

can be done only as the penitent turns for refuge to the outstretched arms of Christ's mercy whose blood alone is able to atone for sin and whose spirit alone is able to deliver from its power. When any one truly repents and turns to God, God will be found of him and he shall find peace. But without repentance and faith there can be no salvation.

Strangers from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon rallied to the support of Asa. Every really good man who strikes boldly for righteousness, acts like a magnet drawing to his cause the best elements in his community or nation. The world honors the man who has the courage of his convictions, and, loyal to them, attempts great things for God.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

Repose is said to be the highest expression of power. And repose is the most striking feature of Asa's good reign. His motto was: "We rest on Thee," ch. 14:11.

1. *The quiet power of a direct message from God*, vs. 1-7. The fundamental principle to urge upon the young is the habit of taking life as a trust from God and showing readiness to hear Him speak whether by a notable voice or an obscure. To posterity, Azariah is an unknown quantity: but his influence swayed the king. His practical theme was, "The Search that Always Finds," v. 2. Asa, after a great conquest, was humble enough to have God's part in history interpreted to him in terms that recalled both king and people to truer conceptions of worship and service (vs. 3, 4), and nobler ambitions to promote the victories of peace, vs. 5, 6.

Even in our own time war has been intended to kill ideas, rather than men: chiefly the idea that force in its destructive aspect is greater than force in its constructive aspect. After the Franco-Prussian war cannon balls were turned into church-bells, and after the war in South Africa shells were turned into dinner gongs. The building up of nationhood that follows the devastation of inevitable wars is most substantial when religious principle interpenetrates all national undertakings, v. 7. The economic waste of war is in this fashion best repaired.

2. *The quiet accomplishment of a needed reformation*, vs. 8-15. The land had been filled with sacred pillars and sacred trees in its "high places," and the most common religious ceremonies were the lewd orgies associated with the deification of vice. Asa

resolutely, and successfully, set himself to suppress these forms of moral evil (v. 8), sweeping away the symbols of Baal and the Astarte emblems, established by his predecessors.

The modern application seems well put in these words: "The world is full of little gods, man-made idols, groves planted by human hands, oppositions and antagonisms to the true theism of the universe. We worship Luck, Fortune, Fashion, Popularity, Self-Indulgence, Accident, Fortuitous Circumstances, Probabilities. Asa's philosophy was, 'We must be right about our gods before we can be right with one another'. To be wrong in our conception of God is to be wrong in every point in the line of our thinking." The full weight of Asa's quiet thinking expressed itself in an open appeal to the people, vs. 9, 10. They made large offerings (v. 11), and entered into a marked (even drastic) engagement to do better in future, vs. 12, 13. Their delight found emotional vent, v. 14. Quiet times resulted, v. 15.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Who was Asa? What kind of a man was he? With an evil inheritance and an evil environment how can we account for such a man? Is the explanation to be found in the fact that we sometimes inherit from a remote ancestor? How far back from Asa to David? It is more likely that some good influences brought him into touch with God, that God did more for him than David did. Bring out that it is as difficult to account for the good that is in some people as it is to account for the evil in others. What great victory had Asa won through divine power? (Ch. 14:9-15.) Our Lesson records what happened as the victors returned home.

1. *The Prophet's Message*, vs. 1-7. What took the prophet out to meet Asa? Discuss