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FOR TEACHERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE



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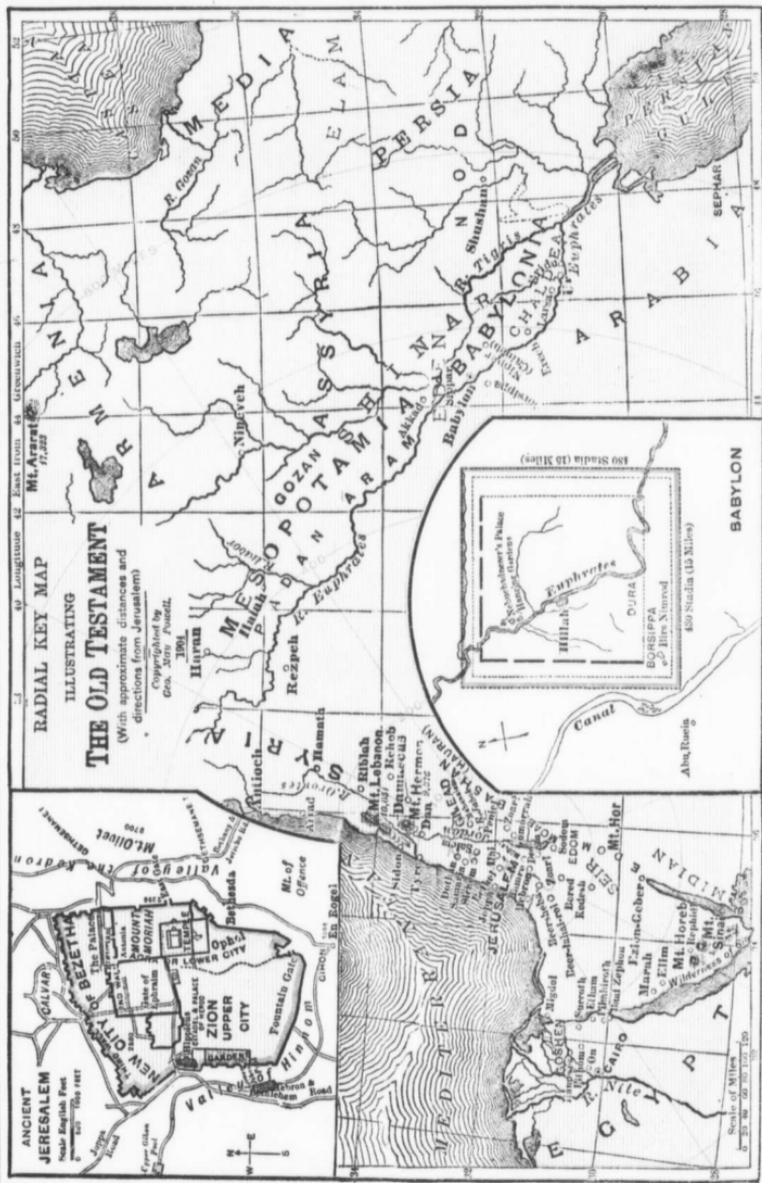
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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 39

JULY, 1905

No. 7

## My Class for Jesus.

BY A TORONTO S. S. TEACHER.

My precious class for Jesus,  
Who did so much for me:  
Who paid the price which justice claimed  
In hours of agony.  
'Tis little, O my Saviour!  
That my weak hand can give;  
Oh, let me win these thoughtless ones  
To look to thee and live.

My whole dear class for Jesus!  
Now in their youthful bloom;  
Ere shadows lie across their path,  
Dull sickness and the tomb—  
While life is in its morning,  
And bright hopes cluster high,  
May these immortal souls lay up  
Their treasure in the sky.

My whole dear class for Jesus!  
Oh, let not one be lost;  
When Calvary was the fearful sum  
Their wondrous ransom cost.  
One little step may sever  
The parting veil away;  
And forms that now are glad and fair  
To-morrow may be clay.

For Jesus! Oh, for Jesus!  
The time is fleeting fast;  
The holy Sabbaths hasten by,  
Soon, soon will come the last—

Then, teachers, toil for Jesus,  
As ne'er ye toiled before,  
That each may bear a precious sheaf  
To yonder shining shore. —Guardian.

## In His World.

BY BENJAMIN F. LEGGETT.

God is in his palace hall,  
Let the earth be still;  
His sceptre over all,  
He will work his will.  
Puny kings of hoary wrong,  
Laden with their gold,  
Though they seem to prosper long,  
Perish as of old.

Nations rise and nations fall,  
Kingdoms pass away;  
Lo! they crumble one and all,  
God abides for aye.  
Every form of ill shall pass  
As a pebble hurled,  
Or a shadow on the grass—  
God is in his world!

He hath made it all complete  
Through the seasons long,  
And their pageant, passing sweet,  
Move to grandest song.  
Nature swells an anthem strain—  
Bee and star imperaled,  
Sing, O heart of man, again,  
God is in his world!

—S. S. Journal.

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## Sunday School Banner

W. H. WITTHROW, D.D., Editor

TORONTO, JULY, 1905.

The great length of the lesson notes, and the fact that we have five lessons in July, so fills the sixty-four pages of The Banner, that much editorial and other matter is crowded out of this number.

It was no lack of capacity in that Bethlehem inn that crowded out the mother of our Lord; it was preoccupation. All the space was filled, and none would even crowd himself a little to make room. Your heart is wide enough for Christ if not preoccupied.—I. O. R.

An exchange gives the following affecting incident, which shows the practical working of the Home Department: "A very efficient Home Department superintendent in New Hampshire relates the following in connection with an old lady who was a member of a Home Class held in the Home for Invalids and connected with the Home Department of the First

Congregational Church of that city. She was quite feeble, but each Sabbath day as she heard the church-bell ring she began her own church services, reading the Scripture, singing hymns, and offering prayer, following as nearly as possible the regular order of church service. In place of the sermon she studied the lesson and closed her service with devout prayer.—Ex.

In the Sunday School Times the coming six years' series, as outlined by the new Lesson Committee, was presented and warmly commended for its noteworthy improvement in certain important features. It was shown that out of six years of study there are to be five courses of a full year each of uninterrupted study in either the Old or the New Testament. This is a valuable recognition of the gain of studying the Bible by completed periods, and removes the last vestige of ground for the criticism so often heard a generation ago, and to-day sometimes echoed ignorantly out of the past, that the International Lessons are fragmentary, or of a "hop, skip, and jump" nature. A second gain shown in the new series is in the beginning and ending of courses with the calendar year.

Rev. J. W. Ridgway, in The Central Baptist, discusses "Religious Education" with much vigor. He says:

"Our Sunday Schools are inadequate. Only one-half hour out of three hundred and thirty-six half hours, or one week, is given to the study of the Bible, and even that is broken into by numerous mechanical devices, or rather vices, probably with the limited time, necessary evils of our Sunday Schools. Numerous educators of the very highest scholarship and Christian character, as well as divines, say that our Sunday Schools as now conducted are inadequate to give religious education. These criticisms are given from both the standpoints of pedagogy or intellectual growth, and evangelism or heart culture.

"Instead of one-half hour as we have, the Welsh Sunday School has four hours a Sunday, two in the forenoon and two in the afternoon. Either more time and more serious consideration to the organization and management of the Sunday School should be given, or another institution established that will be more efficient.—Ex.



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# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS

## THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### LESSON I. Sennacherib's Invasion

[July 2

**GOLDEN TEXT.** With us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. 2 Chron. 32. 8.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION

[The entire chapter should be studied. Read Isa. chapters 36, 37.]

2 Chron. 32. 9-23 [Commit to memory verses 19-21]

9 After this did Sen-nach'e-rib king of Assyria send his servants to Je-ru'sa-lem, (but he himself laid siege against La'chish, and all his power with him,) unto Hez-e-ki'ah king of Judah, and unto all Ju'dah that were at Je-ru-sa-lem, saying,

10 Thus saith Sen-nach'e-rib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Je-ru'sa-lem?

11 Doth not Hez-e-ki'ah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

12 Hath not the same Hez-e-ki'ah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?

13 Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?

14 Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?

15 Now therefore let not Hez-e-ki'ah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or mine hand, was able to deliver his people out of how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?

16 And his servants spake yet more against the Lord God, and against his servant Hezekiah.

17 He wrote also letters to rail on the Lord God of Is'ra-el, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hez-e-ki'ah deliver his people out of mine hand.

18 Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech, unto the people of Je-ru'sa-lem that were on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city.

19 And they spake against the God of Je-ru-sa-lem, as against the gods of the people of the

#### REVISED VERSION\*

9. After this did Sennacherib, king of Assyria, send his servants to Jerusalem (now he was before Lachish, and all his power with him), unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem, saying, 10 Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide the siege in Jerusalem?

11 Doth not Hezekiah persuade you, to give you over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, Jehovah our God will deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? 12 Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and upon it shall ye burn incense? 13 Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the peoples of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands in any wise able to deliver their land out of my hand? 14 Who was there among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of my hand? 15 Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you after this manner, neither believe ye him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of my hand?

16 And his servants spake yet more against Jehovah God, and against his servant Hezekiah.

17 He wrote also letters, to rail on Jehovah, the God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of the lands, which have not delivered their people out of my hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of my hand. 18 And they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language unto the people of Jerusalem that were on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city. 19 And they spake of the God of Jerusalem, as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands.

\* The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

earth, which were the work of the hands of man.

20 And for this cause Hez-e-ki'ah the king, and the prophet I-sa'iah the son of A'moz, prayed and cried to heaven.

21 And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

22 Thus the LORD saved Hez-e-ki'ah and the inhabitants of Je-ru'sa-lem from the hand of Sen-nach'er-ib the king of As-syr'i-a, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side.

23 And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Je-ru'sa-lem, and presents to Hez-e-ki'ah king of Ju'dah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

### Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

- M. Hezekiah's preparation. 2 Chron. 32. 1-8.  
 Tu. Sennacherib's Invasion. 2 Chron. 32. 9-15.  
 W. Sennacherib's Invasion. 2 Chron. 32. 16-23.  
 Th. Seeking the Lord. Isa. 37. 1-13.  
 F. Earnest prayer. Isa. 37. 14-26.

20 And Hezekiah the king, and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, prayed because of this, and cried to heaven. 21 And Jehovah sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth from his own bowels slew him there with the sword. 22 Thus Jehovah saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side. 23 And many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem, and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah; so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

- N. The answer. Isa. 37. 27-38.  
 S. Refuge in God. Psa. 27.

**Time.**—Perhaps B. C. 701 or 699. The date assigned by the Usher chronology is B. C. 710.  
**Places.**—Jerusalem, the capital of Judah; Lachish, an important city on the seacoast plain of Judah.

### The Lesson Hymns

*New Canadian Hymnal*, No. 338.

O God of Bethel, by whose hand  
 Thy people still are fed;  
 Who through this weary pilgrimage  
 Hast all our fathers led.

*New Canadian Hymnal*, No. 411.

God will take care of you. All through the day,  
 Jesus is near you to keep you from ill;  
 Waking or resting, at work or at play.

*New Canadian Hymnal*, No. 407.

I know not why God's word was grace  
 To me he hath made known,  
 Nor why—unworthy of such love—  
 Redeemed me for his own.

### Questions for Senior Scholars

1. *The Blasphemous Threat* (v. 9-19).—What deliverance had Hezekiah promised to the people? What had Hezekiah done? (Verse 12.) Why was this right? What did Sennacherib say about the gods of other nations? What gods were these? (Psa. 115. 4-8.) Did Sennacherib know that the Lord was different from idols? How do men boast against God now? How should we speak of God? What kind of words blaspheme God?

2. *The Prayer* (v. 20).—Who prayed to God? (Verse 20.) In what place did Hezekiah pray. (2 Kings 19. 14.) Who united with

him in prayer? What can you tell about Isaiah? What is said about union in prayer? (Matt. 18. 19.) How can we be relieved from trouble? (Psa. 55. 22.)

3. *God's Answer* (v. 21-23).—How did God help his people? When was this done, and how many were slain? (2 Kings 19. 35.) With what feeling did Sennacherib return home? What happened to him there? What were the names of his murderers? (2 Kings 19. 37.) How does this lesson illustrate the GOLDEN TEXT? What is its warning to God's enemies? How does it encourage Christians?

### Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *The Boast of the Assyrians* (v. 9-19).—Of what great country was Sennacherib the king? Whom did he send to Jerusalem? (See 2 Kings 18. 17.) To whom did he send his message? What made him feel so sure that he could capture Jerusalem?

2. *The Prayer and Faith of the King and the Prophet* (v. 20-23).—What great prophet was living at this time? How did he become interested in Hezekiah's trouble? (See 2 Kings 19. 2.) How was the prayer of the king and the prophet answered?

## Questions for Younger Scholars

Who was Hezekiah? *One of the kings of Judah.* Who was Sennacherib? *King of Assyria.* What did this heathen king wish to do? *Take Jerusalem and Judah for his own.* What kind of a man was Hezekiah? *What message did Sennacherib's servants bring to him? What did he do? Who did the same thing? Did God*

*hear their prayers? What promise did he make? Why did the Assyrian king feel sure of victory? Whom did the Lord send into his camp that night? What did he see when the morning came? How many lay dead? What did Sennacherib then do? Did he ever come back? No, he was slain by his sons.*

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BY REV. S. G. AYRES, B.D.

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## SERMONS ON THE LESSON

Smith, G. A., *Isaiah*, vol. i, p. 304, *Expositor's Bible*, verse 10.

## The Lesson Analysis

I. *The Attitude of Sennacherib and His Servants* (verses 9-19).

1. The king of Assyria. (a) Head of the greatest military and commercial power of his time. (b) Arbitrarily assumed sovereignty over all Syria. (c) He had besieged Tyre, had destroyed Samaria, and was now invading Judah. (d) He conquered wherever he came. (e) Only two great fortresses of Judah remained uncaptured, Lachish and Jerusalem, and Sennacherib was besieging the one when he sent messengers to demand the surrender of the other. 2. His message was (a) addressed not to Hezekiah, but to the rank and file, and thirst; and especially (c) to the unspiritual Jews who disliked Hezekiah because he had forcibly prevented the worship of Jehovah in high places. Sennacherib (d) based his argument on the feebleness of the gods of other lands to protect them against Assyrian power; and (e) assumed that Jehovah was no greater than other gods. (f) His letters were blasphemous against Jehovah. (g) To damage Hezekiah as

much as possible his messengers talked in Hebrew so that all might understand; and (h) appealed to the disloyal "high-place party" within the walls.

II. *The Attitude of Hezekiah and Isaiah* (verse 20).

(a) Hezekiah the king was responsible for the kingdom. (b) Isaiah the prophet was responsible for God's cause. (c) To these two men the followers of Jehovah in this terrible emergency naturally turned for support and direction. (d) And these two men, as their habit was, turned to God in prayer.

III. *The Attitude of God* (verses 21-23).

(a) God answered by deeds even more directly than by words. (b) An angel (possibly a pestilence) (c) ruined the Assyrian army, and (d) compelled a humiliating retreat into Assyria, where (e) the king was murdered by his sons. Besides thus defending Jerusalem from the Assyrians (f) Jehovah greatly magnified nations.

