

LESSON NOTES FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KINGS AND PROPHETS.
B.C. 800.] LESSON VII. [Nov. 15.
EFFECT OF JONAH'S PREACHING.
Jonah 3, 1-10. Commit to mem. vs. 5, 6.
GOLDEN TEXT.

The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here.—Luke 11. 32.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

"I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

DAILY READINGS.

M. *Jonah 3, 1-10. Th. Ezek. 31, 3-17.*
Tu. *Jonah 4, 1-11. F. Acts 10, 34-45.*
W. *Matt. 12, 35-50. Sa. Acts 11, 1-18.*
Su. *Isaiah 55, 1-13.*

TIME AND AUTHOR.—See Lesson 6.

PLACE.—Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was on the Tigris, some 600 miles from Jerusalem. It was the Asiatic centre of luxury and wickedness, as several Israelitish writers testify. Its fall, late in the seventh century, B.C., was followed by complete oblivion, until its ruins were explored by Mr. Layard, forty years ago, and most interesting history recovered from its inscriptions, its libraries of clay tablets, and the vast ruins themselves. The city seems to have lain within an irregular area 18 x 12 miles, and to have been composed of several fortified palaces surrounded by villages and pastures. The religion was a sort of sun-god worship, very degraded.

INTRODUCTION.—Of all Jonah's thoughts and purposes in his three days and nights of darkness, God has singled out this one point for our instruction: Jonah thanked God, and when Jonah thanked God, God delivered him.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—3. *Of three days' journey*—In circumference, probably. Tradition, confirmed by the mounds, sets the journey about the city at 60 miles. 4. *Nineveh shall be overthrown*—This was probably only the text of his sermon. 5. *Believed God*—Believed in God as the true God, able to destroy, yet willing to save. *Proclaimed a fast*—A natural expression of sorrow for sin. *Sackcloth*—A coarse, dark cloth, used for mourning. 6. *His throne*—See description of Solomon's (1 Kings 10, 18-20). *Robe*—Rich and highly ornamented. *Sat in ashes*—An oriental sign of deepest humiliation. 7. *And his nobles*—It was voluntary on his part to associate his great men's names with his own, a possible fruit of his repentance. *Beast*—Of burden, horses, mules, etc. *Herd nor flock*—Cattle nor sheep. *Let them not feed*—They were not driven to pasture, nor fed until evening. 8. *Cry and turn*—Prayer and reformation belong together. *Every one from his evil way*—Public repentance would be attained by each person forsaking his habitual, favourite sins, one by one. *The violence*—The special sin of Nineveh. *In their hands*—The ill-gotten gain must be restored. 9. *Who can tell?*—They had heard of God's justice; they were not yet assured of his mercy. 10. *God repented*—God changed not his purpose, but his outward act. *This Nineveh was not the wicked Nineveh which had been threatened.*

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Jonah's prayer.—Compare Jonah's restoration with the apostle Peter's.—Nineveh from the Bible.—Nineveh from the inscriptions.—Repentance.—Forgiveness on condition of repentance.—Repentance ascribed to God.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What do we know of Jonah during his imprisonment? What do you know of Assyria's importance? What Assyrian kings are mentioned in the Bible? Where was Nineveh? What was the character of its people? Why has it been of special interest during the last forty years?

SUBJECT: REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS.

I. THE PROPHET RESTORED (vs. 1-4).—What was Jonah's sin? (chap. 1.) What were its evil consequences? How did he show his penitence? (1. 12; 2. 7, 9.) What deliverances were granted him? Is relief from punishment all that a penitent man desires? How fully does God forgive? (Hosea 14. 4.) Need forgiven sinners despair of usefulness? (John 21. 15-17; Acts 22. 19-21; Rev. 5. 9, 10.) What is the

special duty of those who have ever yielded to grievous temptation? (Psa. 51. 12, 13; Luke 22. 31, 32.) May we then sin in expectation of deeper repentance? (Rom. 3. 8.) To what was Jonah restored? (v. 2.) Does God generally give us a second call to the same work? What evidence of Jonah's new obedience? (vs. 3, 4.) The perils of his mission? What was his subject? Do all sinners have as long warning as he gave? What does every sin deserve?

II. THE PEOPLE REPENTANT (vs. 5-9).—How was Jonah's preaching received? What evidence of its truth had the hearers? (Rom. 2. 15.) What proof of sincerity did the king give? His proclamation? What shows that God regarded the animals? (4. 11.) Does he expect us to remember their comfort? (Prov. 12. 10.) The special sins of Nineveh? (Nahum 3. 1.) What five elements of true repentance entered into this great revival? Why do natural sins receive their deserts in this world?

III. THE PUNISHMENT REMITTED (v. 10).—Does God change his purposes? (Mal. 3. 6.) Under what circumstances does he change his acts? (Jer. 18. 8.) What name is here given to that change? How did Jonah express the Central Truth? (2. 9, l.c.) Was God's justice shown in forgiveness? (1 John 1. 9.) If the city fell into further sin, was it safe? (Ezek. 18. 24.) Make personal application of the Golden Text.

PRACTICAL.

1. We never receive exactly the same command or invitation from God twice.
2. Take sides openly, firmly, against whatever you believe to be bad.
3. A good man is known, not only when he stands, but when he rises after falling.
4. A cracked conscience is not easily soldered.
5. It is not enough to fast for sin; we must fast from it.
6. Keep the winning, keep the sinning.
7. We are not justified by hope; that is not the ground of pardon.
8. Belief in God, sorrow felt and expressed, prayer, the putting away of sin, reparation, permanently and persistently, enter into true repentance.

