

WHAT WE STUDY THIS QUARTER.

The lessons for last quarter were a study of the life of Christ, and covered about thirty years. The lessons for the present quarter are a study of the life of a nation, Israel, and cover more than two hundred years.

You study history in schools but this is the study of history from another standpoint. In your schools you study the sayings and doings of men only, in their dealings with one another. Here you have history, with God's part in it as well as man's part, showing his sayings and doings as well as those of men.

One thing that impresses us is the very large part that God has in history. He is the chief one in it.

Studying history during the week is like looking at a clock; you simply see the hands go round. Studying history in these Sabbath school lessons is like looking inside the clock and seeing what makes the hands go round.

In this study of history with God in it, we must remember that he is always the same. He may not do the same things at one time as at another, but he always works on the same principles. We know that what he is pleased with, and favors, at one time, he will be pleased with and will favor at another time. This it is that makes these Scripture history lessons helpful to us, showing us how to live so that God may be pleased with us.

We learn here too that the favor of God is more than all else. A country may have a great many other things, but if it have not the favor of God it will come to grief. If it have his favor then it will be a prosperous happy land.

We know from these lessons what kind of a country we should have in order to have God pleased with it; and we learn what our duty is in trying to make our country one that God will favor. We should put down all that is wrong in our laws, and in the carrying out of these laws; and should make it our one inquiry, in matters belonging to our country. "Will God be pleased with it?"

Then there are some things about the part of history that these lessons cover that are peculiar. In most other histories, we see nations beginning, and growing from small weak beginnings, like people, from weak childhood to strong manhood; then find them per-

haps growing gradually feeble until they pass away, or are conquered by some other nation. Here we have a nation coming suddenly into separate existence, by revolt from another nation; then living its life of more than two centuries; and then suddenly disappearing, taken captive by the Assyrians; and as a nation never returning. The nation becomes a nation suddenly, in full strength, and as suddenly passes from the list of nations.

WHAT BECAME OF ISRAEL.

There have been a great many different things supposed and said as to what became of the lost ten tribes. Some have tried to shew that they kept together, and then came west and settled in Britain, and that the British people to-day are Israelites, the lost ten tribes.

When I was in Palestine a good many years ago, the aged priest of the little band of Samaritans there, asked me very particularly, through an interpreter, about our North American Indians. He thought that they might be the lost tribes.

But from what we can gather in Scripture, it was on this wise. The King of Assyria took a great many of them captives to his own country, and put in their places strangers from other countries that he had conquered, and those that were left of Israel became mixed up with these and lost all identity as God's people. Of those that were carried away the larger part would soon become one with the Assyrians, by intermarriage, just as numbers of English speaking Protestants among the earlier settlers of the Province of Quebec intermarried with the French, and soon lost both their language and religion.

Some of the more faithful to God among the captives would continue to serve him, and their children after them would do likewise; and some of these would probably return from the East with the children of Judah when they come back to their own land.

It is well that our nation is not the ancient Israel, with their persistent idolatry and sin. We may be what is far better, the true Israel, for, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Better be the true Israel than the cast off Israel of old, and to this true Israel both Jew and Gentile may, and some day, will, belong.