

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER.

(Condensed from Sabbath School Notes.)

Lesson II. April 10. Ps. 2: 1-12.

THE KING IN ZION.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."—Ps. 2: 12.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A PICTURE OF THE SCENE ON EARTH. THE NATIONS ARMYED AGAINST GOD AND HIS SON JESUS.

1. Why do the nations (A. V. "the heathen"). All the nations besides the Israelites, and now all people who are not of the true Israel of God, and do not love and serve Him. Rage. The Hebrew verb is not expressive of an internal feeling, but of the outward agitation which denotes it. There may be an allusion to the rolling and roaring of the sea. It expresses the impatient and rebellious actions and feelings of all the wicked against the government and law, and often the providence of God. "We will not have this man to rule over us." The people. The same as the nations above. Imagine. To devise, to scheme, to plot. Used in the old English sense, now obsolete. A vain thing. It was vain (this resisting God), not only because there was no true ground of reason why they should imagine or do such a thing, but vain also because they labored in vain, they could not do it.

The Psalmist in vision looks upon the nations and sees them doing their utmost to destroy the kingdom of the Messiah. There has been no time when the picture was not true. In David's time, in Christ's time, in our time, the picture has been the same, only in varied circumstances, and with varied weapons.

A VAIN THING. A medal was struck by Diocletian, which still remains, bearing the inscription, "The name of Christians being extinguished." And in Spain two monumental pillars were raised, on one of which was written, "Diocletian, for having extended the Roman Empire in the East and the West, and for having extinguished the name of Christians, who brought the republic to ruin." The other pillar was raised, for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ. A modern writer has elegantly observed: "We have here a monument raised by Paganism over the grave of its vanquished foe; but in this the people imagined a vain thing. So far from being deceased, Christianity was on the eve of its final and permanent triumph, and the stone guarded a sepulchre as empty as the urn which Electra washed with her tears."

2. The kings of the earth. The leaders, speaking and acting for the nations. Set themselves. Assume deliberately a hostile attitude. The rulers. The poetic parent of kings; and adding all those who by talent and authority are the natural leaders of men. Take counsel together. Devise schemes, consult together. The wicked are not only opposed to God and His religion individually, but all through the ages they have been plotting and scheming how to overthrow them. Against the Lord and His anointed. Against both, because in reality they are one. Whoever opposes and rejects Christ, rejects God.

3. But the singer not only sees the gathering host; he hears their menace of rebellion. Let us break their bands asunder (i. e., those of Jehovah and His Christ), etc. The metaphor is borrowed from restive animals which break the cords, and throw off the yoke (see Isa. 58: 6; 10: 27). Cast away their cords. The same idea under another form; the restraints of their authority; the laws of their kingdom; the cords (twisted ropes, stronger than bands) referring to that which would bind them as prisoners, but to the ropes or cords, which bound oxen to the plough, and hence to that which would bind men to the service of God.

4. He that sitteth in the heavens. God who resides and reigns in heaven, in calm tranquility, infinitely above the reach of His raging foes. Shall laugh. Not in mockery or contempt, but in His conscious power over them to frustrate all their designs. We would say, "He smiles at their rage." So "the ship laughs at the storm." The Lord. Notice that here the word is in small letters, while in verse 2 it is in capitals. There it is the translation of Jehovah, in which case it is almost always, in our English Bibles, printed in capitals. Here it is the word for Lord or Sovereign. Shall have them in derision. Expressing the same idea as "shall laugh." There is a great comfort here for all reformers, all workers for God. We have opposition and must expect it. Evil is strong, active and boastful; it seems to have its own way; but our God is mightier still, and in His victory shall be our own.