## The Lesson Word Studies

**NOTE.**—These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

**INTRODUCTORY NOTE.**—The Old Testament lessons which begin with this month, and which will be continued throughout the remainder of this year, take up again the thread of Jewish history at the point at which the last Old Testament lessons for 1904 dropped the study. Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, had fallen in the year 722 B.C., just after Sargon, general of the Assyrian army, had ascended the

throne of Assyria. Sargon had led into captivity many thousands of the people of Israel. At the same time Hezekiah, a God-fearing king and strenuous reformer, was on the throne of Judah. His chief counselor was none other than the great prophet and statesman Isaiah. When in the year 705 Sargon died and was succeeded by Sennacherib the provinces of western Asia—Damascus, Tyre, Philistia, and others—considered this an opportune moment to declare and reestablish their independence. Judah also was nominally a dependency of the Assyrian monarch though retaining a degree of independence not enjoyed by the neighboring provinces. In the year 701 Sennacherib, after subduing similar revolts in other parts of his kingdom, undertook a campaign against Palestine in order to bring into subjection again the revolting provinces. After quickly reducing to submission the kingdoms to the north and west he invaded Judah, took most of its fenced cities, led away many captives, and all but succeeded in capturing Jerusalem itself. At this point our lesson for to-day takes up the story.

**Verse 9. After this**—That is, after preparation for the defense of the city (Jerusalem) had been completed (comp. verses 1-8).

**Sennacherib**—Assyr. "Sin-akhi-erba," *Sin* (the moon god) *hath increased the brethren*. Son of Sargon, king of Assyria (705-681 B. C.). During almost his entire reign Babylonia was in a state of revolt against the Assyrian monarch, and Judah after the invasion of 701 was left undisturbed in its independent position. As a ruler Sennacherib was boastful and vain, possessing few of the sterling traits of his distinguished father. He built the great wall of Nineveh, eight miles in circumference, and also the famous palace of Konyunjik. To him also is ascribed the extensive repairing of ancient aqueducts and the construction of brick embankments along the side of the Tigris River. He was murdered in 681 B. C. by his son (or sons), who instigated a rebellion against the father and succeeded in holding Nineveh for six weeks. At the end of that time, however, another son, Asarhaddon, who at the time of the murder commanded the Assyrian army in a campaign against Ararat, defeated the rebel brother (or brothers), took Nineveh, and succeeded his father Sennacherib on the throne of Assyria (comp. 2 Kings 19, 37).

**Assyria**—A country famed in antiquity on the east and the middle Tigris, between thirty-five and thirty-seven degrees north latitude. Its ancient name was Assur, and its extent varied greatly at different times.

**Before Lachish**—An important fenced city twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem, the capture and spoliation of which by Sennacherib is described on an Assyrian relief tablet now in the British Museum. Sennacherib's ultimate objective being Egypt, the capture of Lachish was to him of even greater importance than the capture of Jerusalem.

**Hezekiah**—The twelfth king and (counting Queen Athaliah) the thirteenth sovereign of the separate kingdom of Judah. His father was the wicked King Ahaz, and his son the no less wicked Manasseh. Between these two Hezekiah, who instituted many reforms, stands out in a most favorable light.

**10. In the siege**—Perhaps better, as in the marginal reading, *in the fortress*, or fortified

city. The natural position as well as the fortification of Jerusalem was very strong.

**11. To die by famine and by thirst**—The besieging general virtually admits that to take the city by storm was out of the question. A long siege alone could compel its surrender.

**12. His high places**—Outdoor sanctuaries of Jehovah, located on hilltops in different parts of the kingdom; not necessarily places of idolatrous worship, yet, because of their heathen associations, places in which the temptation to idolatry was especially strong. These high places Hezekiah removed from all parts of his kingdom.

**Ye shall worship before one altar**—By prohibiting idolatry and by centralizing the national worship, by destroying local sanctuaries throughout the borders of Judah, Hezekiah paved the way for another and yet more thorough reformation carried out by King Josiah in the next century.

**13. What I and my fathers have done**—Sennacherib's father, Sargon, had been a great and successful warrior, and Sennacherib himself had been successful in several engagements against other minor revolting states. The severe punishment inflicted on these he cites as an example and warning to Jerusalem.

**14. Utterly destroyed**—Literally, and in the marginal reading, "devoted." The Hebrew word means, to devote to destruction; hence to utterly destroy, to exterminate. It was used especially of cities and their inhabitants (comp. Deut. 2, 34; Josh. 8, 26; Jer. 51, 3).

**15. How much less shall your God deliver you**—Judah, in the eyes of the Assyrian monarch, was in some respects inferior to other kingdoms already brought into submission. The Assyrians were polytheists believing that every nation had its own god or gods. It therefore became with them a question of strength and authority between the God of the Jews and of Jerusalem, and the gods of Assyria, and in the superior strength of the latter they had the utmost confidence.

**16. Jehovah**—A word resulting from the corruption of two Hebrew words, one meaning "Lord," and the other being the proper name Jahve (Yahweh), meaning God. The Hebrews in writing used only consonants, the vowel

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sounds being supplied by the reader; but in reading the sacred Scripture the devout Hebrew always substituted the word "Lord" (Adonai) for the proper name Yahweh, which he considered too sacred to be spoken. Many centuries later, in comparatively modern times, when Hebrew proper was no longer a spoken language, it became necessary to indicate the vowels in the Hebrew text. Hence the vowels of the word *Adonai* were printed with the consonants of the word *Yahweh* to indicate that not Yahweh, but Adonai, was to be spoken. These consonants of the word *Yahweh* together with the vowels of the word *Adonai*, if pronounced as written, as they soon were by persons ignorant of the real facts in the case, give approximately the word Jehovah. The word Jehovah, although resulting from an error, must now be considered to be good English.

**20. Isaiah the prophet**—Compare Word Studies on lesson for Sunday, July 9.

**21. Cut off all the mighty men of valor**—The account in Kings (2 Kings 19,

8, ff.) mentions the sending of a letter by Sennacherib to Hezekiah making another demand for surrender. Concerning his own unexpected defeat Sennacherib himself, in his accounts found on Babylonian tablets, is silent. That he failed to take Jerusalem is, however, implied in his own vague statement that he "shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage." The historian Herodotus refers to the destruction of the Assyrian army, and speaks of it as being probably due to a plague. Whatever the means may have been which Jehovah employed to work disaster **in the camp of the king of Assyria**, the impression made upon Sennacherib was such that though he lived for twenty years longer he never again entered Palestine or besieged Jerusalem.

**23. Exalted in the sight of all nations from henceforth**—The victory of faith achieved by Hezekiah was mainly due to the influence of Isaiah, but the glory of that victory fell also on the sovereign who shared the prophet's lofty spirit and confidence in Jehovah.

### The Lesson Exposition

#### EXALTATION AFTER HUMILIATION

The deliverance of Hezekiah and the people of Judah from the power of the Assyrian king came after deepest humiliation. Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, had made himself and his kingdom subject to the then reigning king of Assyria (2 Kings 16, 7). That was done for the sake of help against his enemies, the kings of Samaria and Syria, who were waging war against him. When Hezekiah became king he was subject to the Assyrian king as his overlord. But "he rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not" (2 Kings 18, 7). But that freedom was only temporary. In the years immediately following the Assyrians completely conquered Samaria and carried its people away into a captivity from which they never returned (2 Kings 18, 9-12). That was in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign. Eight years later the Assyrians invaded Judah, and Hezekiah, feeling incapable of resisting them, surrendered and again became a subject ruler and king. But this submission on the part of the kingdom of Judah to the political yoke of Assyria did not satisfy Sennacherib; he purposed its complete conquest and the enslavement of its people. It was with this purpose that the undertaking described in the present lesson was God wrought for his people in the overthrow of Sennacherib. Judah was exalted from a deep humiliation—the state of subservency to Assyria assumed first by Ahaz, and accepted again, through fear and weakness, by Hezekiah.

#### MORAL CAUSES OF THE DELIVERANCE

The deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib was not due simply to a revival of courage on the part of Hezekiah and the leaders of the people; nor was it merely an arbitrary intervention of God. Their revived courage was due to moral causes, and God's intervention came because of new moral conditions. A great moral and religious reformation had taken place in the kingdom. The reading of the three chapters preceding that from which the lesson is taken will show the extent and thoroughness of that reformation. Hezekiah was from the beginning a reform king. In the law of moral heredity he illustrated the principle of reversion to an earlier ancestral type. In him was reproduced not his own evil father, Ahaz, nor his great-grandfather, Uzziah, but in him appeared again the moral spirit of King David (2 Chron. 29, 1, 2). When he came to the throne the nation was in a sad state of religious demoralization. The temple had fallen into a state of filth; the priests no longer exercised their sacred office; sacrifices had ceased and the reading of the law was neglected; the people no longer came together for worship. Not only so, the practices of the heathen had been brought in, and the abominations of the worship of false gods were maintained throughout the land. All this Hezekiah set about removing. The moral sense of the people responded to his appeals, and they had cleansed the land of idolatry and had returned heartily to the worship and service of God. It was at the begin-

ning of his reign that Hezekiah had thrown off the yoke of political vassalage to Assyria; but he was compelled almost immediately to accept the yoke again, because the moral spirit was not yet sufficiently restored to stand the test of a definite resistance. But now in the fourteenth year of his reign he had a regenerated nation back of him, whose spirit was like that of early Israel that knew and trusted God. Such a king and such a people could dare make a stand against an invader who came insolently blaspheming their God; and such a king and such a people were worth delivering. A moral condition had been created that made deliverance possible because it made deliverance worth while.

#### ANOTHER THOUGH UNCROWNED KING

Back of and through the events of the history we are here studying we must not lose sight of one whose presence and personality were perhaps the chief moral force that saved the nation. That potent personality was Isaiah the prophet. Isaiah was God's minister resident and ambassador extraordinary at the court of Judah's kings. He was a princely prophet, belonging to the highest social order, cultured, with a statesman's vision looking out on all the great national and international events that were taking place, but viewing them from a prophet's outlook and seeing their spiritual meaning. He had foreseen the doom that had fallen on Samaria, and he had stood among the nobles of Judah and in the presence of her kings preaching righteousness and unflinching trust in Jehovah, protesting and warning against all foreign alliances, his constant word being, "For God is with us" (Isa. 8, 10). He had withstood the policy of King Ahaz, father of Hezekiah, but in vain. But with Hezekiah he held a place of highest confidence and influence, and there can be no doubt that Isaiah was the inspiring source of the king's reforms and of his confident faith and courage in the crisis of the Assyrian invasion. In the struggle through which the king passed Isaiah joined with him in his prayer to God for deliverance (32, 20). Students of the lesson should not fail to read the article in this issue by Professor Eischen on Isaiah.

#### HEATHEN VAUNTINGS

The messengers whom Sennacherib sent to Jerusalem to dismay the people and dissuade them from resistance spoke as the servants of a heathen king who had gained many victories might have been expected to speak. They knew that Hezekiah was encouraging and strengthening the people by assuring them that Jehovah would defend them. The Assyrians scoffed at this. They were the conquerors of many gods already. Who was this God of the Jews more than the gods of other peoples, that he could deliver his followers out of the hand

of the conquering king? They thought of Jehovah as simply another little god of a province, who was a mere name and without power. So they had found the gods of other peoples to be, and so they believed in this case. They did not understand. They were proud and boastful in their confidence in their material superiority and resources. If their thought of the God of Judah had been correct, their boasting would not have been in vain. They left God out of the account, but that did not eliminate him from the situation. God does not leave men and nations out of his account because they have left him out of their reckonings. In general, vaunting oneself against God, whether in direct words as those Assyrians did, or in a spirit of worldly self-confidence that fears no divine interference, is both foolish and wicked. How very little of God's power is required to humble human pride even when connected with the greatest human strength! A touch, and the overthrow is complete.

#### A GREAT PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER

"And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven" (verse 20). The prayer of Isaiah is not recorded, but that of the king is preserved (2 Kings 19, 15-19). The whole chapter of which this prayer is a part should be studied, and the prayer itself should be read before every class. We are told in this fuller account in 2 Kings that the king of Assyria, in addition to the taunts of his messengers, sent to Hezekiah a boastful and blasphemous letter. Hezekiah took that letter into the house of the Lord and, spreading it out before him, made his appeal to God to deliver his people, not merely for their sake but for the honor of his own name. Read the prayer and read the great and instant answer that was given through Isaiah the prophet. The situation presented is one of the most dramatic in Scripture history—a city threatened by an overwhelming army; messages of boasting and threatening delivered from the insolent foe; the people in doubt and fear; a king with a letter from his enemy spread out before him appealing to the challenged and insulted God; and a prophet through whom God was sending answer to the prayers of the king! It was a great occasion for prayer, and the prayer rose to the level of the occasion. And this, and other examples of similarly great occasions associated with great prayers, such as Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and Daniel's prayer for his captive people, show how natural prayer is in connection with the crises of life, both for the individual and society. When a great hour in a nation's life arrives prayer is almost irrefragable. People forget to pray in ordinary times, because they do not strongly feel the need of God; but a crisis compels them to pray.

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## THE LESSON PRAYER

O Lord, our faith is tried sometimes as was the faith of Hezekiah. Great and strong temptations arise and lay siege to our lives, and our strength seems insufficient to resist them. And the enemy tells us of others whom he has overcome whose strength was as great as ours, and mocks our hope of help from thee. But from this day's lesson our hearts take comfort and courage. "With us is the Lord God to help us, and to fight our battles." Help us to build up about us all the walls of defense and strengthen all our gates; but having done so, may our trust not be in walls or gates, but in thee, who only art able to deliver us. Amen.

### The Lesson Coin Thoughts

#### I

Wrong can never come out right; it is on the wrong road.

Nothing save light will dispel darkness.

Only sanitary conditions can hold contagion at bay.

The legions of evil must go down under the supreme good.

#### II

"Whereon do ye trust?" is the key-question to every man's character and career.

No man's work can be wholly trustworthy who distrusts God.

No amount of bluster can shake the rock of intelligent belief.

The man who has linked his life to power does not need to brag or boast.

Character can never come from misplaced confidence.

Faith in God is the only faith that will do any good.

#### III

Faith, fervor, and fortitude constitute the threefold strength of intelligent enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is an engine on the track with a full head of steam.

Fanaticism is an engine flying the track with a full head of steam.

Intelligent enthusiasm has achieved the greatest victories in art, music, and literature.

The greatest statesmen, reformers, philanthropists and patriots have been the greatest enthusiasts.

It is only by the flaring light of faith that any man finds his way to power.

#### IV

Sennacherib was shortsighted, as all sinners are; the "gods of this world" blind their devotees.

As a politician he tried to create prejudice in the minds of the people.

A corrupt and crafty political leader will lead as many people as he can by *misleading* them. Sinners have sharp eyes for the weak spots in God's people.

#### V

Sennacherib was a fool for daring to match his might against the Almighty.

Many a sinner has been overconfident just before his final overthrow.

Instead of being the culmination of conquest the *finale* of sin is the *finale* of failure.

As sure as God rules righteousness must wax and win.

It is the height of folly for any man to fling his fist in the face of God.

Sin is too shortsighted to see the final triumph of truth.

#### VI

The unblushing boldness of wickedness looks like courage, but it is only consummate conceit.

The rashness of wrong is always irrational.

Sennacherib felt strong in himself because he was not man enough to measure the might of God.

No sinner could be brave at the beginning of his career if he could only foresee the failure that is sure to come at the end.

#### VII

Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and other foolish leaders as well as Sennacherib have misjudged the might of Jehovah.

The man who pits his puny power against the Almighty is a pygmy.

He is already retrograding who tries to impede the progress of truth.

A man may fear a drought who sees only the little *pool* at the edge of the sea, but not when his eyes sweep the sea.

"Guided them on every side:" all of God's guidance is *all-sided* guidance.

