

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1879, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON XXII.

JUNE 1.]

PROPHECY AGAINST TYRE.—Ezek. 26: 7-14.

[About 588 B. C.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 7, 13, 14.

7 For thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will bring upon Ty'rus Neb'uchad-rez'zar king of Bab'y-lon. A king of kings, from the north, With horses, and with chariots, And with horsemen, and companies, and much people. 8 He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: And he shall make a fort against thee, And cast a mount against thee, And lift up the buckler against thee. 9 And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, And with his axes he shall break down thy towers, 10 By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: Thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, And of the wheels, and of the chariots, When he shall enter into thy gates, As men enter into a city wherein is made a breach, 11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: He shall slay thy people by the sword, And thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. 12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, And make a prey of thy merchandise: And they shall break down thy walls, And destroy thy pleasant houses: And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust, In the midst of the water. 13 And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; And the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. 14 And I will make thee like the top of a rock: Thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; Thou shalt be built no more: For I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.—Matt. 24: 35.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Destruction from God follows right against Him.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Ezekiel lived during the Babylonish captivity, on the Chebar, commonly supposed to be the river Habor, 200 miles north of Babylon, but G. Rawlinson regards it as the Royal Canal of Nebuchadnezzar, near Babylon. His prophecies were spoken while he was in exile. The prophet having announced the coming destruction of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines, now turns to denounce Tyre, and foretell her overthrow.

NOTES.—Ty'rus—Tyre, a noted commercial city of Phœnicia, on the Mediterranean Sea, north-west of Jerusalem. It was an old fortified city, Josh. 19: 24. Its king Hiram aided Solomon in building the temple, 1 Kings 5: 7-12; a daughter of the Sidonian king married Ahab, 1 Kings 16: 31; the city was taken by Shalmaneser, and again besieged for 13 years by Nebuchadnezzar, and deserted in 1291 A. D. New Tyre is a poor fishing village, while old Tyre is completely destroyed, a "place to spread nets" of fishermen. Neb'uchad-rez'zar—Prince of god Nebo, the greatest monarch of Babylon; reigned 43 years; captured Jerusalem; enlarged his empire; beautified his capital by many magnificent buildings, such as the palace, the hanging gardens, and built vast walls, massive gates; many bricks are found with his name at Babylon; died 561 B. C. Bab'y-lon—Babel, or confusion, the capital of the Babylonian Empire; one of the oldest cities in the world; of remarkable size; with walls of vast height and thickness, said to be 56 miles in its outer circumference; is now wonderful for its extensive ruins. E-zek'iel—God strengthens, the son of a priest, taken captive to Babylon 11 years before the fall of Jerusalem, and settled with other Jewish exiles on the river Chebar, and exercised the prophetic office in captivity, and was highly esteemed by his companions.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) SIEGE OF TYRE. (II.) RUIN OF TYRE.

I. SIEGE OF TYRE. (7.) WILL BRING, by providential direction; KING OF KINGS, a favorite title of great monarchs of East; THE NORTH, Assyria was north-east of Tyre; COMPANIES, foot soldiers. (8.) DAUGHTERS. . . FIELD, not in walled towns; FORT, movable turret filled with men; CAST A MOUNT, an inclined plane of earth built up against the walls; BUCKLER, a shield, or probably a line of interlocked shields, as in storming a fortress (9.) ENGINES OF WAR, battering rams, heavy beams with iron heads, and swinging upon upright posts against the gates; AXES, swords; TOWERS, capture its strongholds. (10.) THEIR DUST, raised by tramping of great companies of horsemen; ENTER, as a conqueror on a triumphal march into a captured city.

II. THE RUIN OF TYRE. (11.) TREAD DOWN, as if riding over people in the streets; SLAY THY PEOPLE, some of them; STRONG GARRISONS, pillars, citadels, or towers. (12.) THEY, the armies attacking Tyre; THY RICHES, for notice of the riches of Tyre, see chap. 27; MERCHANTISE, see chap. 27: 12-25; LAY THY STONES. . . MIDST OF THE WATER. This was literally fulfilled by Alexander the Great who took stones, timber, etc., of old Tyre to build a causeway from the mainland to the island. (13.) SONGS TO CEASE, it was probably a city of unusual joy and mirth. (14.) LIKE . . . THE ROCK, or "a naked rock," that is, nothing left of the city but the rock upon which it was built. This is true now of Tyre; PLACE TO SPREAD NETS, the site of old Tyre is so used, and has been for centuries; BUILT NO MORE. This, too, is true; old Tyre was never rebuilt.

What facts in regard to Tyre teach us—

- 1. Not to rejoice in others' misfortunes?
2. That the Lord will punish the wicked?

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3. That they may have worldly prosperity for a time?
4. That final judgment will be in proportion to the blessings misused or rejected?

LESSON XXIII.

JUNE 8.]

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.—Ezek. 37: 1-10.

[About 587 B. C.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 4, 5, 10.