5. Shall He speak unto them. The change in the rhythm of the original is worthy of notice; it becomes full and sonorous, rolling like the thunder. We seem to hear the thunder roll and see the lightning flash. "The thunder is God's voice; the heaven is His impregnable fortress." In His wrath. Not passion, as human anger often is, but intense indignation against sin; an indignation which every good person must feel in view of the terrible evils and injuries of sin; and God most intensely of all, because He is most good in His nature, and sees most clearly the evils of sin. Wrath expresses the punishment of sin. Vex them. Strike terror into their guilty souls by the assertion of His divine purpose to enthronize His Son in Zion, and give Him the nations as His subjects to be broken with a rod of iron. Sore displeasure. A stronger, more terrible word than "wrath," above.

6. Yet have I set My King. In the words "Yet I" (the pronoun is emphatic

in the Hebrew) we have the central truth of the Psalm. They may plot and rebel and oppose all they please, but in spite of it all God's king shall rule over all. Have set. Have constituted or created (enthroned, as king). My King. Not a king, nor even the king, but My King, one who is to reign for Me, and in indissoluble union with Me, so that His reigning is identical with Mine. Upon My holy hill of Zion. Zion was the fortified hill, the stronghold, where was David's royal palace (and where He placed the ark and the tabernacle). Its loftiness and strength, its kingly and sacred character, made it the centre and heart of Jerusalem, and the religion and polity of Israel, the source of its hopes, joys and blessings; and as Jerusalem was the heart and centre of all the hopes of mankind, so Zion is described as "the joy of the whole earth."

7. I will tell of the decree. The new law of His kingdom. He reigns through the will of man, but by the grace of God; not by right only as the Son of Jehovah, but by covenant and promise likewise. The decree follows, but was previously made by David (2 Sam. 7: 12). In substance the decree was uttered in every promise of the Messiah, from Adam onward. God does nothing haphazard. Everything is planned. The Lord (Jehovah) said unto me, Thou art My son; this day have I begotten thee. "This day have I given to thee, not existence, which is presupposed, but a new existence, a new career, a throne of the world, and all that is or will be in it."

8. Ask of Me. A poetical figure by which is represented God's willingness to give His Anointed the kingdoms of the world. The conditions are, ask. Even Christ prays the Father, and receives for the asking; because He is the eternally begotten and only begotten Son of the Father. I will give thee. He, as we were, transfers them to Christ, because only through the Messiah can the nations become the loyal kingdom of God. Thine inheritance. Thy possession. Inheritance, by right as heir, possession, by acquisition as moral conqueror.

9. Thou shalt break them. Not to be explained as a description of the habitually severe rule of the Messiah, but as a prophecy of what must happen if the nations persist in revolting from the appointed king.

10. Now therefore be wise. In view of the fact that the Messiah's kingdom and its principles are bound to triumph, because God and all the powers of the universe are on his side, and all opposing powers must be destroyed. Be instructed. By the facts announced. Kings. . . judges. All rulers and leaders of the people. Whoever is wise is ever ready, receiving instruction. This is the mark on the forehead of the wise, that they wish to learn from every source, and are glad to hear good advice.

11. Serve the Lord (Jehovah) with fear. Reverence and awe opposed to carelessness, thoughtless service. This must be the choice of every wise person. And rejoice. Serving the Lord leads to rejoicing before Him. Obedience yields to peace of conscience, without which there can be no real joy. With trembling. A trembling solicitude becomes given when one is coming back from such a rebellion. Trembling does not imply lack of faith, but only a realization of the momentous nature of the dangers, escaped, and the blessedness gained. No one can realize what is at stake in his salvation, and not rejoice, and rejoice with trembling.

12. Kiss the Son. An ancient method of doing homage or allegiance (see 1 Sam. 10: 1). Even in modern European courts the kissing of the hand has this significance; it means, own him as your sovereign. It expresses a loving, rejoicing homage; the allegiance of the heart. The Son. The Messiah, the Son of God. Another translation is admissible (with Jerome), "proffer pure homage, worship in purity." Let He be angry. As in verse 5. A vehement resentment against perverse disobedience and treachery is a clear characteristic of the Messiah as a merciful compassion toward the contrite. Perish in the way. Lose the way, i. e., to happiness and heaven; or perish by the way, i. e., before you reach your destination. They must perish who will not own Christ as king. For His wrath will soon be kindled. It is folly to delay, for ere long you will be exposed to the wrath of the Lamb, if you will not accept of His love. Blessed are all they, etc. As with the dangers He would warn men, so with the glories and blessedness of His service He would attract them, using every method to persuade men to be His disciples. Those that trust in Him are blessed now and hereafter, blessed in body and spirit, blessed as sons and heirs of God, with His care and love and joy and character and home.