## The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

Why should we take this apparently backward leap from the light days of Jesus, the Conqueror by the cross, to the dim days of Hezekiah, the troubled king of Judah, and Sennacherib, the proud monarch of Assyria? Because there is a distinct connection between the lessons of the Old Testament and the New. There is the same teaching in both, the same gospel of the unchangeable God. This story of Jerusalem's trial and Sennacherib's defeat is history and parable too. When shall we ever learn its lesson, a lesson reiterated in the teachings of Jesus—that God is in closest touch with human affairs, and that it is highest wisdom to trust his word and his providence in the face of everything seemingly adverse to his promises and his will? The Rabshakeh from Assyria well personifies the temptations confronting a besieged and perplexed soul. It was Jerusalem's extremity—Jerusalem, where God had said the throne of David should be established forever. All the other cities of Judah had fallen into the Assyrian's hands, and the king had retreated to the fortress of his capital. If this shall fall, only ruin, defeat, and death will be left. But his heart was brave, for it was singing Luther's hymn written centuries after:

"A strong tower is the Lord our God,  
To shelter and defend us,"

and by his faith he held up the faint hearts around him. But now comes the Rabshakeh with specious words, compromises, threats, scoffs, allurements, and an array of facts so real as to delude anyone going by the sight of his eyes and not by faith in the Unseen. "What nonsense is this," he says, "to trust in a God who never yet has proved himself stronger than the forces of men! Look at the cities around you and see how every one has been overpowered by Assyria. They trusted their gods, but what good did it do? I tell you it is might that conquers; money, men, and implements of war are the forces that win. It is so useless for you to stay inside these walls and starve; come out and make a compromise with us and we will make it easy for you. Look at the facts. Did anyone ever get on who tried to stand against money and power? And, besides, do you think your God cares for nobody but you? He told us to come up against Jeru-

salem. You need not think he is going to do some great thing for a little handful of people just because you say you believe in him. You only say it with your lips; you do not really expect him to help you. Your religion is no better than ours; do not let your king nor your God deceive you." Ah, tested, besieged soul, having lost all else, and driven into your one fortress of faith in God and his promises, does the tempter so speak to you? He did so speak to David when he saw the prosperity of the wicked in contrast with his own losses and discouragements. And when Hezekiah heard what the Rabshakeh said, like David, his faith faltered for just a little while; but not for long, because he soon found the hiding place of strength in God. He said to Isaiah, in substance: "Can faith carry out in real life what in spiritual vision it sees? Can we really hold on to God in this extremity until we get the victory?" In his need he besought the prophet to pray for him, and was reassured. So we help one another by our prayers and by our steadfast trust.

The king commanded the people not to answer the Rabshakeh a word. We give the tempter an advantage when we argue with him. The unbeliever knows nothing of a believer's reason for holding on to a besieged fortress, "With us is our God to fight our battles." Where is the use in saying that to the world so confident in its arm of flesh? Do you remember the little woman patiently filling her pots of oil, and the unseen Hand using that unworldly-wise method to pay her debts? Do you recall the mountain filled with horses and chariots while the young man cried, "Alas! Master, what shall we do?" God was watching Jerusalem. It was a typical scene—Rabshakeh and a powerful army outside; Hezekiah prostrate in distress, yet *with God* inside. There could be no question of where the victory would be.

"Thinkest sometimes that thy Father  
Hath forgot?  
Though the clouds around thee gather  
Doubt him not.  
Always hath the daylight broken,  
Always hath he comfort spoken,  
Better hath he been for years  
Than thy fears."

## The Lesson in Literature and Art

**1. Verse 10.** They who look only at the things seen cannot but think the men of faith mad. They who look at the things unseen cannot but know that the men of sense are

fools. The latter elaborately prove that the former are impotent, but they have left out one factor in their calculations, and that is God. One man and God at his back are stronger

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*Maclaren.*

2. Verse 9-14.

O world, with all thy smiles and loves,  
With all thy song and wine,  
What mockery of human hearts,  
What treachery is thine!

Thou woundest, but thou canst not heal;  
Thy words are warbled lies;  
Thy hand contains the poisoned cup,  
And he who drinks it dies.

—*Horatius Bonar.*

3. Verse 15.

Their daily bread and draw the breath of  
heaven,  
Without thought or thanks. Heaven's roof  
to them,

Is but a painted ceiling hung with lamps.  
No more, that lights them to their purposes.  
They wander loose about; they nothing see,  
Themselves except, and creatures like them-

selves,  
Short-lived, shortsighted, impatient to save.  
To their dissolute spirits, soon or late,  
Destruction cometh, like an armed man,  
Or like a dream of murder in the night,  
Withering their mortal faculties, and breaking  
The bones of all their pride.—*Charles Lamb.*

4. Verse 17.

The following meditation of the great Lincoln, written in the year 1862, is in striking contrast with the boastful note of Sennacherib's servants: "The will of God prevails. . . . In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect his purpose. . . . By his mere great power on the minds of the now contestants he could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, he could give the final victory to either side any day."

5. Verse 20.

Abraham's servant prays. Rebekah appears. Jacob wrestles and prays, and prevails with Christ; Esau's mind is wonderfully turned from the purpose he had harbored for twenty years. Moses prays, Amalek is discomfited. Joshua prays, Achan is discovered. Hannah prays, Samuel is born. David

prays, Abithophel hangs himself. Asa prays, a victory is gained. Jehoshaphat cries to God, God turns away his foes. Isaiah and Hezekiah pray, one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians are dead in twelve hours. Daniel prays, the lions are muzzled. . . . Mordecai and Esther fast, Haman is hanged on his own gallows in three days. . . . Elijah prays, rain descends apace. Elisha prays, Jordan is divided.—  
*Ryland.*

6. Verse 21.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the  
fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and  
gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on  
the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Gal-  
ilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is  
green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were  
seen;  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath  
blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and  
strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on  
the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he  
passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and  
chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved—and forever  
grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all  
wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of  
his pride;

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his  
mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal!  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the  
sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the  
Lord.—*Byron.*

Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. It has strangely happened that the vanity, the boastfulness, and the arrogance of this in some respects most illustrious of the Assyrian kings have proved to be elements whereby historic confirmations of the Scripture story have been in recent generations established through the instrumentality of the Oriental discoverers

and archaeologists. Many of the inscriptions, carvings, grotesque and colossal statues exhumed at Nineveh within the past century are the work of artists and architects who wrought at the bidding of Sennacherib, and who under his direction glorified his prowess and monumentalized his conquests. When we read his

own account of his exploits on the tablets of Nineveh we are reminded at once of the style of his ultimatum as given to Hezekiah. In one of these inscriptions he calls himself, according to Rawlinson, "The great, the powerful king, the king of the Assyrians, of the nations, of the four regions, the diligent ruler, the favorite of the great gods, the observer of sworn faith, the guardian of law, the establisher of monuments, the noble hero, the strong warrior, the first of kings, the punisher of unbelievers, the destroyer of wicked men." On another tablet he tells the story of his conquests in the region of Judah, thus referring to the scene delineated in the passage before us: "And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates to prevent his escape." Thus the Almighty causes the wrath of man to praise him, and uses the weapon of his foes to confirm the testimony of his Word.

2. The arrogance of Sennacherib may be paralleled here and there in Scripture, as well as in secular annals. Pharaoh's utterance, Exod. 5, 2, is a specimen of a kindred spirit of proud and scornful opposition to Jehovah: "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go." The bragart demeanor of Goliath of Gath, when he "cursed David by his gods" (1 Sam. 17, 43) and defied all the armies of Israel, affords another striking instance of this disposition. And Byron, in his tragedy of Cain, gives a vivid and terrifying portrayal of the same spirit in the words of Lucifer, who is thus pictured as denouncing the Creator:

"Homage He has from all—but none from me:  
I battle it against him, as I battled  
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,  
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,  
And the interminable realms of space,  
And the infinity of endless ages,

All, all will I dispute! And world by world,  
And star by star, and universe by universe,  
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great  
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,  
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched!"

The literature, if it may be called such, pertaining to a certain blatant form of modern skepticism, is full also of this same spirit of scornful defiance, of hateful arrogance. The king of Assyria mentioned in this lesson is not the only one who "wrote letters" and other productions wherewith "to rail on the Lord God of Israel, and to speak against him." Some of the literature of agnosticism in our time contains railings and mouthings just as foolish and wicked as the utterances of Sennacherib and his servants.

3. In verse 20 "the king and the prophet" are represented as closely mated in prayer. That was their normal relation when the sovereign was willing to yield to the guidance of the divine messenger. The latter was raised up as a counselor to the former; his function was prayer, advice, comfort, sympathy, help, to be administered to the man on the throne and to the people in extremity of need and peril. Usually the prophet was in all respects a greater man than the king—wiser, more unselfish, more devout, and a better statesman. This was particularly the case with Isaiah and Jeremiah, who were chief among the men endowed with political wisdom in their time.

4. The utterance of the Wise Man (Prov. 16, 18), "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall," is vindicated in this story of the humiliation of the imperious and boastful king of Assyria, who instead of carrying out his threats returned to his own land in shame and defeat. His impiety, his vaingloriousness, his contempt and hatred of God, his scornful haughtiness, were all rebuked and punished in the outcome of his campaign. We might cite as an historical parallel the case of Napoleon the Third, in the campaign which proved his overthrow.

### The School of Practice

1. For Hezekiah to have surrendered at the command of the king of Assyria would have been cowardly and wicked. I admire the courage of his refusal. But it is just as cowardly and wicked for me to surrender to the demands of temptation. I will try to remember this during this week, and in whatever form it may come refuse to surrender to sin.

2. I see that while Hezekiah's deliverance came at last from God in answer to prayer he did not neglect anything he could do for himself. He built up the walls and strengthened the gates and made abundance of armor. In my fight this week with temptations by which I am assailed I will first do all that I can to protect and defend myself, and then I will in prayer call upon God for his help.

### The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

#### General Preparatory Work

I. *Lesson Material.* 2 Chron. 32; especially the printed verses, 9-27.

II. *Paralleled Passages.* 2 Kings 18, 13 to 19, 37; Isa. 36, 1 to 37, 38.

III. *Connecting Links.* At the close of 1904 our consecutive study of Old Testament history was sus-

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pended to make way for a rapid survey of the life of Jesus which we have just closed. This lesson, therefore, connects closely with Lesson X, December 4, 1904, *The Reopening of the Temple by Hezekiah*, and with Lesson XI, December 11, 1904, *The Captivity of the Ten Tribes*. Verses 1-8, immediately preceding the printed verses, tell of Sennacherib's descent upon the fortified cities of Judah, and of the measures taken by Hezekiah for the defense of Jerusalem. Note "all" in 2 Kings 18. 13 and Isa. 36. 1.

IV. *Our Lesson Passage Naturally Divides* before and after verse 20. A Simple Analysis: 1. The blasphemous challenge of the Assyrians, verses 9-19. 2. The Prayer to Jehovah, verse 20. 3. The answer of Jehovah, verses 21-23.

V. *Comparative Study of the Lesson Text*. Most of the changes made by the Revision here are unimportant. Instead of "the slogs" (verse 10) the margin reads "the stronghold"; instead of "utterly destroyed" (verse 14), "devoted"; instead of "God" (verse 5), "gods"; instead of "magnified" (verse 23), "exalted." While vigorously defending Jerusalem and Lachish, Hezekiah made unavailing efforts for peace (2 Kings 18. 14-16). The titles of the royal "servants" mentioned in verse 9 are given in 2 Kings 18. 17 (see also Isa. 36. 2); and the names of the deputation which Hezekiah sent to meet them, in Isa. 36. 3; 2 Kings 18. 18. The message of Sennacherib is given at greater length and in more picturesque phraseology in Isaiah and Kings. Hezekiah, who was expecting chariots and cavalry from Egypt, is derisively offered two thousand horses if he can set riders on them. The reason for the Assyrians' outcry in the Jews' speech (verse 18) is given in 2 Kings 18. 26 and Isa. 36. 11; and the appeal made to the people (verse 15) is greatly expanded, 2 Kings 18. 28-37; Isa. 36. 13-22. The story of verse 20 is told at length in 2 Kings 19. 1-7, 15-34; Isa. 37. 1-7, 14-35; and the discomfiture of Sennacherib in 2 Kings 19. 35-37; Isa. 37. 36-38.

VI. *Special Article in this Magazine*: "Isaiah the Statesman."

### The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly.]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see paragraph on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

Illustrative Material: The pictures in our Senior Quarterly will help in class conversation on the lesson. The upper one represents a detachment of Egyptian soldiers whom Hezekiah expected to help him, but whether they came or not he depended on the Lord his God to fight his battles. The lower picture represents the Assyrian soldiers, the "servants" of Sennacherib, of whom our lesson tells.

Getting Ready: 1. Study the Connecting Links above. 2. In studying the lesson passages follow the Simple Analysis given in paragraph IV of GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above. 3. The best introduction to the lesson is familiarity on the part of the pupil with the six passages of Scripture selected as LITTLE READINGS FOR EACH DAY. 4. This is a lesson in which the Golden Text may well be used as a softly in unison at the places indicated by the teacher.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline: 1. *Sennacherib*. The story of this boastful soldier is told in our LETTER, Boys and Girls' Quarterly, page 66. Explain to the class his wicked disposition to fight everybody within his reach, his cruelty, the many kingdoms he conquered. No wonder Hezekiah was frightened when Sennacherib entered his country. In

forty-six battles Hezekiah's soldiers had been defeated, and the presents he sent to Sennacherib had done no lasting good. The two greatest fortresses in Hezekiah's country were Lachish and Jerusalem. Hezekiah himself was in Jerusalem. Sennacherib had surrounded Lachish with soldiers, and it would have to surrender very soon. He sent messengers to Jerusalem with the message which is given in verses 10-15. That message is full of sneers against Hezekiah and against God. Make plain the sneer of verse 11. Explain that what Sennacherib blames Hezekiah for in verse 12 was a good and religious thing to do. Notice the boast of verse 13, and the blasphemy of verses 14 and 15. Show why Sennacherib's messengers shouted their message in the Hebrew language, verse 18.

2. *Hezekiah and Isaiah*. There were just two great men at this time in the little kingdom of Judah. One was the king himself, a man who would have been great even if he had not been king; the other was the man whom God talked. The people looked to these two men as their leaders, and when Sennacherib's messengers threatened the city these two took all their troubles, and the troubles of the whole nation, to God in prayer.

3. *The Lord*. Show how God answered the prayer. He gave them a comforting answer and a promise to help them. He destroyed the power of Sennacherib so that he had to hurry home with disheartened troops. Some time afterward two of his own sons killed him. Jehovah greatly blessed Hezekiah for having trusted in him when in trouble; he made him greater than he had ever been before, and all nations honored him.

#### Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: 1. The text of next Sun-

day's lesson, Isa. 38: 1-8, to be read. **2.** THE LITTLE READINGS FOR EACH DAY (page 69 of the Quarterly). **3.** The GOLDEN TEXT, to be committed to memory. **4.** HARD WORDS MADE EASY, to be studied.

Review Work: Give to each pupil three written questions: 1. What kind of man was Sennacherib? 2. What kind of man was Hezekiah? 3. What kind of man was Isaiah? Ask for written answers next Sunday.

### The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly, the Senior Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

Illustrative Material: We cannot too often exhort the teacher not to use a story illustration where the truth can be plainly taught without it. Pictorial illustrations may be found in Illustrative Notes, 1905: Tell-el-hesi, the ancient Lachish, page 213, and the "signature" of Sennacherib, page 214; also in the Illustrated Quarterly. Our frontispiece map shows the geographical relation of Judah and Assyria.

