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SERMONS ON THE LESSON

Verse 1.—*The Union Pulpit*, 188. *The Pul- pit*, vol. lxxv, p. 38.

The Lesson Analysis

I. *Hezekiah's Illness* (verse 1).

(a) "Those days" were days of national peril. (b) He who was "sick unto death," be- sides being king, had the clearest mind and the strongest heart in the nation. (c) The warning of approaching death came from God through Isaiah; (d) whose message pointed to immediate and manifest duty.

II. *Hezekiah's Prayer* (verses 2, 3).

(a) Never had Hezekiah's life seemed so nec- essary to his kingdom. (b) He was still young; no son had been born to succeed him. (c) He had just carried through a great national re- form which would tumble in pieces with his death. (d) His people were threatened by As-

syrian invasion. (e) In his trouble he turned to God. (f) He pleaded his loyalty to Jehovah as a many-sided reason for a favorable answer. (g) He framed no petition. (h) He "wept sore."

III. *God's Promise* (verses 4-6).

God (a) showed sympathy; (b) promised fifteen years of added life; (c) promised deliv- erance from the Assyrians.

IV. *God's Sign* (verses 7, 8).

(a) Signs of God's power and faithfulness were not as numerous in Hezekiah's day as now. (b) God then, as always, met the need of his loyal servant. (c) The entire narrative evidences the truth of the Golden Text.

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—*These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.*

FOUR HISTORICAL CHAPTERS.—Our canonical book of Isaiah falls naturally into two great portions, the first of which includes chapters 1-33, and the second the remaining chapters of the book. Of the first part the last four chapters (36-39 inclusive) again form a smaller division quite distinct from the chapters pre- ceding. These four chapters are historical, while those preceding are more or less strictly prophetic. The historical chapters are introduced into the body of the prophetic book for the purpose of giving the reader a summary of the events narrated in 2 Kings 18, 13 to 20, 19, from which account they were doubtless taken. The two accounts differ as regards important matters only in two points; the summary in Isaiah does not record Hezekiah's submission mentioned in 2 Kings 18, 14-16, but does insert Hezekiah's psalm of thanksgiving on his recovery (chap. 28, 9-30), the latter not being found in the account in Kings. The parallel accounts should be read together.

Verse 1. In those days.—This expression is doubtless to be taken as an indefinite refer- ence to some portion of Hezekiah's reign, the chronology of which as a matter of fact presents many difficulties. From the arrangement of the narrative, both here and in 2 Kings, it would seem as if the sickness of Hezekiah followed the retreat of Sennacherib, but a closer examina- tion leads us to conclude otherwise. From 2 Kings 20, 12 and Isa. 39, 1 it is plain that the sickness preceded the embassy of Merodach- baladan, king of Babylon. But Merodach-bala- dan was king of Babylon from 721 to 705 B. C., and again for a brief period during 702 B. C. Sennacherib's invasion occurred in the year

B. C. 701. Hence the sickness of Hezekiah which preceded the embassy sent by the Babylonian king (probably during his second and shorter reign) must have preceded the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian king, which oc- curred still later. The events, therefore, of chapters 38 and 39 precede in point of time those of chapters 36 and 37.

Isaiah the prophet.—The author of large parts of the book bearing his name, living in the time of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah. The greatest of Hebrew prophets, and, at the same time, doubtless, the greatest of Hebrew statesmen. He was especially noted for the strength of his personality, the wisdom