

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIFTH YEAR, 1877. JUNE. FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

B. C. 725. LESSON XI. THE PROMISE OF REVIVAL: or, Hope for Backsliders. Hosea 14. 1-9. June 10.

EXPLANATORY.

RETURN...THOU HAST FALLEN. Israel had forsaken God, and as a result, fallen from his high estate as the chosen people. The prodigal who would receive mercy must return to his father's house. Thy God. Let the backslider and the wanderer be encouraged to know that the Lord is still his God. Fallen by thine iniquity. Those whom sin has dragged down, repentance may lift up.

TAKE WITH YOU WORDS. Come not with offerings merely, but with words of prayer. The richest oblation is less precious to God than the humblest supplication. Say unto him. Those who have become unused to prayer, need to be taught its language. This petition for pardon and acceptance embraces the substance of every returning sinner's address to God. Calves of our lips. "Instead of bulls or calves slain upon thine altars, we bring lips of confession, of contrition, and of consecration."

ASSHUR. Assyria. Horses...gods. In times of distress Israel had looked for deliverance, not to its God, but to the chariots of Assyria, the horses of Egypt, and to the gods of wood and stone. Sin thus fully confessed and renounced will be as freely forgiven. Fatherless. Or orphaned. Findeth mercy. Better than Assyrian chariots or Egyptian cavalry, in the hour of need, is the arm of the Lord.

I WILL HEAL. When man has spoken his words of penitence, God will speak his word of pardon. Backsliding. The relapse is more difficult to cure than the original disease; there is only one Healer who can save the backslider. Love them freely. "Whom God loves he loves freely, not because they deserved it, but of his own good pleasure."—M. Henry. Anger is turned away. What seems change in God is really change in man. He is ever the same, angry with the wicked, friendly toward the righteous. When men turn away from evil to good, God turns also from wrath to love.

THE DEW. God's grace is like the dew in its celestial origin, noiseless manifestation, and fruitifying influence. As the lily. In beauty, purity, fragrance, and rapid growth. The white lily grows in Palestine very abundantly without cultivation, and often produces fifty bulbs from a single root. His roots as Lebanon. This may refer to the cedars, whose roots deeply penetrate the crevices among the rocks, and give secure foothold against the heavy tempests; or, perhaps, to the mountain itself, anchored upon its granite foundations; in either case a forcible illustration of the stability and strength of a character rooted in God.

HIS BRANCHES SHALL SPREAD. The deeper the roots, the wider reach out the branches and the higher ascends the crown. Olive-tree. The olive is one of the characteristic trees of the Orient. It grows from twenty to twenty-five feet high, with gnarled trunk and smooth bark; its leaves evergreen, with dark hue, touched with green; its fruit rich, valuable and most abundant; tenacious of life, and bearing fruit down to extreme age—apt emblem of the Christian. Small as Lebanon. Travelers have often remarked the fragrant air around the slopes of Lebanon, from vineyards, wild flowers, aromatic shrubs, and the resinous odor of the cedars. Revive as the corn. The fall wheat, apparently dead through the winter, awakens to greenness and growth in the spring. So perishing Israel was destined to receive new life in the hour of promise. Grow as the vine. "Whose branches," says M. Henry, "extend furthest of any tree." Wine of Lebanon. Well known, even to this day, as among the finest wines.

EPHRAIM. Named as representing the ten tribes. Any more with idols. Those who have tasted of God's love will loathe this world's idols. I have heard him. God says, "I have answered and will regard him." The forgiven sinner precious and honorable in his Redeemer's eyes. A green fir-tree. "I am thy fir-tree for shade, and thy fruit-tree for food." So his saints may sit under his shadow with great delight, and feast upon his love. Thy fruit. This may mean, either that we partake of the fruit as the gift of God, or that we are fruitful through his grace.

LITTLE BAY ISLANDS, GREENBAY, March 27, 1877.

DEAR SIR,—We have just closed our missionary campaign for this circuit, with cheering results. Our first meeting was held at Woodford's Arm, on Monday evening, February 11th. Brother George Paddock (a noble brother) occupied the

chair. The speakers were not numerous, but their addresses were excellent, and breathed the true missionary spirit. The audience, although not large, was enthusiastic. The duty of Christians giving liberally of their substance to the support and spread of the Gospel, was pointedly and affectionately referred to by the speakers—some of whom expressed it as their conviction that the more people gave to the cause of God, the more they would be enabled to give. Whereas, those who gave nothing would never possess anything to give. We left this deeply interesting meeting, feeling it was good to have been there.

Our second meeting was held at Robert's arm, on Monday evening, Feb. 19th, and here the proceedings exceeded our most sanguine expectations. The house (or rather tent) in which services are being conducted during the winter, although the largest in the place, was crowded to excess with eager listeners. Brother Thos. Rowell (one of the fathers of our Island) occupied the chair with ability and tact. The speakers here were both numerous and humorous. Messrs. Joseph Strong and George Mursell, two of the most prominent supporters of our cause at Little Bay Island, who unexpectedly dropped in, were called upon, and delivered excellent addresses. We were especially gratified to hear honorable mention made of the late Dr. Livingstone and his work of noble philanthropy in Africa, by Mr. Mursell. A rather amusing incident occurred during the meeting.

One friend who felt anxious to contribute something towards the glorious cause of Christian missions, lacked the means; but as he was returning home from a neighboring place on the day in question he caught a fish, which was at the request of the audience put up by auction, and sold, of course, to the highest bidder—the money realized being given to the collection. We have been accustomed to attend large missionary meetings in England where the speaking was eloquent and comprehensive, but never has it been our privilege to attend such an enthusiastic meeting as this. We believe that its influence will be felt in days to come.

Our third meeting was held at Badger Bay on Saturday, February 24th, and here we were delighted with the liberality of the children who presented their offerings, varying from threepence to a shilling.

Our last meeting was held at Little Bay Island, which forms the head of this mission, on Monday evening, March 26th; Mr. Joseph Strong in the chair. The list of speakers was somewhat long, most of whom responded to the announcement of their names and delivered feeling speeches; some told of the happy deaths they had witnessed through the power of the Gospel, whilst others bore personal testimony to the labors of the now sainted Marshal, pioneer of Methodism in Green Bay (Mr. John Campbell), who is the oldest inhabitant of this Island, graphically depicted the dawn and subsequent progress of the work of God within the borders. The Rev. George J. Bond, B.A., of Betts Cove, thrilled all hearts by his earnest appeals for increased liberality and effort. We heard several say on leaving that this was the best Missionary meeting ever held on Little Bay Island. We believe that many of the fishermen of this country possess intellects of no mean order; education, we think, is one of the main crucibles needed to brighten and develop these intellects. This mission being composed of a group of islands, is exceedingly difficult and dangerous; many miles must be travelled upon ice in winter, and in boats during the summer, in order to reach the several settlements; but the warm grasp of the hand which we often feel, and the friendly remarks which we often hear, animate us amid our weariness. Of the kindness of the people of this part of Green Bay it is impossible to speak too highly. I remain, yours truly, ROBERT BRAMFIT.

—North Star.

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