#### Constructing the Lesson.

Follow the GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK outlined above. The meaning of the lesson passage is made plain by our WORD STUDIES, its teachings are developed in the LESSON EXPOSITION. Be sure to praise the readers of the DAILY BIBLE READINGS. The Lesson Plan: **1.** The Blasphemous Threat, verses 9-19; **2.** The Prayer, verse 20; **3.** God's Answer, verses 21-23.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

##### Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

**1.** Sennacherib's threat was (a) Terrible, because his word had been mercilessly kept in other sieges; (b) Crafty, insinuating disloyalty to King Hezekiah; (c) Cruel, emphasizing present suffering from hunger and thirst, and throwing all blame on the king; (d) Political, siding with the "high-place party," and implying that Jehovah was displeased with Hezekiah; (e) Boastful, of the demonstrated power of the Assyrian armies and of the helplessness of the other gods; (f) Blasphemous, suggesting that till the Assyrians came those other gods had seemed quite as powerful as Jehovah; (g) Dangerous, particularly because spoken and written in Hebrew, and addressed to the rank and file rather than to the officials.

**2.** The prayer was offered representatively by the whole nation. The king, representing civil government and secular affairs, and the prophet, representing the ecclesiastical life of the nation, united in earnest prayer, *crying* to heaven "for

this cause"—the Assyrian blasphemy against Jehovah.

**3.** The messenger from Jehovah ruined the plans of the king of Assyria. With shame of face he returned and was killed by his own sons, while God did even more for Hezekiah than he had asked.

By careful explanation of the promise of the GOLDEN TEXT prevent such misunderstandings as young people might naturally fall into. Ask each pupil to write on his lesson pad, and to preserve for Review Day, this condensation of the spiritual teachings of this lesson:

### THE LORD WILL FIGHT OUR BATTLES.

Show what battles the Christian has to fight, and *how* the Lord helps.

#### Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: Urge the reading of the HOME READINGS day by day, and ask each pupil



to copy from the Intermediate Quarterly the Lesson Plan for next Sunday, and to read over the lesson passage with that plan in mind.

Review Work: Copy our two Writing Table Questions (Intermediate Quarterly, page 68) for each pupil, and ask for written answers next Sunday.

### The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

Trace the history of Hezekiah's times through the books of Isaiah, Kings, and Chronicles. His reign is more fully chronicled than that of any other king of Judah.

King Ahaz had been compelled to do homage to Tiglath-pileser, and Hezekiah, therefore, began his reign as a "tributary" of Assyria. He devoted his earliest energies to the overthrow of idolatry throughout his little kingdom, and then refused to pay further tribute to Nineveh. Hoshea, king of Israel, had also rebelled (2 Kings 17: 4), and a great Assyrian army was promptly marched into Palestine. Samaria, Hoshea's capital, was first attacked; after a three years' siege it was taken, many of its

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people were deported, and the kingdom of Israel was never revived. But instead of proceeding immediately to Jerusalem the Assyrian forces busied themselves for five years with the siege of Tyre. In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah the long-threatened blow came. The Assyrians captured "all" of the "fenced cities" of Judah. Hezekiah paid a crushing ransom (2 Kings 18, 14-16), apparently against the advice of the prophet Isaiah. It has been supposed that Isa. 22 fits in here, Shebna, who is there denounced, was at that time Hezekiah's chief officer and adviser. Isaiah himself had foretold the Assyrians' conquering march (Isa. 10, 28-32), but urged his people to "be not afraid of the Assyrians" (verse 14). Hezekiah's illness, the subject of next Sunday's lesson, also took place in the fourteenth year of his reign, apparently before the Assyrians' overthrow. The invasion

described in our lesson passage is believed by some authorities to have come later (see WORD STUDIES); but this chronological question has no bearing on the moral and spiritual teachings.

The words of Hezekiah show a strong heart: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." No wonder the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32, 7, 8).

The secret of Christian courage: Spreading our difficulties before the Lord: for "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." When we are brave and trust in God others will rest upon us.

### The Responsive Review

1. What city did Sennacherib come to capture? *Jerusalem.* 2. What had Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem, done? *He had destroyed idol worship.* 3. What did Sennacherib say about Hezekiah? *He tried to make Hezekiah and Isaiah? He sent an angel to defeat the Assyrians.* 4. What did the Lord do in answer to the prayer of Hezekiah? *He was killed by his own sons.* 5. What happened to Sennacherib when he returned home? *He was killed by his own sons.* 6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"With us is," etc.*

### The Church Catechism

44. How doth our Lord set forth our duty to God and our fellow-men? Our Lord sets forth our duty to God and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. Luke x. 27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

## LESSON II. Hezekiah's Prayer

GOLDEN TEXT. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psal. 46. 1.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Study Isa. 38, 1-22]

Isa. 38, 1-8

[Commit to memory verses 4-6]

1 In those days was Heze-ki'ah sick unto death. And I-sa'iah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then Heze-ki'ah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD.

3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Heze-ki'ah wept sore.

4 Then came the word of the LORD to I-sa'iah, saying,

5 Go, and say to Heze-ki'ah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Da'vid thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of As-syr'i-a: and I will defend this city.

7 And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken:

REVISED VERSION.\*

1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Set thy house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto Jehovah. 3 and said, Remember now, O Jehovah, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. 4 Then came the word of Jehovah to Isaiah, saying, 5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. 6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. 7 And this shall be the sign unto thee from Jehovah, that Jehovah will do this thing that he hath spoken: 8 behold, I will cause the shadow on the

\*The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of A' haz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

### Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

M. Hezekiah's Prayer. Isa. 38. 1-8.

Tu. Thanksgiving. Isa. 38. 9-20.

W. Another record. 2 Kings 20. 1-11.

Th. Encouragement to pray. Matt. 7. 7-12.

steps, which is gone down on the dial of Abaz with the sun, to return backward ten steps. So the sun returned ten steps on the dial whereon it was gone down.

F. The Lord heareth. Psa. 34. 11-22.

S. Prayer of the afflicted. Psa. 102.

S. A present help. Psa. 46.

**Time.**—Perhaps B. C. 701, shortly before our last lesson. **Place.**—The king's palace in Jerusalem.

### The Lesson Hymns

*New Canadian Hymnal*, No. 52.

The Lord's our Rock, in him we hide :

A shelter in the time of storm !

Secure whatever ill betide :

A shelter in the time of storm !

*New Canadian Hymnal*, No. 44.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in thee ;

Let the water and the blood.

*New Canadian Hymnal*, No. 45.

Jesus, Lover of my soul,

Let me to thy bosom fly,

While the nearer waters roll,

While the tempest still is high :

### Questions for Senior Scholars

1. *Hezekiah's Illness* (v. 1).—What nation was hostile to Judah when King Hezekiah was taken ill? When Hezekiah's recovery seemed impossible what message did he receive? Who was the messenger? What can you recall concerning him?

2. *Hezekiah's Prayer* (v. 2, 3).—Is there any petition in this prayer? What is the difference between prayer and petition? What sort of a man had Hezekiah been? What was his purpose in reminding God of his loyalty. Why did Hezekiah's life seem to be of unusual importance to Judah at this juncture?

3. *God's Promise of Recovery* (v. 4-6).—How soon was Hezekiah's prayer answered? (2 Kings 20. 4.) What promise was made him concerning his life? What promise was made

him concerning the Assyrian invasion? What promise was made him of a sign?

4. *God's Promise of a Sign* (v. 7, 8).—Had Hezekiah asked for any sign? (2 Kings 20. 8-10.) Was he justified in asking for a sign? Have we a right to expect signs? If not, why not? How many descendants of David had preceded Hezekiah on the throne of Judah? To what frightful sin was Judah tempted through all these reigns? What had Hezekiah firmly set himself to do? What reform measures did he successfully inaugurate? Are we to regard his recovery as a fulfillment of the promise that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much? How and why did Hezekiah's view of death differ from that of Paul? (Comp. 2 Tim. 4. 6-8.)

### Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *The Distressed King* (v. 1-3).—How long had Hezekiah been king of Judah? What very important event made it seem necessary for such a king as Hezekiah to live? What message did Isaiah bring to his king? To whom did the king appeal in his distress? How did he hope to gain the favor of God in his prayer for his life? What shows that he was very much troubled over the thought of dying?

2. *The King's Prayer Answered* (v. 4-8).—What title did the Lord give himself in his second message to Isaiah for the king? What reasons did the Lord give for answering Hezekiah's prayer? How many years did the Lord add to the king's life? What more was given to the king than he had asked for? How was Hezekiah assured that this cure was from the Lord in answer to his prayer?

### Questions for Younger Scholars

What great king had come to take Jerusalem? *The king of Assyria*. What happened to Hezekiah? What word did the Lord send him? Who by? What did the king do? What did he pray to the Lord about? How did the Lord an-

swer him? What did he promise the king? What else besides the adding to his life fifteen years? What sign was given him? Did the king get well? How many years did Hezekiah live after this illness?

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## SERMONS ON THE LESSON

Verse 1.—*The Union Pulpit*, 188. *The Pulpit*, vol. lxxx, p. 38.

## The Lesson Analysis

I. *Hezekiah's Illness* (verse 1).

(a) "Those days" were days of national peril. (b) He who was "sick unto death," besides being king, had the clearest mind and the strongest heart in the nation. (c) The warning of approaching death came from God through Isaiah; (d) whose message pointed to immediate and manifest duty.

II. *Hezekiah's Prayer* (verses 2, 3).

(a) Never had Hezekiah's life seemed so necessary to his kingdom. (b) He was still young; no son had been born to succeed him. (c) He had just carried through a great national reform which would tumble in pieces with his death. (d) His people were threatened by As-

syrian invasion. (e) In his trouble he turned to God. (f) He pleaded his loyalty to Jehovah as a many-sided reason for a favorable answer. (g) He framed no petition. (h) He "wept sore."

III. *God's Promise* (verses 4-6).

God (a) showed sympathy; (b) promised fifteen years of added life; (c) promised deliverance from the Assyrians.

IV. *God's Sign* (verses 7, 8).

(a) Signs of God's power and faithfulness were not as numerous in Hezekiah's day as now. (b) God then, as always, met the need of his loyal servant. (c) The entire narrative evidences the truth of the Golden Text.

## The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—*These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.*

FOUR HISTORICAL CHAPTERS.—Our canonical book of Isaiah falls naturally into two great portions, the first of which includes chapters 1-33, and the second the remaining chapters of the book. Of the first part the last four chapters (36-39 inclusive) again form a smaller division quite distinct from the chapters preceding. These four chapters are historical, while those preceding are more or less strictly prophetic. The historical chapters are introduced into the body of the prophetic book for the purpose of giving the reader a summary of important facts concerning the life of the great prophet. They are a summary of the events narrated in 2 Kings 18, 13 to 20, 19, from which account they were doubtless taken. The two accounts differ as regards important matters only in two points; the summary in Isaiah does not record Hezekiah's submission mentioned in 2 Kings 18, 14-16, but does insert Hezekiah's psalm of thanksgiving on his recovery (chap. 28, 9-20), the latter not being found in the account in Kings. The parallel accounts should be read together.

**Verse 1. In those days**—This expression is doubtless to be taken as an indefinite reference to some portion of Hezekiah's reign, the chronology of which as a matter of fact presents many difficulties. From the arrangement of the narrative, both here and in 2 Kings, it would seem as if the sickness of Hezekiah followed the retreat of Sennacherib, but a closer examination leads us to conclude otherwise. From 2 Kings 20, 12 and Isa. 39, 1 it is plain that the sickness preceded the embassy of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon. But Merodach-baladan was king of Babylon from 721 to 706 B. C., and again for a brief period during 702 B. C. Sennacherib's invasion occurred in the year

B. C. 701. Hence the sickness of Hezekiah which preceded the embassy sent by the Babylonian king (probably during his second and shorter reign) must have preceded the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian king, which occurred still later. The events, therefore, of chapters 38 and 39 precede in point of time those of chapters 36 and 37.

**Isaiah the prophet**—The author of large parts of the book bearing his name, living in the time of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah. The greatest of Hebrew prophets, and at the same time, doubtless, the greatest of Hebrew statesmen. He was especially noted for the strength of his personality, the wisdom

of his statesmanship, the length and unbroken assurance of his ministry, the almost unaided service which he rendered to Judah at the greatest crisis of her history, the purity and grandeur of his style, and the great influence he exerted on subsequent prophecy.

**Thus saith Jehovah**—The prophet's authority was not his own. It was as the accredited messenger and representative of God that he was respected and obeyed if at all.

**Set thy house in order**—Literally, "Give commandment to thy house." The parting command of a man about to die was considered sacred and binding. Compare Jacob's charge to Joseph (Gen. 49, 29-33). It was more than a last wish, and was rather of the nature of making a will, as it related oftentimes to the disposition of lands and of property, and in the case of kings of the royal scepter as well.

**2. Turned his face to the wall**—In order to be alone with God in this hour of anguish. It is probable that Hezekiah was at this time childless (his son Manasseh was born later), in which case his death at this time might have meant the extinction of his house and possibly of the house of David also.

**3. Remember . . . how I have walked**—Words of bold confidence on the part of Hezekiah. Long life was considered a mark of God's approval, and compared with his immediate predecessors Hezekiah's administration certainly did seem to merit this mark of approval. Jehovah does not dispute the claim, but grants the request.

**4. Then came the word of Jehovah to Isaiah**—The answer to the prayer was immediate, as shown in the account in 2 Kings 20, 4, which explains that it was "before Isaiah was

gone out into the middle court" that he received word to return with this glad message.

**5. David thy father**—The terms "father" and "son" were more loosely used among the Hebrews than they are at present among us. It is here used in the sense of "ancestor."

**Fifteen years**—According to 2 Kings 18, 2 Hezekiah became king at the age of twenty-five, and reigned in all twenty-nine years; hence he must at this time have been thirty-nine years old and in the fifteenth year of his reign.

**6. I will deliver thee and this city**—This verse seems to point to the fact that the siege of the city had not yet taken place. Doubtless, however, Sennacherib's invasion was at this time anticipated and greatly feared.

**7, 8. The shadow on the steps . . . dial of Ahaz**—We are to think of a pyramid of steps on the top of which stood a short pillar or obelisk, so constructed that when the sun rose in the morning the shadow of the pillar just covered the lowest step on the western side of the pyramid. As the sun rose in the eastern sky the shadow shortened, climbing step by step to the foot of the obelisk at the top of the pyramid. After noon, as the sun descended toward the west the shadow gradually descended on the opposite or eastern side of the pyramid. Thus the position of the shadow on the steps of the pyramid indicated quite accurately the time of the day. Clocks and watches were at this time unknown. The retreating shadow miraculously lengthening the day was a pledge, as some have thought, symbolic of the postponement of that "night in which no man can work" (death), which had so nearly overtaken the king.

## The Lesson Exposition

### A KING'S WEAKNESS

Hezekiah appears at his strongest and his weakest in his prayers. In the prayer which he offered when besieged and insulted by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, he reached the climax of his life (Isa. 37, 14-20). Through that extreme ordeal he bore himself altogether as a king and as a man who trusted God. It was an act of a noble spiritual drama when he took Sennacherib's arrogant and boastful letter and "spread it before the Lord" and appealed to him for the deliverance of his people and the vindication of the divine honor. As we read it we feel the quickening and uplift which always come to us when a brave, true man measures up in his deeds and his words to the demands of a great crisis. We are made aware of God when a man fronts great danger in a spirit like that. But in the present lesson he disappoints us. Not that he acts wickedly, but

that he acts weakly. We wish that when the announcement of his approaching death came to him he had borne himself with dignity and calmness. We do not respect a whimpering man, much less a whimpering king, even in extreme sickness and in the presence of death.

### EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Something can be said for Hezekiah, however. First of all, he was in great physical weakness through sickness and suffering. His disease seems to have been a carbuncle (Isa. 38, 21), and that is a malady that frequently develops in a condition of already depleted vitality, and its searching and ceaseless pain wears out the nervous force and saps the vigor of the mind. It was in that condition, when sickness and suffering had unmanned his resolution, that the prophet came to him with the announcement that he must die. If in full vigor of health

But Hezekiah's personal view, based on the world's view, was better than his. It is in the Old Testament canon, and of it require as thei

such an announcement had come to him he might have borne himself more bravely. We know that the pride and courage of the strongest are sometimes reduced to pitiful weakness when subjected to the slow and consuming siege of disease. This reflection extenuates Hezekiah's breakdown; and still we think of Job, the citadel of whose strength failed not, and we are sorry that the king was not more kingly.

