

because of the weakness and badness of his ancestors and of his brother, and doubtless thousands of families were broken up, and the most awful sufferings entailed upon them, because of Zedekiah's weak perversity while on the throne of Jerusalem. It is questionable whether you can entertain an evil thought without injuring somebody else. "None of us liveth to himself."

4. *Sin leads to temporal ruin.* All the pulpits preach that it leads to eternal ruin, and that is a great lesson for all to learn. But we ought to have it clearly fixed in our minds also that it leads to temporal ruin as well. In the long run virtue makes for worldly prosperity and vice for poverty and degradation.

5. *It is not safe to confide in any strength but that of God.* "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

Alas, this huge, savage army of invaders all about Jerusalem! You can see them pouring down into the valleys, rising up to the hill-tops, flowing over the plains, every-where crowding in, every-where pitching their tents, building their ramparts, marshaling their towers and rams and assaulting columns. Alas, alas!

O, that the days might come back when an invading army was routed by angels and archangels. No celestial champions now appear. Jerusalem is left to its fate. The siege goes on, so wearily, oppressively, day after day, month after month. The hoarse, defiant cries of the barbarians, the ponderous towers of attack, the fierce columns of assault, the huge, tireless rams that batter and batter—these are things of frequent event.

One day—alas that day!—the assault was successful. The barbarians with furious shouts clamber over the ruptured wall, and Jerusalem is taken! It is one long, merciless column pouring in—footman, bowman, spearman, and the great war-princes too crowding into the middle gate. How black and dismal and death-like settled down the night upon Jerusalem, conquered and defiled by barbarians! But hark! There is a noise near the king's gate, a crowding, and then a springing away! Assyrians! No, Jews in flight, men of war. And look! That dark figure, muffled and in tumultuous haste, is the king! Fleeing to gain the plain, frantically hurrying!

The king escaped!

The men of war gone!

Mount horse! Ride hard, Assyrian horsemen! Away, away! You hear the clatter of hoofs springing quicker, pounding harder.

But there he is! That frightened fugitive fleeing for his life, driving over Jericho's level plains,

is Zedekiah! Seize him, bind him, bear him away to the Assyrian king at Riblah.

There sits the haughty Nebuchadnezzar. How he frowns! Here comes the Hebrew captive, heavily bowed, head drooping, eyes cast down, no more striding like a king, but shuffling like a slave. And his sons? Here they are. Let father and children fall into one another's arms and take one long, tender look. It is for the last time.

O horrible tragedy then enacted before the father's very eyes! His sons are murdered! He has seen enough. It shall be his last vision, not a lingering look at a sunset-glory or the sea in its imperial sweep or the mountains in their majesty, but the sight of his own children, struck down, bleeding, dying! Now put out the eyes of Zedekiah and let the vision of that murder keep him company in his never-ending house of darkness! Heart-broken Zedekiah, sightless, in clanking chains, led up to Babylon!

But there is the king's city—Jerusalem—that even as the master must be humbled. Throw over the towers! Roll down the battlements and tear away the walls! Burn the gates! Fire the houses! Make a smoking heap of the lofty temple! At last, in the ashes of its own fires, bowed, degraded, Judah sits desolate, despised, and captive! Over its ruin-heaps, along its choked streets, clamber the hungry dogs by day, while in the lonely moonlight the fierce hyena and the ravenous jackal prowl unchecked.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

The downfall of Judah. Judah had become a nation of idol-worshippers. Only a few believed in the one true God. During the Reign of Terror France was declared by the National Assembly to be a nation of atheists. Robespierre proclaimed in the convention that belief in the existence of one supreme God was necessary to those principles of virtue and morality upon which the republic was founded. Soon after this the assembly recommended that the people recognize the "Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul."

Though penalties are long delayed, wrong-doing is sure to meet with its appropriate punishment. When the whirlwind sweeps through the forest some giant tree falls crashing to the ground. But it was twenty years preparing for this fall. Twenty years before it received a gash. Twenty years before water settled at some crotch and sent decay to the heart of the tree. The work of death progressed till it stood all rottenness and fell in the first gale.—*Becher.*

Golden Text. Punishment is not a school-master following us with a whip. It is a consequence,