

Kings, x, 15-17), we may perhaps understand the title to refer to the wild, nomadic character of the clan."—*S. G. Green, D.D.*

"From the part Jehonadab took in helping Jehu to root out the worship of Baal, it seems plain he was a zealous adherent of Jehovah, and possibly, from the lasting nature of his influence, he was a religious reformer; and as the names of the men mentioned in Jer. xxxv. are all compounded with *Jeh*, the form which Jehovah takes at the end of a word, it is plain that the tribe continued their allegiance to Him. The object of Jehonadab in endeavoring to preserve the nomad habits of his race was probably two-fold. He wished, first, to maintain among them the purer morality and higher feeling of the desert, contrasted with the laxity and effeminacy of the city life, and, secondly, he was anxious for the preservation of their freedom. A tribe of wanderers in the open desert is very much out of the reach of danger."—*S. G. Green.*

In the 25th chapter of Jeremiah, the prophet utilizes this punctilious obedience to Jonadab's precepts "to point a useful lesson for his own people. We can quite imagine that their black tents, pitched in the open places of Jerusalem, had attracted no slight degree of attention, and while all men were talking of them, the prophet invited them into the temple, and brought out into clear relief their steady obedience to their ancestor's command."—*S. G. Green.*

Our lesson places in marked contrast the *obedience* of the Rechabites to the command of their ancestor, and the *disobedience* of the Jews to the laws of Jehovah their God; and then states the *consequences* of each course of action.

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE RECHABITES.—V. 12-14

V. 12. Then—Immediately after the test of the loyalty of the Rechabites recorded in the preceding verses of the chapter. The date was B.C. 606, in the reign of Jehoiakim, just before the first captivity, in which Daniel and his companions were carried off to Babylon (see verse 11, and Introduction to last lesson), Jeremiah. See last lesson.

V. 13. Thus saith the Lord of hosts. The word for "hosts" in Hebrew is *Sabaoth*, (Rom. ix, 29; James v, 4). Sometimes it refers to angels (Eph. i, 21; Col. i, 16); sometimes to the stars (Jer. xxxiii, 22; Isaiah xli, 25); sometimes to the people (Exod. xii, 41).—"Lord of hosts" therefore includes all these, and is a grand term, expressive of Jehovah's majesty and power. Go and tell. "Jeremiah, accompanied, as it seems, by the main body of the Rechabites (v. 18, 19) went into one of the courts of the temple, and there addressed to the people the rebuke of which we have the summary in the following verses."—*S. G. Green.* The test of the Rechabites had been applied in a more private chamber. (v. 4) Will ye not receive instruction? It is the mark of the wise to receive instruction; see Prov. i, 7; 8; iv, 13; 33; xvi, 33; Jer. xxxiii, 33; 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17.

V. 14. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab. These words are recorded in verses 6 and 7 of this chapter. For his object in making this rigid exaction, see Introduction. Commanded his sons not to drink wine. "The drinking of wine was not probably forbidden so much on the merits of the question, whether it is good or bad, as on the fact, which also appears in the sowing and building, that producing it implied fixed habits, settling upon landed property, making vineyards, a slow process, as one may see by Isa. v, 1, 2, and implying wine-presses and other fixed arrangements, and time for wine to get "old." Nomadic races make the water of the rock or spring and the milk of their herds their drink. Though there are historical records of nomads who forbade corn-planting, fruit-trees, and houses, yet as we see by Gen. xxvii, 25, wine was used by them, and corn could be raised,

(Gen. xxvii, 12.) And while we do not find in this account of the Rechabites any positive opinion one way or the other, on the drinking of wine (for if we quoted the passage against wine, it might be replied that it is equally against building houses and growing corn, yet the reasons for abstaining from wine in our time are not the weaker. The evils of drunkenness are so many and so dreadful, that a Christian man may well deem it Christian and expedient to forego what he has a right to, for the sake of opposing a dreadful vice, and strengthening the weak against it." *Dr. John Hall in the Sunday School World.* Are performed—"are established, i.e., are maintained in full force."—*S. G. Green.* Unto this day—a period of more than two hundred years.

THE DISOBEDIENCE OF THE JEWS.—V. 14, 15

V. 14. (continued). Notwithstanding. Here the contrast between the faithfulness of the Rechabites and the perfidy of the Jews commences. I have spoken unto you. "God Himself speaking late and early by His various ways of providence and grace. In verse 15, and in 2 Chron. xxxvi, 15, a distinct mode of address is alluded to, viz., God sending His servants."—*Fausset.*

V. 15. All My servants the prophets. "The Rechabites had had but one law-giver, the Jews had had a succession of messengers accredited unto them by God. Compare Matt. xxi, 34, 37."—*S. G. Green.* Saying—Three things only God required of His people: (1) Return, (2) Reformation, (3) Steadfastness; and offered them a glorious inheritance for their obedience. But ye have not, &c. They would not even listen, much less consider.