#### A CHEERLESS VIEW OF DEATH

But Hezekiah's collapse of courage has a deeper explanation than physical weakness. His conception of death and what lies beyond death was obscure and cheerless. The concluding part of the chapter from which the lesson is taken (verses 9-19) shows us how he thought and felt about death. This psalm which he wrote after his recovery describes his reflections during his sickness. He felt that to die then would be untimely, a cutting off of the residue of his days. The truth was, as we shall see, he was really through living, and to continue would be merely staying in the world to no purpose. But what chiefly made his soul shrink from death was the fact that everything cheerful and desirable was associated with the life of this world, and everything gloomy and joyless with the state of the dead. In that state, he moaned, he should no more see the Lord or his fellow men; in his death he felt that an end would be made of him; the grave was "the pit," and he could not see anything but its corruption and darkness; "for the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee." So regarding death, a little wonder that the king and the light of the sun is glorious, and the fruits of the earth are sweet, and human friendships and fellowships bring deep satisfaction and happiness. If the state beyond the grave bring cheerlessness such as Hezekiah conceived it to be, why should we not recoil from it with great dread?

#### BEFORE THE DAYDAWN

But Hezekiah's view was not a morbid, personal view, but the view of his age, the view of the world before the daydawn which Christ ushered in. Indeed, as an Israelite his view was better than that of an heathen world. But chosen people was the thought of the future life in that early age. The doctrine of immortality there, except for a few surprising crystallizations of statements, is almost indiscernible solution. It is implicit but not explicit. The Old Testament conceptions of God, of the worth of man, and of the moral order of the universe require as their background and necessary as-

sumption a life beyond this life that shall be to it not a darkening twilight but a breaking dawn, not its cutting off but its completion. But that implication was not recognized with sufficient clearness, except by a few, to be a source of comfort and strength. It remained for "life and immortality to be brought to light by Jesus Christ." The courage and calmness with which men faced death in those early ages among the heathen peoples of the world were not inspired by hope but by resolute will; while the noblest of the Jews came to the gates of death not with any joyful visions of the things beyond, but simply with a sustaining faith in a God whom they could trust beyond the utmost limits of his revelations.

#### PRAYER FOR HEALING

The lesson presents a distinct case of prayer for bodily healing and of God's answer to the prayer. God thus recognized such a prayer as legitimate, and by many examples both in the Old and the New Testaments warrants the hope that such prayers may still be answered. We do not know the lines of limitation in God's providence regulating this matter; but we do know that God has not lost the power to work miracles. But this is to be observed, that bodily healing was never made a matter of pre-ëminent importance in the times which the Bible records. Such healings were comparatively rare, and they were always subordinate to moral ends. And then, too, the Bible always regards disease and death as realities and never as mere "delusion of the mortal mind." Hezekiah was sick, his carbuncle was a plain and painful reality, and God did not tell him he was mistaken about it, but healed it. In sickness we are entitled to pray for healing, always understanding that God may not answer our standing also that, if he does heal us, it is only, in Hezekiah's case, a brief postponement of death.

#### FIFTEEN YEARS TOO MANY

God recognized Hezekiah as a good man. In the days of his strength he had delivered the nation from idolatry, and had stood for righteousness. And when the king so piteously raised him up and added fifteen years more to his life. But perhaps one of the most valuable things which this lesson teaches us is that a man may live longer than it is profitable for empty. He did not fall into sin as other kings had done, but was blundering and weak. Isaiah, the prophet who had stood by him and was compelled to come to him and to rebuke him for his folly (chap. 39) and foretell to him the overthrow of his kingdom and the carry-

ing away of his children into captivity. And perhaps the lowest point of contemptible weakness which the king, lingering in the world after he should have gone out of it, touched was when, having heard the prophet's words concerning the ills that would come after his

death, he said, "There shall be peace and truth in my days." He could endure the vision of calamities that would not fall in his time. That was the weak sighing of a soul side-tracked in this world and some years overdue in the world beyond.

### THE LESSON PRAYER

O Christ, who art the resurrection and the life, having thyself risen from the grave, thou art able also to raise us from the dead. Thou hast delivered us from the fear of death through the forgiveness of sin and the bringing to light of life and immortality; and so thou hast delivered us from the fear of sickness, which is the advance messenger of death. Make us strong and patient to suffer; and, knowing that life shall continue more full and rich beyond the grave, may we have no wish to tarry here beyond the hour when thou seest we have finished the work which thou hast given us to do. Amen.

### The Lesson Coin Thoughts

#### I

Hezekiah's sickness was only a solemn pause on the way to power.

Death is not the soul's terminus, it is its point of transition.

Life had not yet been fully brought to light when Hezekiah was "sick unto death."

It was "the Man of Galilee" who unveiled the mystery of immortality.

Death was a darker question in Hezekiah's day than it is in ours.

The light from the cross has banished the night from the sepulcher.

#### II

How often the message of the prophet has heartened the world.

Farsighted prophecy gives *faith*.

Farsighted prophecy gives *fortitude*.

The farther a man can see into the purposes of God the less he is fearful of failure and the surer he is of success.

The forward-moving feet of the prophet hasten on to meet the coming conquests of the world.

It is always in the spirit of the seer to see the sunrise beyond the sunset.

The soul likes to see where it is going.

Like Abraham, a man may not know *whither* he goes, but he may know *with whom* he goes.

#### III

It is better "to set one's house in order" while it is day than to wait till the night comes.

When the angel comes and calls us he will not wait for us to go back and sweep the floor.

• Many a singer will leave the song unfinished, many a painter will leave the picture undone, when the angel beckons the workman away.

We would better say the word of love now lest the time slip and we miss the chance.

#### VI

He who would "set his house in order" must first set his own heart in order.

You cannot "set your house in order" by *domestic disputes*.

You cannot "set your house in order" by *family gossip* about your neighbors.

You cannot "set your house in order" by finding fault with the preacher in the presence of your children.

Parents cannot "set their house in order" by challenging each other's authority or discipline in the presence of the children.

#### V

You can "set your house in order" by *patience*.

You can "set your house in order" by being a *peace-maker*.

You can "set your house in order" by *family prayers*.

You can "set your house in order" by *kindness, courage, consistency*.

You can "set your house in order" by being *orderly* in your house.

#### IV

The thing that Hezekiah wanted the Lord to remember was that he had *walked before him in truth*.

Are we doing things in life that it will give us pleasure to remember in death?

## VII

The miraculous is as easy with God as the commonplace.

Many a prayerless man will pray when he finds himself face to face with death. But life is the time for prayer.

Real prayer is as much *God's call* as it is *God's answer*.

## The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

"It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well!—Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,

This longing after immortality?  
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,  
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?  
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;  
'Tis heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man."

Chronology counts nothing when we enter Hezekiah's chamber where it seemed he must "meet his fate." The scene, the mind conditions, the impressions, are like what we saw yesterday. What we see to-day, and will see to-morrow.

No one of healthy mind wishes to die. We may say we do, but when illness looks serious we are ready to send for the physician. The love of life is implanted by the Giver of life. We ought to love it, and provide for its continuance under the most favorable conditions possible. It is no sign of high spiritual attainment to put a discount upon vigorous physical existence in this world in which by God's providence we were born. It is good to be in the arena of the affairs of life, to have its responsibilities and its honors if they come to us in God's order.

It must have been hard for Isaiah to say to his friend, "Thou must die," when the kingdom needed his leadership and before his powers had begun to wane with advancing years. It was hard for Hezekiah to hear the message. When he was in straits through Sennacherib's message he spread the letter before the Lord; and now he turned to the same source of help, and again proved that God heard and answered prayer. A remedy was found that cured his illness. God works his will by human means or without, as pleases him.

I heard Isaiah's message. "Set thine house in order," in the sick room of one beloved of the Lord. I also heard this prayer: "O Lord, we beseech thee, if there is anything in all the realm of medical healing which has not yet been suggested to the minds of the physicians for our brother, reveal it to them, we pray!" A few hours later a new remedy was thought of, and the result was the beginning of recovery which added twenty years to an honored and useful life. Always the recovery was reverently recognized as God's healing through human means in answer to prayer.

The incident of our lesson confirms our belief that life and death are absolutely in the hands of God. The coming of a soul into life here and its passing hence to eternity are events of too solemn portent to be left to the chance of circumstance. "I kill and make alive; I wound, and I heal." "Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hades and of death."

If our Lord has the keys, we may infer that the door opens only when he chooses. I would not affirm what I do not know, but with the reverence becoming us when we speak of God's mysteries I may say I believe we neither shorten nor prolong life except as the Life-giver chooses. We may ruin health by breaking his laws, but we do not die until the time chosen by his providence comes.

The thousands slain by accident, pestilence, and war are not hurried out of the world unseen and uncared for by the Father of spirits. Immortal beings are precious to him. The eternal destiny of each soul is too momentous to be left to the accident of a bullet or the triumph of a microbe over the physician's skill.

But life's secrets belong to our God. There are blessed things which are revealed which we may speak of without question. Life and immortality are brought to light in Jesus. Hezekiah seemed to see only the grave; Paul saw no grave, but only life forever with the Lord. Hezekiah said: "In the cutting off of my days I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years." Paul says: "O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

"Why be afraid of death as though your life were breath?  
Death but anoints your eyes with clay, O glad surprise!  
This is the death of Death, to breathe away a breath  
And know the end of strife, and taste the deathless life,  
And joy without a fear and smile without a tear,  
And work, nor care to rest, and find the last is best."

## The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. The depths of our misery can never fall below the depths of mercy.—*Sibbes*.

2. Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys. They sweep along the infinite scale of man's wants and of God's goodness.—*Hugh Miller*.

## 3. Verse 1.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour :—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
—*Gray*.

4. Sophocles, the most renowned of the Grecian poets, almost equally distinguished as dramatist, statesman, and philosopher, closed a career of eighty years, which the world has called brilliant, five centuries before the birth of our Saviour. But, unenlightened by Christianity, there was no happy paradise of God opening before him. As he sank into the rayless grave he left behind him the following pathetic testimony :

"Man's happiest lot is not to be ;  
And when we tread life's thorny steep,  
Most blest are they who, earliest free,  
Descend to death's eternal sleep."  
—*J. S. C. Abbott*.

5. One may live as a conqueror, or a king, or a magistrate, but he must die a man. The bed of death brings every human being to his pure individuality, to the intense contemplation of that deepest and most solemn of all relations, the relation between the creature and his Creator.—*Webster*.

6. Verses 2, 3. There are not many who finish their lives before they die. Very few go willingly ; most are forced, and not a few are dragged to the grave. Instead of leaving the world, they are hunted out of it.—*Gotthold*.

## 7.

More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy  
voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats,  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not those hands of  
prayer,  
Both for themselves and those who call them  
friends?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
—*Tennyson*.

## 8. Verse 5.

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,  
Passed o'er our village as the morning broke ;  
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath  
The smother houses hearsed with plumes of  
smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,  
Alike their features and their robes of white  
But one was clothed with amaranth, as with  
flame,  
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,  
Descending, at my door began to knock,  
And my soul sank within me, as in wells  
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognized the nameless agony,  
The terror and the tremor and the pain,  
That oft before had filled or haunted me,  
And now returned with threefold strength  
again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,  
And listened, for I thought I heard God's  
voice ;  
And, knowing whatso'er he sent was best,  
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile that filled the house with  
light,  
"My errand is not Death, but Life," he said ;  
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,  
On his celestial embassy he sped.

All is of God ! If he but wave his hand,  
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and  
loud,  
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
Lo ! he looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his ;  
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er ;  
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,  
Against his messengers to shut the door ?  
—*Longfellow*.

## Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. An unusually helpful manual of reference in connection with the lessons now under consideration is William Day Crockett's volume, issued by the Book Concern in 1897, *A Harmony of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles*. Side by side in this work we find

various versions of the same incident, each one affording some phase of the case which the other does not. For example, in order to have a complete view of the incident to be studied here we must also read 2 Chron. 32. 24-26, and 2 Kings 20. 1-11. The student of the Word

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who has learned that in many cases Scripture illustrates Scripture, who knows how to seek out the parallel passages and to discern the difference between them, and the underlying unity which blends them together harmoniously, has mastered one of the most helpful of all methods of exploring the contents of the Book.

2. More than four hundred years ago among the religious dramas then in vogue was one which has been revived in our time, and has produced everywhere a deep impression by its message. It is called *Every Man*, and its plot centers about the appearance of Death, in his own personality, to summon mortals to their final hour. The point of the play hinges on the fact that no man is ready for the message; each one has something else to do first; and by one excuse or pretext after another each person summoned endeavors to postpone the call and escape from the summons. Thus the teaching of the old play, and the anguish of Hezekiah in view of death, combine to suggest the same truth.

3. That great English scholar, preacher, and poet, Richard Chevenix Trench, formerly Archbishop of Dublin, wrote many years ago a poem which stands alone, we judge, in English literature, in its pertinency to the theme before us. It is called *The Day of Death*, and can be found in full in Schaff and Gilman's *Library of Religious Poetry*. We cite the opening and closing lines:

"Thou inevitable day,  
When a voice to me shall say,  
"Thou must rise, and come away;  
All thine other journeys past,  
Gird thee, and make ready fast  
For thy longest and thy last,  
Day deep-hidden from our sight  
In impenetrable night,  
Who may guess of thee aright?  
Art thou distant, art thou near?  
Wilt thou seem more dark or clear?  
Day with more of hope or fear?  
Wilt thou come, unseen before  
Thou art standing at the door,  
Saying, 'Light and life are o'er'?"

"Little skills it where or how,  
If thou comest then or now,  
With a smooth or angry brow:—  
Come thou must, and we must die;  
Jesus, Saviour, stand Thou by,  
When that last sleep seals our eye!"

4. "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die," is a message to be heeded by every one of us. Who knows at night whether the morning will find him in this world or in the next? Wise are they who before they sleep, night after night, calmly look death in the face, and, in view of his possible assault and approach during the darkness, are able to say, as the little child everywhere is taught to say:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.  
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

And, in the daytime and at our work, we have good reason to recall and ponder the words of the Preacher (Ecl. 9, 10), " whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor devise, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." And may we not also profitably call to mind the words of the Master, "The night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9, 4)?

5. The example of Hezekiah in carrying his burden of anxiety and grief to the Lord in prayer is justified in many places in the Scriptures. The book of Psalms abounds with encouragements and examples in this respect: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (50, 15); "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation" (91, 15, 16). The apostolic injunction is also pertinent here, James 5, 13—which reads, when the ordinary and the Revised Versions are put together, "Is any among you afflicted, or suffering? Let him pray."

### The School of Practice

1. Hezekiah in his sickness was distressed because, through ignorance of the life beyond, he stood in fear of death. This week, if I find the opportunity, I will try to cheer some one by a note or a visit, who is sick or has been bereaved, with the things that Christ has made known which have robbed sickness and death of their dread.

2. Seeing how little Hezekiah knew of the future life, I will this week study the New Testament that I may see what new knowledge Jesus has given us concerning it.

### The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

#### General Preparatory Work

I. *Lesson Material*. Isa. 38, 1-22, especially the printed verses, 1-8.

II. *Parallel Passages*. 2 Kings 20, 1-11; 2 Chron. 32, 24-26.

III. *The Lesson Passage Naturally Divides* between verses 3 and 4, giving us, 1. The Prayer; 2. The An-

swer. A closer division is, 1. The Sickness, verse 1; 2. The Prayer, verses 2, 3; 3. The Promise, verses 4-6; 4. The Sign, verses 7, 8.