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

Did Jonah heed God's second call? **ANS.** He arose and went unto Nineveh. What message did he take? **ANS.** Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. How was it received? **ANS.** The whole city repented, and cried mightily to God. What did God see? **ANS.** That they turned from their evil way. Did he destroy the city? **ANS.** He did not.

B.C. 726.] LESSON VIII. [Nov. 22.
HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN.
2 Kings 18, 1-12. Commit to mem. vs. 5-7.
GOLDEN TEXT.

He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.—2 Kings 18. 3.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

True religion is the basis of a nation's prosperity.

DAILY READINGS.

M. *2 Kings 17, 1-14. Th. 2 Chron. 30, 1-27.*
Tu. *2 Kings 18, 1-12. F. 2 Chron. 31, 1-21.*
W. *2 Chron. 29, 1-36. Sa. Isa. 5, 1-14.*
Su. *Prov. 1, 20-33.*

TIME.—Hezekiah began to reign B. C. 726, more than a century after the death of Elisha, our last lesson in Kings.

PLACE.—The kingdom of Judah, especially Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—We pass over at least 75 years since the era of Josiah. The kingdom of Israel was growing worse and worse; that of Judah had varied fortunes. The last king, Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, did all he could to ruin Judah, religiously and politically.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Hezekiah*—Son of Ahaz; a good son of a bad father. He was the 13th king of Judah. 2. *Daughter of Zachariah*—Probably the prophet who helped Uzziah (2 Chron. 26. 5). *High places*—See Lev. 3, 4th Qur. *Groves*—Rather, wooden pillars of Ashtoreth. *The brazen serpent*—Num. 21. 4-9. *He called it*—They called it: its popular name had been *Nehushtan*—a piece of brass. 8. *Gaza*—A city in south-west Palestine, towards Egypt. 9. *Shalmaneser came up*—B.C. 723. He began the siege. His successor, Sargon, took

it in B.C. 721; hence it is said in v. 10, "they (not Shalmaneser, but the Assyrians) took it." 11. *Halah, Gozan*—Regions in Mesopotamia, beyond the river Euphrates. *Haber*—Is the river of Gozan. This was the end of the kingdom of Israel.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Hezekiah.—The kingdom as Ahaz left it.—The evils destroyed by the great revival.—The methods and instrumentalities of the revival (2 Chron. chs. 29-31).—The prosperity following the revival.—The end of the kingdom of Israel. Light on this period from the Assyrian inscriptions.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How much time intervenes between this lesson and the last? Who are now reigning in Israel and Judah? What was the general state of the kingdoms? In what books of the Bible is the reign of Hezekiah recorded?

SUBJECT: A GREAT REVIVAL.

I. KING HEZEKIAH (vs. 1-3).—Who were the parents of Hezekiah? What kind of a man was his father? (2 Kings 16. 2-4.) Why is his mother's name mentioned? How long did he reign? What was the character of Hezekiah? What prophets lived in his time?

II. THE STATE OF THE KINGDOM WHEN HE BEGAN TO REIGN.—In what state had Ahaz left the kingdom to his son? (2 Kings 16. 3, 8, 17; 2 Chron. 28. 4-6, 17-25; 29. 6-9.) What was the cause of this sad state of affairs?

III. THE GREAT REVIVAL (vs. 4-6).—When did Hezekiah begin to reform the kingdom? (2 Chron. 29. 3.) What great meeting did he hold? (2 Chron. 30. 1, 5, 21-23.) What was done at this meeting? (2 Chron. 30. 21, 22, 27.) What were the people aroused to do? (v. 4; 2 Chron. 31. 1.) What were the high places? The groves? Give an account of the brazen serpent. (Num. 21. 4-9.) Why was it destroyed? Meaning of "Nehushtan"? What was done to the house of God? (2 Chron. 29. 4, 5.) As to the services of the temple? (2 Chron. 31. 2.) What as to singing? (2 Chron. 29. 25-28.) What as to prayer? (2 Chron. 29. 30; 30. 27.) What as to instruction? (2 Chron. 30. 22; 31. 21.) What as to benevolent contributions? (2 Chron. 31. 4, 5.) How are these things always affected by a revival of religion? What is said of Hezekiah's own character? (vs. 5, 6.)

IV. THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION FOLLOWED BY NATIONAL PROSPERITY (vs. 7, 8).—What is said of Hezekiah's prosperity? (2 Chron. 32. 27-30.) What was the source of this prosperity? (v. 7.) What had Hezekiah to do with it? (vs. 6, 7.) Is religion and morality the true foundation of prosperity? What promise does Christ give us? (Matt. 6. 33.)

V. THE END OF INCORRIGIBLE SINNERS (vs. 9-12).—When did the kingdom of Israel come to an end? By whose means? Did these captives ever return? Why was this destruction sent upon them? Name over the various things God had done to make them good and prevent their ruin? Does God do all he can to lead men to himself? Why do any perish?

LESSONS FROM THE GREAT REVIVAL.

1. A young man may be good even if his circumstances are bad.
2. The first need of men and of nations is a revival of religion.
3. There is a divine and a human instrumentality in every work of grace.
4. There are two processes in a revival,—destroying the evil, and building up the good.
5. God does all he can to prevent the destruction of men, by his word, his providence, his Spirit, his discipline, his blessings, his people.
6. Those who will not repent will finally be cut off, and that without remedy.

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

1. Who was one of the best kings of Judah? **ANS.** Hezekiah, who reigned from 728-698 B.C. 2. What was the state of the kingdom when he ascended the throne? **ANS.** It was very low in both its religious and its worldly condition. 3. What took place under this pious king? **ANS.** There was a great revival of religion. 4. What was the state of the kingdom at his death? **ANS.** It was victorious, rich, and prosperous. 5. What became of the kingdom of Israel? **ANS.** It was totally destroyed B.C. 721.

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