1. The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. 2. And caused me to pass by them and round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. 4. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these dry bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. 7. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. 9. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

GOLDEN TEXT.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the word that I speak unto you, they have the spirit and they are life.—John 6: 63.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Holy Spirit is the reviving spirit.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—After foretelling the fall of Tyre, the prophet announces judgments to come upon Pharaoh and Egypt; the fall of Assyria; the particulars of the destruction of Egypt; rebukes the unfaithful rulers and leaders; pronounces the judgment of the Lord upon Edom, and comforts true Israelites with a promise of restoration, as in the lesson.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Remember that, by a long course in sin, souls become as dead and dry as the dry bones in the prophet's vision, but the power of the Lord can restore dead souls as readily as dry bones.

NOTES.—Valley, possibly the plain by the river Chebar, where Ezekiel dwelt, and where he had seen the glory of the Lord, 8: 22, or it may mean only a valley seen in the vision. It would seem to picture a spiritual reviving of the people. Che'bar. This is commonly supposed to be the Habor, in Mesopotamia, 200 miles north of Babylon. G. Rawlinson identifies it with the Royal Canal made by Nebuchadnezzar near Babylon, and his view agrees with the tradition respecting Ezekiel's tomb.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE BONES DEAD AND DRY. (II.) THE BONES MADE ALIVE.

1. THE BONES DEAD AND DRY, (1.) HAND OF THE LORD, power of the Lord, 1 Kings, 18: 46; Dan. 10: 10; CARRIED ME, Acts 8: 39; IN THE SPIRIT, as in a vision, see case of Peter and of Philip, Acts 8: 29; 10: 10-19. (2.) PASS . . . ROUND ABOUT, walk through and around them, to view them closely; VERY DRY, dead so long. (3.) SON OF MAN, a common phrase in Ezekiel and Daniel; IN THE NEW TESTAMENT it is especially applied to Jesus; CAN THESE LIVE? said to test the faith of the prophet; THOU KNOWEST, implying that only God could revive them

(4.) PROPHECY, not foretell anything, but proclaim, preach to them. (5.) I WILL CAUSE, or "I am causing;" BREATH, life, Gen. 2: 7. (6.) SINews, "binding matter," that which joins and holds the bones together; SHALL LIVE, notice the natural order: (1.) bones; (2.) sinews; (3.) flesh; (4.) the skin; (5.) the breath—alive. Ps. 104: 30: YE SHALL KNOW, from this proof of my power.

II. THE BONES MADE ALIVE. (7.) WAS A NOISE, literally, "came a voice;" 2 Sam. 5: 24; A SHAKING, or rattling from the moving of the many dry bones; BONE TO HIS BONE, each bone came into the proper place in each body or skeleton of a body. (8.) WHEN, or "as" I looked; FLESH CAME, Gen. 2: 7; ABOVE, over the flesh; NO BREATH, perfect bodies, but lifeless. (9.) THE WIND, or "breath" spirit, see ver. 10; FOUR WINDS, from the four points of the compass; THESE SLAIN, these lifeless bodies, representing the dead state of Israel, and that of a soul in sin. (10.) LIVED, became alive; STOOD UP, as a proof that they were alive; GREAT ARMY, or "great host," not soldiers; the words refer only to the size of the multitude.

What facts in this lesson represent—

- 1. The sad condition of Israel?
2. Of souls in sin?
3. The final restoration of Israel?
4. The power of God's grace in dead souls?
5. The nature of the final resurrection?

ILLUSTRATIONS.—Revivals. In Helvetia there was a custom of celebrating the sun's return to heat and power, by putting out all the fires, for some days, that they might be rekindled from the sacred fires in the heathen temple on Tara hill. The people waited for the appearance of this sacred flame, and hastened from it to rekindle the fires on their own cold hearth. So on many a home altar the spiritual fires have gone out. These should be rekindled by the reviving power of the Holy Spirit. If that fire has gone out on the altar of our heart it is time to re-light it.—Adapted from Foster's Cyclopaedia.

In the vision of dry bones there was first a noise, and then a shaking through all the plain. Revivals always produce vigorous stirring in the church, and excitement in the neighborhood. . . Revivals disturb the formalist, the indolent, the lukewarm, and the wicked. They produce trouble in the conscience, agitation in the mind, tumult in the emotions, commotion in the sympathies, and vigorous animation in all the faculties.—Bates.

NOT BY MIGHT, OR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAITH THE LORD.

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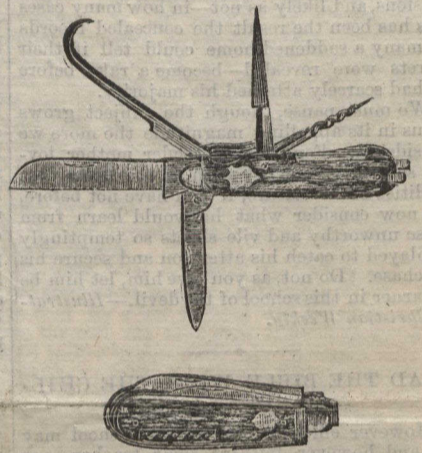
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