IV. *Comparative Study of the Lesson Text.* The parallel passage in 2 Kings is nearly a transcription of this. Verse 1: compare 2 Sam. 17. 23. Verse 3: compare Neh. 13. 14, 22, 31; 2 Kings 18. 5, 6; Psa. 26. 3; 1 Chron. 28. 9; 29. 19; Deut. 6. 18. Verse 5: trace the fifteen years in 2 Kings 18. 2, 13. Verses 7, 8: instead of "the shadow of the degrees" read "the shadow on the steps"; instead of "in the sundial of Ahaz ten degrees backward," read "on the dial of Ahaz with the sun to return backward ten steps"; and note similar changes in the last clause of the verse. Study carefully Hezekiah's psalm of gratitude, verses 9-20, and the means of the cure, verses 21, 22.

#### The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly.]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher, see paragraph on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

Illustrative Material: The sundial pictured in any good Bible Dictionary is probably very unlike the sundial of Ahaz, but it will at least make plain to pupils the purpose of a sundial. The picture of the prophet and the sick king will help in teaching. It will be helpful to have the boys and girls memorize "If We Had But a Day," page 60.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. *The Sick Man and His Prayer.* Sickness, always painful and sad, is often God's way of taking good people to their home in heaven. Hezekiah was so sick that everyone was sure he would die. Isaiah, the prophet who had been to God about it, came back without any encouragement that the king could live. Isaiah said, "Set thine house in order;" that means, "Make your will." But really it seemed that Hezekiah could not be spared; the people needed him greatly. So he told God all about it. He could not go into another room, and shut the door to be alone with God, for he was too ill to rise. So he turned his face toward the wall and prayed. I am glad they wrote down his prayer. Some of the most beautiful prayers do not ask for anything. They simply spread our needs before God, and wait for him to do whatever is best. That was the way with Hezekiah's prayer. He just asked God to remember how hard he had tried to do right. It was no shame to him that he wept. He prayed so earnestly that the tears could not be kept back.

2. *God Sent His Answer to Hezekiah* by Isaiah the prophet, of whom Hezekiah was fond. Why did he call himself the God of David? God had heard the king's prayer; he hears every prayer that is offered. He had seen the king's tears; he sympathizes with everyone who is sad. He promised that Hezekiah should live fifteen years longer; and lest anyone should be afraid of fifteen years of hard fighting, he promised to keep the king of Assyria out of Jeru-

salem. And God really did much more than he promised. He always does.

We need no sign that God will keep his promises. But Hezekiah lived before our Saviour came to earth, and he could not know so much about God as we know. So God gave him a sign. We cannot understand how a shadow could go backward, but God, who made both sun and shadow, did it. Hezekiah soon became well; he was greatly honored and became rich. *Home Work for Pupils.*

Review Work: How many years did the Lord add to Hezekiah's life? From whom did God defend Hezekiah? What is the Golden Text for Lesson II? Let the pupils come to Sunday school next Sunday prepared to answer these three questions.

#### The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Illustrated Quarterly, the Intermediate Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK above.

Illustrative Material: The so-called Pool of Hezekiah in Jerusalem is beautifully pictured in the Illustrative Lesson Notes, page 221; note also pictorial illustrations in Illustrated Quarterly.

#### Constructing the Lesson.

1. The Distressed King, verses 1-3. God's servants are not exempted from the troubles of life and death. 2. God always comforts his servants; not always by bringing about what they desire, but always by satisfying their souls.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

Develop the Outline descriptively, enlisting the class in an endeavor to make a word-picture of the entire scene. From this event, among other lessons, we should learn that—

1. Life is *valuable*. It is God's good gift; ingratitude to esteem it lightly; sin to throw it away.

2. Life is a *talent*. Hezekiah's life was used for the glory of God and the good of his kingdom. It was a noble title God gave him, "Captain of my people"; a nobler title is within reach of us, "Servant of all" (Mark 10. 44).

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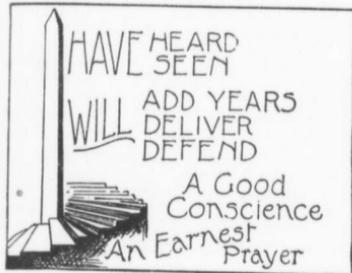
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3. And yet this life is *not the best thing*. Christians know of a better. To the Christian "it is not death to die." Our Saviour has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1. 10).

4. A promise pleaded by faith will always be honored.



Show that sometimes God answers our prayer and gives us what is best for us in a way we desire not, but always in love. "In some way or other the Lord will provide." Ask each pupil to print on his pad, for use on Revision Sunday,

THE LORD WILL HELP US IN TROUBLE.

#### The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

All who believe in the inspiration of Holy

Scripture, and its providential preservation, must be impressed by God's estimate of the importance of the event we study to-day, for it is three times mentioned in Scripture, and is told in detail twice. It was a pivot on which the history of the chosen nation turned. It was an evidence of the Godhead of Jehovah at a time when such evidence was much needed. It furnishes modern Christians several very important lessons. (Compare notes for the Intermediate Grade.)

How much Hezekiah knew of a future life we are not told, but it was the pressure of the nation's need that made him cling to his own life so closely. Special promises of long life conditioned on obedience were constantly made to the Hebrews (compare Deut. 4. 40; 6. 2; 11. 9, 21; Psa. 91. 16; Prov. 3. 2; 4. 10; 9. 10, 11; 10. 27), so that Hezekiah's prayer was really a pleading that he had fulfilled the conditions to which the blessings of a long life had been attached. "Those days" seem to have been days of perplexity and trouble, and Hezekiah felt himself unusually needed on earth.

The difficulty that may arise in some minds because of the prophet's warning that he should die and not live, and the favorable answer to his prayer, is similar to the difficulty in the case of the Syrophenician woman who persisted in her request in spite of the apparent rebuke which she received from the Lord Jesus, because there was that within which encouraged her to hope.

The story of the sign presents no difficulties except to those who refuse to believe that God has ever worked miracles.

#### The Responsive Review

1. What did the Lord say by Isaiah to Hezekiah when he was sick? "Thou shalt die." 2. When Hezekiah had prayed and went what did the Lord then say? "I will heal thee." 3. What sign was Hezekiah given that the Lord would heal him? The going back of the shadow. 4. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? "God is our refuge," etc.

#### The Church Catechism.

45. What are the more particular duties unfolded in the New Testament? The more particular duties unfolded in the New Testament are our duties to ourselves, to our family, to the Church of Christ, to the state and to society at large.

Ephesians vi. 4-6.

### LESSON III. The Suffering Saviour

[July 16

GOLDEN TEXT. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isa. 53. 6.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Read Isa. 42. 1-12; 49. 1-13; 50. 4-11; 61. 1-3] Isa. 52. 13 to 53. 12 [Commit to memory verses 4-6]

13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that

#### REVISED VERSION\*

13. Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14 Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men), 15 so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not

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which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

### Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

M. The Suffering Saviour. Isa. 52, 13 to 53,

12.

Tu. Acquainted with grief. Heb. 4, 15 to 5, 9.

W. For the unjust. 1 Pet. 3, 12-18.

been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand.

1 Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him, 3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Th. A prophecy of Christ. Acts 8, 26-35.

F. The silent Sufferer. Mark 14, 55-65.

S. The rich man's tomb. Matt. 27, 54-69.

S. The victory. Heb. 10, 1-13.

**Time.**—Just before R. C. 705. Place.—Jerusalem, the residence of the prophet Isaiah.

### The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 68.

"Man of Sorrows," who at a name  
For the Son of God who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim!

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 158.

Je-us, and shall it ever be,  
A mortal man ashamed of thee!  
Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 91.

Whoever receiveth the Crucified One,

Whoever believeth on God's only son,

A free and a perfect salvation shall have:

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### Questions for Senior Scholars

1. *The Saviour* (v. 13-15).—How has his wisdom affected the world? In what sense has he "sprinkled the nations"? How do we know this prophecy relates to Christ?

2. *The Saviour Rejected* (v. 1-3).—Why is he called a tender plant? How was Christ a root "out of the dry ground"? Why was he despised? What circumstances conspired to make Jesus of Nazareth unattractive to the average Jew? On whose account did the Jews who drove him to death believe that he suffered? From what class of diseased persons did the Hebrews customarily hide their faces?

3. *The Saviour Dying* (v. 4-9).—What is the description of the character of Jesus? How was he literally wounded, bruised, and chastised? For whom did he suffer? Why was this

necessary? How are sinners compared to stray sheep? Who bears our iniquities? Refer to an instance in the New Testament where Jesus, when afflicted, opened not his mouth. What literal fulfillment was there of verses 8 and 9? How were our Lord's sufferings borne?

4. *The Saviour Interceding* (v. 10-12).—Who are meant by the "seed" or offspring of Jesus? In what sense did he prolong his days? Whose name is honored above every name? In what sense was Jesus numbered with the transgressors? How is his purity described? Who permitted his death? What was the nature of his sacrifice? How are men justified before God? What is Christ's office in heaven respecting men? What New Testament text shows us that he now intercedes for us?

### Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *Sufferings and Triumph* (v. 13-15).—Whose message was Isaiah giving to his people? Who is meant by "my servant"? What would lead many to be astonished at the Saviour? To whom would the blessings of his work of redemption come? How does the prophet say kings would show their reverence for Christ?

2. *Who Hath Believed our Report?* (v. 1-12.)—To whom has the arm or power of the Lord

been shown? What kind of an appearance should the Messiah make before the world? Who despised and rejected Jesus? Who needed most this lesson of the suffering Saviour? Did the Jews understand this message of their great prophet? Can anyone truthfully say that he does not need a Saviour? How did Jesus treat his enemies? For whose transgression was Jesus crucified?

### Questions for Younger Scholars

When did Isaiah live? What visions did he have? Who gave them to him? Could he understand them? Why can we understand them? *Because Jesus has come into the world.* What kind of a picture does the prophet make? Can

you see love? How do you know where it is? How did God show his love for us? *Through Christ.* To whom does Jesus make himself known? What may we ask him to do within us? What does he want us to be?

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### The Lesson Analysis

I. *The Saviour* (verses 13-15).

(a) The Messiah (Isa. 42, 1); (b) increases in favor with God and man; (c) becomes wise and eminent; yet (d) to popular gaze is marred and disfigured. He is (e) a blessing to Gentiles

as well as to Hebrews; and becomes (f) a source of conflicting estimates and universal wonder.

II. *The Saviour Rejected* (verses 1-3).

(a) Prophecies of the Messiah familiar to the

people are unrecognized and unheeded when he comes. (b) His character is out of harmony with his surroundings, and (c) out of harmony with the world's ideals. He is (d) despised and rejected by those who at first applauded him, and (e) his early exaltation is turned into sorrow and grief. (f) Even *we* hid our faces from him.

### III. *The Saviour Dying* (verses 4-9).

(a) The grief and sorrow which the Messiah bore were really ours, not his own; (b) we thought he was punished of God for his own sins, while really (c) he suffered and died for our salvation, (d) for we all need a Saviour. (e) He did not resist the injustice of his treatment. (f) The chastisement by Herod, the

stripes inflicted by Pilate, the silence before Caiaphas, the irregular trials, the death between two recognized criminals, the burial with the rich—all these are foreseen and described by the prophet.

### IV. *The Saviour Interceding* (verses 10-12).

The Messiah's death, (a) an offering for sin, (b) is to be followed by the prolongation of his days (a hint of the resurrection?), (c) for the purpose of making perpetual atonement between God and man. (d) Bitter as his agony was, he derived holy satisfaction from his own self-sacrifice. (e) He not only bore the sins of the world, but makes intercession for the sinful in all lands, in all ages. (f) He is to be honored by the sons of men.

## The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH.—Our lesson passage for to-day is the last and greatest of four so-called "Servant passages" (comp. 42, 4, ff.; 49, 1-6; 50, 4-9). The reference to the Servant of Jehovah in these passages, and more especially the reference to the suffering servant in our lesson for to-day, has always been regarded by the Christian church as a direct conscious prophecy of the Christ. Against this prevalent view some have argued, explaining the Servant as a *collective* idea representing either the nation of Israel or some smaller community within the nation, as for example, the prophetic order, the faithful remnant, or the ideal Israel. Since in many portions of this same prophecy Israel is referred to as the Servant, it is argued that consistency of interpretation requires that the term "servant" shall in every case be taken to have the same meaning. Others think that the conception in the prophet's mind becomes more and more clear and definite as the prophecy advances from one stage to the next, beginning with the thought of the Servant nation, advancing to the conception of the ideal personal representative of that nation, and culminating in a clear and conscious conception of a personal Messiah. Possibly the latter view may not be far from representing the actual facts. We know that the prevalent view of the Christian church regarding this last and greatest of the Servant passages is indorsed in the New Testament (comp. Acts 8, 26-35), and cannot therefore have been incorrect. And certain it is that all Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament reaches its culmination in this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Written centuries before the advent of the Messiah whom it as certainly portrays, yet reading in every line as if written under the very shadow of Calvary, it must ever stand as the most wonderful instance of divinely inspired prophecy of a personal Messiah who was to be the Saviour of sinful men.

**Verse 13. Shall deal wisely**—Literally, *shall prosper*. His career shall be crowned with complete success.

**Exalted . . . lifted up . . . very high**—The coming exaltation of the Servant in contrast to his past abasement is set forth in this and the two succeeding verses (13-15), which verses are introductory in character, briefly stating the import of the entire passage.

**14, 15.** These verses are to be taken as a single compound sentence, as the punctuation of the Revision shows.

**As many were astonished**—Amazed and horrified at the spectacle of unparalleled suffering. The parenthetical clause which follows explains more in detail the repugnance felt by those who beheld the Servant in his former abject condition.

**Sprinkle**—The verb rendered "to sprinkle" means literally "to scatter (a liquid) in small drops," as in ceremonial act of cleansing (comp.

Lev. 4, 6). Thus shall the Servant, once shunned as unclean, make **clean many nations**.

**1.** Verses 1-9 of chapter 53 present a view of the Messiah's career as he appeared to his contemporaries at the time of his great humiliation—that is, the period of his life among men.

**Our message**—Literally, *that which we have heard*. The things now spoken by the prophet, who, as one among his people, speaks of himself as receiving with them this message or report. A negative answer seems to be implied by the question. Too strange and wonderful to be believed has been the message concerning the humiliation and subsequent glory of the Messiah. It is not believed because to none has **the arm of Jehovah** (his power) **been revealed**.

**2. He grew**—The Servant, the Messiah.

**Before him**—Jehovah.

**As a tender plant**—"I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman" (John 15, 1).

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In obedience to the Father's will the Word became flesh, at first a helpless child attaining gradually unto strength and manhood.

**As a root out of dry ground**—A precious plant in unpropitious soil and surroundings.

**3. He was despised**—Note the past tense used throughout by the prophet, who sees all this suffering and humiliation of the Christ as already accomplished.

**Rejected**—Better, *forsaken*.

**Grief**—Literally, *sickness*.

**As one from whom men hide their face**

—Or, "he hid as it were his face from us." The reading of the Revision in this case seems to give the better sense.

**Esteemed him not**—Literally, *held him of no account*.

**5. The chastisement of our peace**—The pain inflicted for moral ends with remedial intent and needful to procure for us peace and pardon (comp. Prov. 3, 11, f.): "My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah: . . . for whom Jehovah loveth he reproveth."

**6. Every one to his own way**—Following individual selfish impulses and interests.

**7. Opened not his mouth**—Did not murmur nor complain.

**8. By oppression and judgment he was taken away**—The Hebrew of this clause is a little ambiguous—probably the sense is that oppression and judicial procedure brought about his death. The rendering of this entire verse

in the Revision gives the probable sense of the original and is a great improvement over the rendering of the Authorized Version.

