

the east, in which "all the people" of Jerusalem, under Ezra, could assemble.

5. Compare David's words (1 Chron. 15. 12, *sq.*) referring to the disaster of Uzzah. The "sanctification" was of course purely ceremonial, but its significance would be instinctively felt till long familiarity had reduced it to a mere form. It must be remembered that the root idea of "holiness" among the Shemites was not purity, but exclusive dedication to a deity. The "holy ones" of Baal and Ashtoreth shared the foulness of their divinity, and the "holy ones" of Jehovah were to be pure only because he is pure. **Filthiness.** Comp. note on 2 Kings 17. 12, last month. Besides the pollutions of idol-worship, there would be accumulated rubbish from years of neglect. The house of the Lord must be purged from all defilement, material or spiritual.

6. Our fathers. And his own worst of all. It was reserved for Hezekiah's son to outdo this neglect of Jehovah's house by profaning it with idol-altars far more than Ahaz had done in the earlier part of his reign. The reference does not seem to go further back than Ahaz and his generation. **Turned away.** We are reminded of the sun-worshippers of Ezek. 8. 16 (often, but wrongly, supposed to be Zoroastrians). But the words here must be taken in the metaphorical sense, of abandoning and despising the house. It is a clear confession of the neglect of religious duties.

7. Doors. That is, the outermost gates of the temple, in the center of the great colonnade. Thus, if any had desired to worship they were shut out.

8. The last chapter gives a vivid picture of God's judgments on the guilty land, and how Ahaz in his despair sought aid from Tiglath-pileser, and from every divinity but the true. God's forbearance to him is wonderfully shown in Isa. 7. 10-17, where deliverance from Pekah and Rezin is promised before the child of the sign, "God-is-with-us," should have reached years of discretion. This was early in his reign, but, as ever happens, the man who rejected God's word only grew harder of heart because that word had been spoken. **Tossed.** Comp. Jer. 15. 4, etc.; Deut. 28. 25. **Hissing.** Comp. Mic. 6. 16, and often in Jeremiah (18. 16, etc.). The word portrays the expression of contempt and scorn. **See.** Referring to the various disasters of chap. 28. The evidences of the evil results of forsaking God were before their eyes.

10. Heart. Comp. 1 Chron. 22. 7. **Covenant.** Comp. chap. 15. 12; 34. 31; Neh. 10. 28, *sq.* This renewal of the pristine covenant belongs especially to times when there has been a great national apostasy. Such renewals prepare for the grand promise of a new covenant, which should be forever (Jer. 31. 31). **Augur.** Comp. chap. 30. 8.

11. Sons. The affectionate address brings out the king's deep earnestness. **Chosen.** (Deut. 10. 8.)

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What traits of character were exemplified by King Hezekiah?*

Zeal for the worship of God and for the utter destruction of the images, groves, high places, and altars of idolatry; courage and confidence in God; great constancy and perseverance in the work of reform. His only recorded weakness was vanity and pride shown in the display of all his treasures to the ambassadors of the King of Babylon, for which he incurred the divine displeasure. In true piety and zeal for God he was unexcelled by any King of Judah.—*S. N. Fellows, D.D., Manchester, Ia.*

Without piety Hezekiah could not have been instrumental in bringing about the great reformation that touched every part of the country. Unlike some pious men he was practical, as seen in the means used in achieving the results of his reign. Some connect piety with an easy-going disposition, but Hezekiah was energetic and courageous. He threw off the yoke imposed upon his fathers and set the all-powerful Assyrians at defiance. Like many great men vanity in a weak moment mastered him, and the glorying in his possessions resulted in serious consequences.—*Rev. William Eakins, Jersey City, N. J.*

Hezekiah was a model king. Coming to the throne at a time when God was mocked, virtue ridiculed, and vice encouraged, he rose superior to his surroundings and showed himself to be: 1. Conscientious. "He did that which was right." 2. Zealous. He "broke the images in pieces;" even the brazen serpent went to powder. In place of idolatrous rituals, sacred literature was furnished the people; thus society was reformed. 3. Judicious. Reform was commenced at the right place—in the temple; and among the right class—the clergy. 4. Patriotic. "All Israel and Judah" were loved, and in war he exhorted, "Be strong and courageous." 5. Vain. Like others, he was "lifted up" by success. 6. Pious. His piety, however, was greater than his vanity, and, duly humbled, he became greater than ever.—*Rev. J. M. Durrell, Manchester, N. H.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Good King.

I. HIS GOOD FOUNDATION.

1. *Right.... sight of the Lord.* v. 2.

"I...search the heart." Jer. 17. 10.

2. *All that David.* v. 5.

"Thy house....established." 2 Sam. 7. 13.

II. HIS GOOD BEGINNING.

1. *First year... first month.* v. 3.

"With thy mig't." Eccl. 9. 10.

2. *Opened the house.* v. 8.

"Open.... gates of righteousness." Psa. 113. 19.