THE CONSEQUENCES TO EACH.—V. 16-19.

i. To the Jews.—V. 16, 17. V. 16. Because . . . of their father. "This little company of Rechabites, in their faithfulness to their ancestor's command, nearly 300 years, administered a terrible proof to a nation which had disregarded the infinitely more august and solemn law of God. The sons of Jonadab rose up in that day of judgment to condemn the people of Jerusalem."—*S. G. Green, D.D.*

V. 17. The evil that I have pronounced—see Deut. xxviii, Levit. xxvi, i, Jer. xxv, 8-10. "Sinners imagine that, because punishment is delayed, it will not come; but these evils, announced more than 800 years before, came to pass at last." *Plumptre.*

Note.—The teacher, referring to the passages named, may catalogue some of the various evils that were to come upon the disobedient Jews, and impress them upon the attention of the class.

2. To the Rechabites.—V. 18, 19.

V. 18. Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father &c. The teacher will not fail here to inculcate full obedience. Exod. xii, 12; Deut. xxvii, 16; Prov. 8; vi, 20; Eph. vi, 1, 3.

V. 19. Shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever. Prof. Plumptre, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, advances some striking facts in support of the view that "the Rechabites were solemnly adopted into the families of Israel, and were recognized as incorporated into the tribe of Levi"—the tribe whose office especially it was to stand before Jehovah (Deut. x, 8). But taking the prophet's word as denoting perpetuity of the Rechabites as a tribe, it has been singularly fulfilled. The late Dr. Wolff, in his journal says "the Jews of Yemen told him, in 1829, that he would find Rechabites living near Mecca. When he came near Senaa, he met with a tribe who identified themselves with the sons of Israel, with one of them, Mousa by name, Dr. Wolff conversed thus: "Whose descendants are you?" Mousa answered, "Come, and I will show you"—and he read from an Arabic Bible

the words of Jeremiah, in this 35th chapter, and added, "Come, and you will find us 60,000 in number." You see, the words of the prophet have been fulfilled.

May 5.—The Captivity of Judah.—Jer. lii, 1-11; B.C. 588.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore shall she be removed: all that honoured her, despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; yea, she sleighteth and turneth backwaters."—Isa. lvi, 8.

INTRODUCTION.

This 52nd chapter is a sort of appendix to the book of Jeremiah, whose authorship, as there stated, ends with the last verse of the preceding chapter. It contains some additional details to those in chap. xxxix, and carries the history down to a later date. The writer of this additional chapter was probably Ezra, and it is almost identical with 2 Kings xxix, 18-20, and xxxv. The captivity of which our lesson treats, is the third and last captivity (B.C. 588). It will not be necessary again to trace the steps in Jewish history, leading to the events here recorded, that having already been done in the introductory remarks on the lesson for April 21st—"Jeremiah in Prison"—to which the teacher will kindly refer again.

We notice in these eleven verses: 1. Zedekiah's Evil Reign; 2. Jerusalem Desolated; and (3) the King's Fate.

ZEDEKIAH'S EVIL REIGN.—V. 1-3.

V. 1. Zedekiah. The last king of Judah, made king by Nebuchadnezzar, when he took the child-king Jehoiachin captive, B.C. 599. Zedekiah's name was formerly Matthan, and it was changed in accordance with the then custom in appointing tributary kings. His mother's name was Hamutal. He was therefore brother of Jehoahaz (2 Kings xxi, 31), but his brother only of Jehoiachin (2 Kings xxiii, 34). He was also the uncle of Jehoiachin, and son of Josiah. Of Jeremiah of Libnah. Nothing further is known of him. Libnah was one of the cities taken by Joshua from the Canaanites, situated in Judah about 30 miles south-west from Jerusalem. See Josh. x, 29, 30; xxi, 13; 2 Kings xvii, 2; xix, 8, 35.

V. 2. Did that which was evil. Compare 2 Chron. xxxv, 12-13; Jer. xxvii, 2. "His chief recorded evils were (1) his refusal to be guided in his political conduct by Jeremiah's counsels, while nevertheless he admitted him to be a true Jehovah prophet; (2) Chron. xxxvi, 12; Jer. xxvii, 2; and (3) his infraction of the solemn oath of subjection and allegiance to which he had sworn to Nebuchadnezzar, either at his accession or soon afterwards (2 Chron. xxxvi, 13; Ezek. xvii, 13-15). He was therefore according to all that Jehoiachin had done. See 2 Kings, xxv, 1, 2; 2 Chron. xxxv, 4-8. Jehoiachin had been the vassal of Egypt, and Zedekiah also courted an Egyptian alliance against Babylon, which had been declared to be offensive to God (Jer. xxvii, xxviii.).

V. 3. Through the anger of the Lord. "They provoked God at last to surrender them to their Chaldean foes. He might have done to Nebuchadnezzar and his army what He did to Sennacherib, and his—either then, by a glance, blasted them by a breath. But Zedekiah was not Hezekiah; the people of Jerusalem were not what they had been in earlier days. Jeremiah, unlike Isaiah, was not in power, but in prison; the fig-tree was become barren and must be cut down; the inhabitants of the land were ripe for removal, and God must cast them into a fiery furnace to be tried and purified, so that a residue should come forth in due time, to be used in the