**9. They made his grave**—The sense is that of the passive construction. "His grave was made," the pronoun "they" being indefinite.

**Wicked . . . rich man**—Apparently associated in thought since the rich are frequently arraigned by the Old Testament prophets as especially guilty of **violence and deceit**, neither of which were found in his mouth.

**10. When thou**—Jehovah.

**He shall see his seed**—In the giving of his life many shall be brought to life.

**11. By the knowledge of himself**—Apparently referring to the prophetic activity of Christ in which he taught men concerning himself and his mission.

**12. Therefore**—Because of all that he has suffered and done.

**Will I**—Jehovah, in whose name the prophet is speaking.

**Divide him a portion with the great**—Exaltation, power, and glory shall follow his suffering and humiliation. Out of tribulation, suffering, and combat the Messiah is to come forth victorious. The purpose of his life of humiliation among men is to be gloriously accomplished, for since **he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors**, many who were transgressors through him shall be saved.

## The Lesson Exposition

### "MY SERVANT"

It would be impossible under the limitations of an ordinary lesson in the Sunday school to discuss the questions raised by the word "servant" in the first verse of this lesson; and for the great majority of those who study the lesson it would be unprofitable even if it were possible. For those who, at their leisure and privately, wish to give the matter more particular attention the following references will give the "servant" passages in the book of Isa. 41, 8 and following: 42, 1-7; 48-55; 44, 1, 21; 48, 20; 49, 1-9; 50, 4-11; 52, 13 to 53, 12. The question which every reader is certain to ask in reading this lesson is the one which the Ethiopian eunuch asked of the evangelist Philip. Philip came to him as he was reading from this same fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in which such wonderful statements are made concerning "the Servant," and he said to Philip, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Philip did not hesitate a moment, but "opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8, 27-35). Putting everything else aside, therefore, we are to start at the point where Philip started, and assume that this les-

son, and the other similar passages in Isaiah, are prophecies concerning Christ.

### JESUS AS A SERVANT

The primary characteristic of a servant is that he is one who does the will and work of another. In this sense Jesus always recognized himself as the servant of God. He was a servant in that he was sent into the world by his Father, and that he came into the world to fulfill his Father's will and do his work. "My intent is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4, 34). See also John 5, 30; 6, 38. And when Jesus came to the close of his life he was conscious not simply that his life was shortly to terminate, but that it was complete, for he could say to his Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17, 4). Then, too, Jesus always maintained toward humanity the spirit that he was in any sense subject to the will of men, but that he came to bring help and minister good to men. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20, 28). When Jesus proclaimed himself to those among

whom he had grown up in Nazareth he chose a great passage from Isaiah in which his office of servant to men was set forth (Luke 4. 16-19; Isa. 61. 1-3). And the New Testament writers make frequent references to Jesus as the Servant of God. It is to be noted that in such passages as Acts 3. 13, 26; 4. 27, 30, the Revised Version uses "Servant" instead of "Son," though being the Servant of God did not imply that Jesus was not also in the highest sense the Son of God; but merely that he was in the world in the office and on the mission of a servant. A man's son may represent him as a servant; and so God's Son was commissioned and sent forth as the divine Servant.

#### SERVICE THROUGH SUFFERING

The lesson particularly presents Jesus as serving humanity through suffering. As the title of the lesson puts it, he is "The Suffering Saviour," that is, the one through whose sufferings came salvation to men. All through the lesson runs the sob of suffering. The prophet describes the great Sufferer with amazed awe and pity. He was marred in countenance, he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, familiar with grief, stricken, afflicted, wounded, bruised, chastised, beaten with stripes, oppressed, imprisoned, brought to judgment, delivered as a lamb to the slaughter. How the prophet broods broken-heartedly over the various aspects of the Saviour's sufferings! And in this meditation upon the suffering Saviour there were three things which came in upon the prophet's mind:

1. Shame and humiliation and penitence on account of men's blindness and failure to understand the sufferings of the Saviour. He was not understood; his marred visage was regarded with abhorrence; men saw in him no beauty to be desired; they thought his sufferings were afflictions from God for his sins; they hid their faces from him. This dull misunderstanding of the great Sufferer humbled and filled the prophet's heart with shame. They looked upon a great drama and understood it not. And we know how the vision of the prophet was fulfilled in Christ. Through his whole life of deep humiliation and suffering men did not understand the meaning of what he did. At the very last, when they were nailing him to the cross, he prayed for them on account of their ignorance: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

2. The second thing which the prophet saw was the substitutional and saving nature and effects of the Saviour's sufferings. So far from his sufferings being a punishment for his own sins, they were altogether for the sins of men. "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" but instead, now we see that "he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Not he, but men, had sinned; not his guilt, but the guilt of the world, was being expiated. And so the prophet tells it with tears and inex-

pressible gratitude, turning over and over the thought of Christ's substitution and expiation and atonement. But the great thing was that the Saviour took the place of men. He was our grief-bearer, our sorrow-carrier, our peace was secured through his wounds and bruises and chastisements. This great discovery of the meaning of the Saviour's sufferings is made more wonderful as placed in contrast with the blind misunderstanding that preceded it. The world thought of Christ as a transgressor and treated him with contempt; while in fact he was doing for the world what no one else had ever done or could do.

3. But the third thing which came in upon the prophet as he meditated upon the suffering Saviour was the vision of his ultimate and glorious triumph. Christ's sufferings, which first seemed to be only the results of his own sins, and then were seen to be for the salvation of men, were next seen to be the means for bringing at last the greatest glory to the Saviour himself: "He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. . . . Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." And his exaltation is because of his humiliation and sacrificial and substitutional sufferings: "Because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." We are reminded of Paul's words in his letter to the Philippians (2. 5-11), in which the same relation between Christ's sufferings and his glory is pointed out.

#### THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

The purpose of Christ's sufferings for us will in very large measure be defeated unless they inspire us according to our measure to suffer as he did also. We must not forget the words with which the passage referred to above from Paul's letter to the Philippians opens: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ for us." The sufferings of Jesus were certainly for us, and secure for us the remission of our sins. But they are also an example for us, representing the spirit of the new life in Christ Jesus which we are to live. Jesus was in the world as a servant; so must we be servants. Jesus bore our burdens; so we must bear one another's burdens. Jesus being innocent suffered on account of the guilt of others; so must we suffer for the sins of our fellow men. Jesus laid down his life for us; so must we lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3. 16). We may not make an atonement for sin in the same sense in which Jesus made an atonement, for he was sinless and we are sinful; and yet through our self-sacrifices for men, or sufferings in love, we may show forth the spirit of Jesus and win men

July 16] to forsake himself and exalted with him.

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to forsake their sins. Because Jesus humbled himself and suffered on the cross, God also highly exalted him; and so, "if so be that we suffer with him, we may be also glorified together"

(Rom. 8. 17). We must enter into "the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3. 10). And this we can do only by suffering and sacrificing for others as he did.

### THE LESSON PRAYER

O Lord, we fear lest we shall read the words of this lesson as if they related to things far off, and that so our hearts shall be unmoved. Bring nigh unto us this vision of the suffering Saviour, until we shall look into the face that was marred more than any man, and until we are made to feel through what ranges of suffering thy love has come to us for our rescue and healing. Cause the vision of the life of Jesus to pass before us, from the humiliation of his manger-birth to the agony of his death on the cross, and bring home to us with searching and humbling power the fact that all of his self-abasement and pain and death was for the cure of our sin. And give us to see that Christ's suffering love for us is the supreme rebuke of that selfishness in us that is unwilling to suffer for others. Amen.

### The Lesson Coin Thoughts

#### I

Christ is the "suffering Saviour" because he is the sympathetic Saviour.

The *cause* of the Saviour's suffering was not in the Saviour.

The larger the life the larger its capacity for suffering.

The smallest souls never know the greatest sorrows.

All the anguish and agonies of men came to high tide in the sorrows of Jesus.

#### II

No child can comprehend the sorrows of its father.

There is always a high intellectual element in deep suffering.

Only the highest type of spiritual intellectuality is capable of superlative sorrow.

Herein is where the sorrow of Christ passes the comprehension of men.

Only an infinite soul is capable of infinite suffering.

#### III

Christ shall "sprinkle the nations"; in that saying I see the day-dawn gleams of earth's redemption morn.

Christ shall "sprinkle the nations" with the spirit of national brotherhood.

Christ shall "sprinkle the nations"; in that spirit of universal peace.

Christ shall "sprinkle the nations" with the national love of liberty.

Christ shall "sprinkle the nations" with the spirit of mutual kindness and consideration.

This blessed baptism of Christ is slowly descending on the nations now.

#### IV

"Who hath believed our report?" Men have been slow to believe the reports of revelation.

No great truth has been suddenly accepted by the world.

The greatest truths in *art* have found acceptance slowly.

The great truths in *science* have plodded like weary pilgrims across the centuries before the world would give them welcome.

The great truth of human *liberty* had to knock for long at the doors of civilization.

Even Christ, who is "the Truth," came to his own, and his own received him not.

#### V

"He shall grow up." The *greatest* things are *growing things*.

No great truth or institution has come to men full-grown.

He who comes to greatness must come by growth; there is no sudden step to the top of life's ladder.

"The fullness of time" had to come before Christ could come in his fullness.

#### VI

Christ was rejected by those whose dejection he came to cure.

Christ, who came to set at liberty the captive, was himself oppressed.

He who never transgressed was himself  
"stricken for our transgression."

## VII

Love comes to the height of its power just in proportion as it pours itself out in service.

## The Lesson Heart, Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

The prophecy of Isaiah is an oratorio of the Messiah. The music sinks and sobs in minor cadence as he warns the nation of its sin and pleads for repentance and return to God. How it rises in victorious strains as he sings of redemption and deliverance! "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out. There is none to guide her among all her sons; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up. These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?"

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good things, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. Break forth into joy, sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem, for God hath comforted his people, he hath ransomed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." It is the sighing and sobbing of captive Judah, the singing and shouting of exiles returned to their kingdom. It is the sighing and sobbing of a lost world, far from God; and the singing of a ransomed world redeemed and restored to the favor of God and the glory of his kingdom. The redemption is priceless; its cost is humiliation, suffering, death. It is complete and forever, "for the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee nor the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord."

Five hundred and fifty years after the prophet's soul, swept by the Spirit of God, poured forth this sublime music, its true Interpreter said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might have everlasting life." The final strain is yet to be sung. Saint John heard coming ages marching to its music: "And they sung

He who follows duty, even in the darkest day, never follows a forlorn hope.

The darkness of Calvary lay between Christ and the day of his conquest.

Every vestige of truth is a part of the power that will issue in triumph at last.

a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." Universal redemption by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; universal praise to the atoning Saviour wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, upon whom was the chastisement of our peace, by whose stripes we are healed.

Travail of soul—satisfaction. One must pay high price for a thing of value. Here is One whose glory is what the world calls shame. "The marred visage has made him King." I must know the fellowship of his sufferings if I would share the glory of his crown. I must see the awfulness of sin and suffer travail of soul to save men from it. I may not sit at ease while one I love is under its power, nor yet while one whom God loves has not heard of the world's Saviour. "I stood one day upon an eminence of the great city and looked down. I looked upon its sins and sorrows. I saw the squalor beneath the glory, the rags beneath the costly raiment. I beheld the struggle for survival, the weariness of life, the recklessness that breeds crime; and as I beheld, I wept. And then I knew that I was bearing *thy* cross. That I knew that I was lifting that old, old burden of thine—the burden of Jerusalem that made thee weep. I used to sing only, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus'; it is for me no longer an adequate song. I cannot sleep if thou art suffering in the Garden. Rather would I have my arms round thee in the fellowship of pain. The fellowship with my pain brings rest to the labor of my heart; but my glory will be when I enter into *thy* labor."

## The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. "I will be wise,  
And just and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power; for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize  
Without reproach or check."—*Shelley*.

2. Verse 15. There are negroes in Central Africa who never dreamed that they were black until they saw the face of a white man; and there are people who never knew they were

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

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ful until they saw the face of Jesus Christ in all its whiteness and purity.—*A. F. Gordon.*

**3. Verse 4.** Phocion, an Athenian captain, being condemned to death, and seeing one Enippur condemned to the same death, but very fearful, he comforts him with these words: "Is it not enough to thee that thou art to die with Phocion?" Should it not comfort us, in suffering, that we die with Christ?—*S. Coley.*

**4.** The most delicate and sensitive being trained from infancy in a home of purity and love, sheltered from the very breath of pollution, and then forced to live in some haunt of iniquity, and among the shameless and abandoned victims of profligacy, would not undergo the transition with such shrinking abhorrence as did Jesus that transition which he voluntarily underwent for us. An angel from the throne of God submitting to dwell amid blasphemies and wailings of hell would not exhibit a spectacle of voluntary humiliation such as His who stooped from infinitude to such a world as this.—*Dr. Caird.*

**5. Verse 5.** Two friends are said to come into Vulcan's shop, and to beg a boon of him: it was granted. What was it? that he should either beat them on his anvil, or melt them in his furnace, both into one. But without fiction here is a far greater love in Christ; for he would be melted in the furnace of wrath, and beaten on the anvil of death, to be made one with us. And to declare the exceeding love, here were not both to be beaten on the anvil, or melted in the furnace; but without us, he alone would be beaten on the anvil, he alone melted, that we might be spared.—*Thomas Adams.*

**6.** Alexander the Great was dying of a wound which did not seem very dangerous at first; but it baffled his physicians, and was rapidly becoming mortal. One night, however, it is said he dreamed that some one had brought him a peculiar-looking plant, which, when applied to the festering sore, had cleansed and closed it. In the morning, when he awoke, he described the plant; and the historian informs us that it was sought for and found, and, when applied to

the wound, the fiery pain subsided, and he was speedily healed. Now, your soul has received a deadly hurt: it has been stung by the old serpent, the devil. The wound gets worse. There is a tender plant which is able to heal you: it is the Balm of Gilead. They used to wound the balsam tree in order to obtain its healing essence; and so for our transgressions the Saviour was wounded, and "by his stripes we are healed."—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

**7. Verses 5, 6.**

"In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopped my wild career.

"I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,  
As near his cross I stood.

"Sure never till my latest breath  
Can I forget that look:  
It seemed to charge me with his death,  
Though not a word he spoke.

"A second look he gave, which said,  
'I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayst live.'

**8. Verse 11.** The good must ever live, and "walk up and down the earth," like a living spirit guided by the living God, to convey blessings to the children of men. It lives in humanity, in some form or other, like the subtle substance of material things, which, though ever changing, never perishes, but adds to the stability, the beauty, and the grandeur of the universe. The influence of the holy character passes also beyond the stars, giving joy to our angel brothers, and to our elder brother Jesus Christ, who in seeing his own love to his God and our God, to his neighbor and ours, reflected in his people, beholds the grand result of the travail of his soul, and is "satisfied."—*Dr. Macleod.*

**Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations**

**1.** This passage abounds in paradoxes, antitheses, and difficult phrases, hard to decipher in the original, and hard to construe when they are once translated. It is only when we apply the various utterances to our Lord, and throw upon them the light which the Gospel history affords, that we obtain satisfactory results. The "servant of Jehovah," mentioned in this section of Isaiah, is sometimes interpreted as meaning the nation of Israel personified. In some passages this may have been the primary reference, but in the largest sense, considering the entire scope of the passages indicated, the allusion throughout is clearly to the Redeemer.