They Agreed Then and After. A Baptist minister took charge of a parish near Boston, where he knew that one man was decidedly opposed to his pastorate. Soon after his arrival the Rev. Mr. X. called upon Mr. A. "Brother," said he, "I hear that you think I am the wrong man to be the pastor of this church."

"Well, to be frank," replied Mr. A., "I do think that another would have filled the place better."

"Now that is just what I think," said the pastor. "But as long as we have this opinion in opposition to the majority of the parishioners, let's try to be unselfish and make the best of it."

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THE RAIN AND THE DEW.

"Thou hast fallen," said the Dewdrop To a sister drop of rain; "But wilt thou, as I do, to the dust, In banishment remain?"

"Nay, Dewdrop, but anon with thee— The lowlier better than I— Upheld shall I seek again My native home—the sky." —John B. Tubb, in N. S. Times.

A Sister's Influence.

Some years ago, as I sat on the piazza of a summer hotel, says a writer in the *Rams Horn*, I noticed among the crowd—a party of young people—two or three pretty girls and as many nice young men, all "waiting for the mail."

"Oh, dear!" said the prettiest of the girls, impatiently, "why don't they hurry? Are you expecting a letter, Mr. Allison?" and she turned to a tall youth standing near.

"I'll get one surely," he said. "It's my day. Just this particular letter always comes. Nell is awfully good; she's my sister, you know, and no fellow ever had a better one."

The pretty girl laughed, saying, as he received his letter, "Harry would think he was blessed if I wrote once a year."

Gradually the others drifted away, but Frank Allison kept his place, scanning eagerly the closely-written sheets, now and again laughing quietly. Finally he slipped the letter into his pocket, and rising, saw me.

"Good morning, Miss Williams," he said, cordially, for he always had a pleasant word for us older people.

"Good news?" I questioned, smiling. "My sister's letters always bring good news," he answered. "She writes such jolly letters."

And, unfolding this one, he read me scraps of it—bright nothings, with here and there a little sentence full of sisterly love and earnestness. There was a steady light in his eyes, as half apologizing for "boring me," he looked up and said quietly, "Miss Williams, if ever I make any thing of a man, it will be sister Nell's doing."

And, as I looked at him, I felt strongly what a mighty power "Sister Nell" held in her hands—just a woman's hands, like yours, dear girls, and, perhaps, no stronger or better; but it made me wonder how many girls stop to consider how they are using their influence over these boys, growing so fast toward manhood, unworthy or noble as their sisters choose.

There is but one way, dear girls; begin at once, while they are still little boys at the home circle, ready to come to "sister" with everything. Let them feel that you love them. These great, honest boy hearts are both tender and loyal, and if you stand by these lads now, while they are neither boys nor men, while they are awkward and heedless, they will remember it when they become the courteous, polished gentlemen you desire to see them. Do not snub them; nothing hurts a loving boy's soul more than a snub, and nothing more effectually closes the boy heart than thoughtless ridicule.

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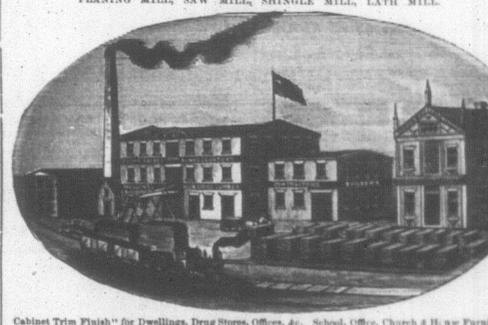
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