive and defensive. He mobilized the army. He infused his own devout and dauntless spirit into the garrison, in an address which for faith and patriotism has never been surpassed.

Every precaution which the king had taken to preserve the morale of the garrison was necessary. The servants of Sennacherib, captain, eunuch, and cup-bearer, appeared upon the neighboring hillsides and addressed the people, who crowded to the walls. They were sappers and miners sent to honeycomb the courage of the defenders of the city. They showed Machiavelian skill; but they failed. Even the threatening letters of Sennacherib fell short of their purpose. All fiery darts were quenched by the faith of the people in God and his servant, their king.

In the last extremity Hezekiah betook himself to prayer. He believed the as yet unwritten Scripture, 'The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' He took every precaution, as if everything depended upon himself. Then he prayed, as if everything depended upon God.

We may never know the precise way in which the Assyrian host was destroyed. But deliverance came to Jerusalem. The crimson shields of Assyria covered the pillars of the temple, so lately stripped of their gold to buy a worthless truce. Sennacherib returned in defeat, to die at the hand of an assassin. A great page of world-history turned that day. On the under side Assyria disappeared, and on the upper Babylonia came into view.

### THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

The prophet Isaiah describes the approach of the world-conqueror with nervous and poetic picturesqueness. Like a desolating tide his army reaches the height of Lebanon. The cedars feel his fire at their roots. Damascus is a heap. Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, Ivah, Calno, Carchemish, are the milestones in his march of ruin. He pauses at Michmash, the Rubicon of sacred history. Ramah, Gibeah, Geba, Benjaminite cities, fall in one day. Two score 'fenced cities' of Judah are taken. Jerusalem alone remains inviolate, and the ruthless invader even now stands at Nob and shakes his hand defiantly at the daughter of Zion.

The extremity is reached. Jerusalem is an oasis in a desert of desolation. The destroying floods break in angry roar and foam about the rock of Zion. Hezekiah is as a bird shut in a cage. Sennacherib is about to thrust his hand into the holy city, as he has into the nest of every nation, and despoil it.

The dilemma is fixed. To resist means defeat, and that involves suffering, inhuman and ferocious barbarities unsurpassed in history. The Assyrian bas-reliefs tell how cruelly conquerors treated their prisoners of war.

On the other hand, surrender without resistance meant denationalization and deportation of the entire population, according to the fixed policy of Eastern conquerors. The exile would be further embittered by the importation of a heathen colony (also a part of the Eastern policy) into Judea, a motley people who would be encouraged to imitate the Hebrew ritual after the manner of the Samaritans.

In this darkest hour the patriotism of Hezekiah shines with incomparable splendor. He was no stoic—he was keenly sensitive to the situation. He was no hair-brained zealot, ready to impale himself on the enemy's pike. He maintained his poise. He had what has been aptly called the greatest possession; namely, self-possession.

Hezekiah at prayer for his nation is a scene worthy the greatest artist. Justified by the awful emergency, he probably entered the Holy of Holies, and, casting himself before the mercy-seat, spread out before the Lord Sennacherib's grievous letter.

For three thousand years the destruction of Sennacherib has stood as a glorious memorial of answer to prayer.

Napoleon's retreat from Russia is a modern analogy to that of Sennacherib from Jerusalem. A scant twenty thousand out of five hundred thousand French survived. The account of the fall of Sennacherib is still read in the churches of Moscow on the anniversary of the French retreat.

### C. E. Topic.

Sunday, July 2.—Topic—The making of a Christian: his destiny. I. John ii., 15-17; iii., 1-3. (Consecration meeting.)

### Junior C. E. Topic.

#### OUR OWN COUNTRY.

Monday, June 26.—Our country God's gift. Deut. viii., 10, 11.

Tuesday, June 27.—Chosen of the Lord. Deut. vii., 6-8.

Wednesday, June 28.—Our inheritance. Deut. xxxii., 7-9.

Thursday, June 29.—A goodly heritage. Ps. xvi., 6.

Friday, June 30.—Righteousness exalts a nation. Prov. xiv., 34.

Saturday, July 1.—God exalts the nation. Ps. lxxxix., 15-17.

Sunday, July 2.—Topic—Our own country. Deut. xi., 12. (Home Missionary of Christian Citizenship Meeting.)

## Teachers Should Visit Their Scholars!

I remember once in hunting for a boy, I passed his house and turning suddenly back, met his mother who was covered with confusion at my finding her thus standing in the door-way and gave as her reason for it, 'Harry called me and said, "Come, quick, mother, and see the woman that tells us about Jesus." Her story was this: She had been married nine years and had six small children and during this time had not once entered a church, but had, she said, been wishing for weeks some one would come and tell her the way of salvation. It is not difficult to lead to the Saviour one who is really seeking him. The Holy Spirit has already prepared the way for the truth.

If a great blessing follows an opportune visit by the teacher, an equally great failure follows many a careless or even unintentional neglect of an absent one.

A little girl who was sick with typhoid fever insisted that her mother should make her ready to receive her teacher as soon as the Sunday-school session for the afternoon closed, for, said the little one, 'She will miss me and she will come and see why I wasn't there.' The teacher did not come, and the next Sunday the same preparation was made with the same result. The grief and disappointment caused the fever to run higher; from that she recovered, but the grieved heart did not recover from its bitter disappointment.

I knew a boy slightly older than the girl who stayed away from Sunday-school on purpose to see what his teacher would do. Daily on his return from school, he would ask: 'Mother, has teacher been here?' After two weeks' absence he was told by his mother he must return to his class. He said: 'What is the use of going? Teacher don't care.' How many do you suppose have watched for our coming and been equally surprised and disappointed?—'Australian Spectator.'

### A Street Arab.

I was standing before the window of an art store where a picture of the crucifixion of our Lord was on exhibition. As I gazed I was conscious of the approach of another, and turning, beheld a little lad gazing intently at the picture also. Noticing that this mite of humanity was a sort of street Arab, I thought I would speak to him: so I asked, pointing to the picture: 'Do you know who it is?'

'Yes,' came the quick response, 'that's our Saviour,' with a mingled look of pity and surprise that I should not know. With an evident desire to enlighten me further, he continued, after a pause: 'Them's the soldiers, the Roman soldiers, and,' with a long-drawn sigh, 'that woman crying there is his mother.'

He waited, apparently for me to question him further, then thrust his hands into his pockets, and with reverent and a subdued voice, added, 'They killed him, Mister. Yes, sir, they killed him!' I looked at the little ragged fellow, and asked, 'Where did you learn this?' He replied, 'At the Mission Sunday-school.'

Full of thought regarding the benefits of mission Sunday-schools I turned away and resumed my walk, leaving the little lad looking at the picture. I had not walked a block when I heard his childish treble calling, 'Mister! Say, Mister!' I turned. He was running toward me, but paused; then up went his little hand and with triumphant sound in his voice he said, 'I wanted to tell you he rose again! Yes, Mister, he rose again.'

His message delivered, he smiled, waved his hand, turned and went his way, feeling, I presumed, that as he had been enlightened, he had done his duty in enlightening another. —T. R. Teske, in 'Christian Alliance.'

As a father in a garden stoops down to kiss a child the shadow of his body falls upon it, so many of the dark misfortunes of our life are not God going away from us, but our Heavenly Father stooping down to give the kiss of his infinite and everlasting love.—Talmage.