

I. Sennacherib's Pride, 21-29.

V. 21. *Isaiah . . . sent unto Hezekiah.* The answer to the king's prayer came from the Lord God of Israel, whose people the Assyrians were threatening, and to whom Hezekiah had *prayed* concerning the letter he had received (see vs. 14-20), to the prophet Isaiah, a trusted adviser of the king; but he maintained a dignity not less than royal by sending a servant to announce the divine message to Hezekiah. The message itself is evidently contained in vs. 33-35. The intervening verses contain an introductory poem (vs. 22-29), and an introductory prophecy, vs. 30-32. The poem is addressed to the Assyrian monarch, and should be compared with the psalm of triumph over the king of Babylon in Isa. 14 : 4-20.

Vs. 22, 23. *The word which the Lord hath spoken.* Over against the threats of the Assyrian king is set the decree of the almighty King of kings. *The virgin daughter of Zion* (Rev. Ver.); a name given to the fortress of Jerusalem. *Hath despised thee*; or "despises thee"; this is a taunt song. *Shaken her head*; a gesture of contempt (see Ps. 22 : 7; Jer. 18 : 16; Lam. 2 : 15, etc.). *At thee*; literally, "behind thee": the foreign invader is in flight followed by the scorn of Jerusalem's inhabitants. *Whom hast thou . . . blasphemed?* What kind of a Being,—so great and terrible? *Against the Holy One of Israel.* So conscious is the poet of Jehovah's dignity, that he demands reverence for Him from all nations. Israel's God cannot tolerate the pride and self-confidence of Sennacherib.

Vs. 24, 25. *Thou . . . hast said*; that is, the king of Assyria. *The multitude of my chariots*; literally, "the chariots of my chariots", that is, my innumerable chariots. *Height of the mountains.* The Assyrians boasted that they had penetrated "trackless paths and difficult mountains on wheels of iron and bronze", and had laid cedars and fir trees low to provide timber for their palaces, fleets and machines of war. *Lebanon.* The northern mountain boundary of Israel, here stands for the whole land: it is the Lebanon country. The "innermost parts" are Jerusalem, the capital. *I have digged, and drunk water.* When the streams of Palestine had

run dry, the invader had obtained a supply of water by digging wells. *His farthest height* (Rev. Ver.); that is, Jerusalem. *The forest of his fruitful field* (Rev. Ver.); a picture of Jerusalem's strength and beauty. *I dry up all the rivers of Egypt* (Rev. Ver.); the Nile and its branches in the Delta. The boast of the Assyrian was, that his soldiers never lacked for water, nor was any river, however wide or deep, a barrier to their onward march. As a matter of fact the Assyrians did not invade Egypt till the reign of the next king, Esar-haddon (B.C. 681-668).

Vs. 26-29. *I have done it . . . I have formed it*; fixed it in my purpose. The Assyrian was a tool in God's hand (see Isa., ch. 10). This is the beginning of Jehovah's rebuke to Assyrian insolence. *As the grass on the house tops*; the flat, earth-covered Eastern roofs. The grass which sprang up there was feeble and easily withered. *As corn* (grain) *blasted*, etc.; by the scorching east wind. *I know*, etc. All the actions of the Assyrian were under the watchful eye of God. *My hook is in thy nose*; to drag him back like a wild beast. *Bridle in thy lips*; the halter by which captives were led. So the Lord will turn the Assyrians back from Israel.

II. Hezekiah's Sign, 30-32.

Vs. 30-32. *The sign unto thee*, etc. (Rev. Ver.); to prove the prophet's words. Men will believe these when they actually see the Assyrian army withdrawn and regular farming operations resumed. They had destroyed one harvest, their presence prevented the plowing and sowing for the next, but they would soon retire and leave the fields free. *The remnant . . . escaped*; the people of Judah who are left. *Take root downward, and bear fruit upward*; become firmly established and flourish exceedingly.

III. Jerusalem's Safety, 33-36.

Vs. 33-36. The message which came by Isaiah (see on v. 21). *He shall not come into this city*; because Jehovah is its Defender. *Shields*; to ward off the darts and stones or fiery torches thrown by the besieged. *Bank*; a raised earthwork from which to storm a city. *For mine own sake*; in proof of His faithfulness. *My servant David's sake.* God shows mercy to the descendants of those who