

Notes on the S. S. Lessons.

The Faithful Rechabites.

Jeremiah 35: 12-19.

GOD had commissioned Jeremiah to tell the people of Judah that because of their sins He would punish them by sending them away into a far land as slaves, and that their homes and temple would be destroyed, and their fields left desolate. All this terrible punishment was to come because of their disobedience. They had not done as God had told them. God tried one more plan to teach them their sin. There was at that time outside the gates of Jerusalem, a tribe of strange men. They had once been called Kenites, but now were known as Rechabites. These men would not drink wine, nor live in houses, nor own lands, but kept moving about the country wherever they could find pasturage for their cattle. The Lord told Jeremiah to invite these people into one of the chambers of the Temple court. When they came, Jeremiah brought out vessels of wine, and said, "Drink it. But at once they said, "No, we will drink no wine, for our Father commanded us not to drink it, and we have been obedient." Then Jeremiah said to the people of Judah, "See how these men obey what their fathers told them, and you will not obey God." God's word should have more weight than that of a man. So God said, "I will punish you for your disobedience; but as for these Rechabites, because they have been so faithful, they shall not want a man to stand before Me."

Now, this took place nearly two thousand five hundred years ago, yet great travellers tell us that in Arabia there are to this day descendants of this strange yet obedient people. So you see, dear children, God calls for obedience to His commands. Have you obeyed God's command? Read about two of them—first, in 1 John 3: 23; second, 1 John 3: 11.

Captivity of Judah.

2 Kings 25: 1-12.

IN this lesson we have the fulfilment of God's threat. The time of His forbearance is past. A king named Nebuchadnezzar sent a great army and besieged Jerusalem. The people of Judah suffered

from famine, because the enemy so closely watched the city that no provisions could be brought in. After eighteen months the city was taken. The king and his sons were taken prisoners; and the last sight his eyes beheld was the saddest a father could behold: it was the murder of all his sons, after which his own eyes were put out, and he was taken away to the great city of Babylon. The palace and all the great houses were burned, and the beautiful temple was robbed of all its vessels. The enemy had no compassion on the people. They were either killed or taken away captives, only the very poorest of the people were left as vine-dressers and husbandmen. Thus you learn that God's threats, like His promises, will surely be fulfilled. Remember that all the trouble, and sorrow, and ruin, and death, was the wages of sin; and it is just the same now. "The wages of sin is death." Read Prov. 29: 1.



THE FAITHFUL RECHABITES.

Daniel in Babylon.

Dan. 1: 8-21

AMONG the captives taken to Babylon were four young men, one of whom was named Daniel. The young prisoners were princes of Judah, and were placed in charge of a man named Ashpenaz. One day Ashpenaz received a command from the king to select some of the captives who were to be trained up for the king's service.

They were to be educated and provided for liberally by the king, and at the end of three years they were to appear before the king. Daniel made up his mind that come what might he would not drink the king's wine nor eat the meat. He asked that he and his companions might be allowed to live on vegetables and plain food. Ashpenaz was afraid that they would look pale and be weak if they lived on such food, and then the king would blame him. At length consent was given, and when ten days were ended it was found that they looked fairer and fatter than those who had been fed from the king's table; and when the time came to appear before the king, it was found that there was none equal to Daniel and his three companions, in looks, in knowledge, or wisdom.

'OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.'

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