**2.** Humiliation and exaltation alternate in this ancient portraiture of our Lord. Glance for a moment at the first-mentioned phrase. He appears here as a "servant"; and Paul in the early part of Philippians, second chapter, tells us that "He made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." His visage, marred with privation and suffering; his form maimed and broken on the cross; his arraignment, his association with transgressors in his death—all this is pictured

here in advance by Isaiah with a force of language, and with a depth of feeling, and with a significant and picturesque representation which make the passage unique in literature.

3. These representations of the low estate of sorrow and suffering into which the Saviour entered, during and at the close of his earthly ministry, are emphasized by other passages of Scripture. Let anyone place side by side the following portions of Scripture, Psa. 22, Isa. 53, Matt. 27. 35-50, Mark 15. 24-37, Luke 23. 33-46, and John 19. 19-37, if he would be impressed with the extraordinary harmony that exists between the words of the prophet and psalmist written hundreds of years before the event, and the utterances of the four evangelists written after the event had taken place. Is it possible to evade, candidly and reasonably, the due impression which this comparison almost inevitably makes upon the inquiring mind?

4. Sacred poetry and hymnology are full of apt, pathetic, and vivid passages based on the scenes to which this lesson attracts our vision. We can cite but one, by some unnamed author:

"O, come, my soul, and gaze  
On that great grief, that crown of thorn;  
In deep and dread amazement  
There look and mourn.

"For thee He shed his blood;  
Weep till with woe thine eyes grow dim;  
To that accursed wood  
Thou hast nailed him.

"To thee, the mighty Lord,  
Who washed in blood our sins away,  
Our boundless gratitude  
Its thanks would pay."

5. In the study of this lesson, and of the passages which are properly accordant with it, we

have a good opportunity to emphasize the doctrine of the Atonement as central in the gospel. We are living in a time when the tendency is to put the entire stress on the pure character of Jesus of Nazareth, on his greatness as a teacher, and the force of his life as an example and an inspiration. Even in orthodox pulpits the old doctrines of expiation, vicarious suffering, and atonement are often rudely swept aside, as if they had no place in modern theology. This attitude is, it must be avowed, justified when these doctrines are judged by the formulae of mediæval teachers, and when certain former tenets of Calvinian theologians are had in view. But we must learn to distinguish between certain old statements of the atonement—which may now rightly seem to us unreasonable, hard, mechanical, almost mathematical in their attempt to cipher out just so much suffering for just so much redemption—and the biblical teachings on the subject. When Isaiah says, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all"; when the Master says that he came to "give his life a ransom for many"; when Paul declares that in His "blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins"; when the author of Hebrews teaches that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many"; and Peter says that "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust"; and when we find that these are simply types of Scriptural teaching; that these verses taken at random can be matched with many scores of verses, all teaching the same truth—in view of which this who can reasonably or safely deny that atonement, wrought out by suffering and death on the part of the Saviour, is a truth fundamental to the gospel?

### The School of Practice

1. Jesus is presented in this lesson as a servant, and he himself said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22. 27). I am sure that the excellence of the best people consists in this disposition to be the servants of others by doing them every possible good. This week I will try to live the life of a servant, and in small things or great things, as I find opportunity, do what I can for others.

2. This lesson from the Old Testament, as well as the teachings of the New Testament, tells me that Jesus suffered for my sins. But that must mean that he suffered in order that my sins might be forgiven and that I might be induced to quit sinning. That his sufferings for me may not be in vain, I will this week earnestly try to avoid all sin, by refusing to do anything I know to be wrong, and by doing whatever seems to be my duty.

### The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

#### General Preparatory Work

I. *Lesson Material*: Isa. 52. 13 to 53. 12; to be studied in connection with Isa. 42. 1-12; 49. 1-13; 50. 4-11; 61. 1-3.

II. There are no *Parallel Passages*; but the prophetic passages mentioned above are in unison with the entire gospel narrative.

III. *The Lesson Passage Naturally Divides* after verse 3 and after verse 10, giving us, 1. A Prophecy of the

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Rejected Servant of Jehovah, verses 1-3. 2. An Account of His Sufferings, verses 4-10; and 3. A Promise of His Triumph, verses 11, 12.

IV. *Comparative Study of the Lesson Text:* "Jehovah" instead of "the LORD," throughout. Verse 13: Jehovah's "servant" (comp. verse 11) is portrayed in 49. 1-7. For "deal prudently" the Revision Margin substitutes "prosper." Verse 14: compare verse 2. Verse 15: instead of "sprinkle" the Revision Margin suggests "startle," but compare Num. 19. 18-21; Ezek. 36. 25; on shutting the mouth compare Job 21. 5; for "at him," "because of him." The end of this verse is quoted, Rom. 15. 21. Verse 1 is quoted, John 12. 38 "sickness;" for "we hid as it were our faces from him," "as one from whom men hide their face," or (margin) "he hid as it were his face from us"; compare the accounts of our Lord's trial and condemnation, 4. 25; Heb. 9. 28; 1 Cor. 15. 3. The last clause of this verse and the first clause of verse 6 are quoted, 1 Pet. 2. 24, 25. Verse 7: Mark 14. 61; Luke 23. 9; Matt. 27. 12-14. The close of this verse and the beginning of last six verses of the lesson should be carefully noted. Verse 9: instead of "the rich," "a rich man" in the Revision; "although," "because"; the last clause of this verse is quoted in 1 Pet. 2. 22. Verse 10: the Hebrew for "an offering for sin" is literally a "trespass offering"; our Lord quotes verse 12 in Luke 22. 37; compare Phil. 2. 9-11.

### The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

**Illustrative Material:** The garden of Gethsemane, as it now appears, and an unobjectionable picture of the Crucifixion, are shown in any Bible Dictionary. The daily **LITTLE READING** is this week in the truest sense illustrative.

**Getting Ready:** The substitutional character of our Lord's death, which seems to be emphasized in every part of our lesson passage, is beyond the comprehension of pupils in the JUNIOR GRADE, and no attempt should be made to present it philosophically; but the direct statements of verses 4, 5, and 6 should be drilled into their memories with so much of illustration as may be necessary to make plain the practical side of the blessed truth. Boys and girls will take interest in tracing through the life of Jesus fulfillment of the prophecies of this passage. The character of Jesus as here unfolded, his personal affection for us which led him to suffer for our sakes—all this is quite within the range of a child's thinking and feeling. Our Golden Text, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" means (in part): *Hundreds of years before Jesus came God promised that our loving Saviour should suffer for our sakes.* Let us take as our outline: 1. God's Promise; 2. Our Saviour; 3. His Love; 4. His Suffering; 5. For Our Sakes.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. *God's Promise.* Teach the inspiration of

the prophets. Show the literal fulfillment of verses 7, 9, etc. Ready use by the teacher of gospel incidents will make this part of the lesson exceedingly interesting.

2. *Our Saviour: God's Son; the Babe of Bethlehem; the carpenter of Nazareth;* who spoke as never man spake; who went about doing good. Show how verses 2 and 3 especially were fulfilled in his career.

3. *Our Saviour's Love.* A cause behind every act. A boy hits another because he is angry. A man pays a debt because he owes money. People sing because they love music. Everything is done *because*—Recall the life of Jesus and find that the cause of everything he did was his love for others. For love's sake he talked or was silent; for love's sake he went from place to place; for love's sake he cured the diseased and helped the outcast; for love's sake he died.

4. *Our Saviour's Sufferings.* Here again turn to the gospels for illustration. In close detail this lesson passage was fulfilled.

5. *For Our Sakes.* Not merely for the sakes of those who lived in Palestine when Jesus lived. Remember how the Golden Text ends: "US ALL." He knows each of us as well as he knows Mary or John and loves us as tenderly.

### The Intermediate Grade.

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly, the Senior Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

**Illustrative Material:** The best illustrations of this lesson are the facts of gospel history. It cannot be intelligently studied without constant reference to them. If the teacher will select

beforehand five or six (he will hardly have time for more) incidents of our Lord's life which fulfill this prophecy, and without too much reference to Scripture text will recall the facts to the memory of the pupils, an interesting and profitable "lesson hour" will be assured. For pictorial illustration see THE FIELD OF BLOOD, page 229, Illustrative Lesson Notes. See also the Illustrated Quarterly.

Teaching the Lesson.

Arrangement of the Lesson Facts:

1. A Survey of the Lesson Picture. Let the pupil transport himself through time and place to the side of Isaiah, while he talks out the vision God is impressing on his mind. He sees God's Servant (verse 13), a wise and exalted man marked on "visage" and "form" by hard usage (verses 13, 14); he rises high above his own nation; and other nations and kings, in astonished silence, see and understand the revelation the Servant brings (verse 15). He is despised, rejected, sorrow-stricken, carries the griefs and sorrows of others while he is supposed to be under the curse of God, bears the iniquity of us all, and secures our peace by his



stripes (verses 1-6). He is unresistingly led to death by a perversion of justice, and is buried in the grave of a rich man (verses 7-9). The prophet sees in him the world's sin offering (verse 10); and in the end the righteous Servant shall receive world-wide honor because of his self-sacrifice.

2. A Survey of the Lesson Teachings. These cannot be exhausted. The LESSON STATEMENT will suggest many of these. Do not try to cover too much ground. The personal relation of Jesus to our civilized comforts and to our personal salvation should be made plain.

On our lesson cards let us write  
THE LORD HAS PROVIDED FOR US A SAVIOUR.

### The Responsive Review

1. What was foretold concerning the treatment Christ was to receive? "He is despised and rejected of men." 2. What sort of a man was he to be? "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." 3. With what are we healed? "With his stripes we are healed." 4. What did God lay on Christ? "The iniquity of us all." 5. With whom was he numbered? "He was numbered with the transgressors."

### The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

A rapid textual study, based, if possible, on the Revised Version, will serve to bring out five or six spiritual teachings: 1. The hiding of God's power, verses 13-15; 2. The inaptitude of the carnal nature for God's revelations, verses 1-4; 3. The new standard of beauty established by Christ, verses 14, 2; 4. The new standard of honor established by him, verse 7; 5. Our fourfold duty to Christ. Some of these thoughts are elaborated in THE LESSON APPLIED, Senior Lesson Quarterly.

1. We should watch and study God's revelations, especially those concerning the Saviour. He who ignores the word of prophecy, who listens with dull ears to the gospel story, who is inattentive to the influence of conscience, who heeds not the divine call, places himself in the ranks of God's enemies. The sinfulness of unbelief in the "report" or "message" of salvation consists, in many cases, in mere heedlessness and inattention; people do not observe "the arm of the Lord," but turn away from the manifestation of his power.

2. We should study the beauty of Christ. It is a warped judgment, a degraded taste, that finds in Jesus only marring and ugliness. Rightly viewed, he is fairer than ten thousand, the one altogether lovely. The lowliness of his earthly surroundings adds to the beauty of his career.

3. The Christian spirit of love and helpfulness is offensive to selfish and revengeful hearts.

4. Our fourfold duty to Christ. We should honor and confess him before all men. Those who honor him he will honor. And often the only way within reach to honor him is to take up the cross and follow him. We should accept Christ as our personal Saviour, not merely as the world's Redeemer, but as one who bears our sins and carries our sorrows. Our sins have been personal; death is a personal act; life everlasting is a personal privilege; we need a personal Saviour. We should make Christ our model in patience and endurance of wrong. If we live out the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount we will, when unjustly treated, pass our wrongs over to God for rectification. Forbearance seldom brings either sin or secular failure; "standing up for one's rights" often brings both. We should depend upon the intercession of Christ. Now in heaven he pleads for us, and his sympathy and advocacy should make us confident and loyal.

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The Church Catechism

46. What are our duties to ourselves? Our duties to ourselves are to guard the health, temperance, and chastity of the body; to cultivate the mind in the knowledge of truth; and to preserve the spirit in purity and communion with God.

LESSON IV. The Gracious Invitation

GOLDEN TEXT. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Isa. 55. 6.

[July 23

AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Read Isa. 54.]

REVISED VERSION.\*

Isa. 55. 1-13

[Commit to memory verses 6-8.]

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which satisfieth not? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of Da'vid.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Is'ra-el; for he hath glorified thee.

6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

6 Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near:

7 let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and it shall give seed to the sower and bread to the eater:

11 so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Time.—Probably about 705 B. C. Place.—Jerusalem.

Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association.]

M. The Gracious Invitation. Isa. 55. 1-13.

- T'u. Look, and be saved. Isa. 45. 18-25.
- W. An everlasting covenant. Jer. 32. 36-44.
- Th. To-day! Heb. 3. 7-19.
- F. Return and forsake! Isa. 1. 10-20.
- S. Piteous redemption. Psa. 130.
- S. Christ's invitation. Matt. 11. 25-30.

\*The Revised Version, copyrighted 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

## The Lesson Hymns

*New Canadian Hymnal, No. 79.*

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;  
Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel;  
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish.

*New Canadian Hymnal, No. 83.*

Art thou weary, heavy laden?  
Art thou sore distressed?  
"Come to me," saith One, "and coming."

*New Canadian Hymnal, No. 80.*

What could your Redeemer do  
More than he hath done for you?  
To procure your peace with God.

## Questions for Senior Scholars

1. *The Invitation* (v. 1-5).—What sort of people are invited by God to come to him for nourishment and delight? What sort of people are they who, hungry and thirsty and having "no money," spend money on "that which is not bread"? Have you ever known men who labored for "that which satisfieth not" either in profit or in pleasure? What is meant by "fatness" in the figurative language of the Bible? What is meant by the sure mercies of David? Mention three phases of the Messiah's work which are given in the first four verses. To how many nations did Moses give his law?

2. *The Promise* (v. 6-13).—When are we to

seek the Lord? When are we to call upon him? What must be forsaken by the repentant soul? What is God's attitude toward him who returns unto the Lord? What is characteristic of God's love? What is the difference between God's thoughts and ways and ours? To what does God liken the falling rain in verses 10 and 11? How should the agriculture of Palestine testify to the secular blessings of God? In what way should the life of a Christian bear witness to the fructifying influences of the divine Spirit? Do secular blessings always follow obedience to God's law? What is better than great riches? (Prov. 22. 1.)

## Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *Come unto Me* (v. 1-7).—Who receives this gracious invitation? What does God ask the sinner to give for salvation? What is "spending money for that which is not bread"? Does a disobedient, sinful life satisfy the heart? What does God promise to do for the soul that comes to him? Who is referred to as David? Of what was Jesus a witness to the people? Did God send Jesus to save the Jews only? What did the Jews expect their Messiah to do for other nations? Does God want men to think that they can be saved from their sins at any

time? When are we quite sure that God can be found by us? What two things does God require of the wicked and unrighteous? What does he promise to do for the guilty sinner?

2. *The Word of Life* (v. 8-13).—What reason is given for our faith in what God has promised? How does the Lord show that his Word shall be a word of life? What does God say his Word shall accomplish? What change shall come to the world when all men shall believe in Jesus? Of what shall this great change be a token or sign?

## Questions for Younger Scholars

What was Isaiah? A prophet. What invitation did God give the world through Isaiah? *To come and be saved.* How does God give salvation? *Freely and gladly.* When should we seek God? What does God promise to the

wicked man? On what condition does he make this promise? What must we forsake? *Everything that is wrong.* What must we give to God? *Our hearts.* What will he give to us? *Joy and peace.*

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The Lesson Analysis

1. The Invitation (verses 1-5).

(a) The thirsty and hungry are invited to drink and eat (b) without charge. (c) They are reminded of their former fruitless endeavors, (d) and are urged to give diligent attention to this invitation. (e) They are promised an everlasting covenant of friendship, (f) a Guide who shall never fail, (g) and identification of interests with those of the Holy One of Israel. (h) This invitation is to us.

11. The Command (verse 6).

(a) We are to seek; search is our lifework. (b) We are to seek Jehovah. (c) We are to

seek him while he may be found. (d) We are to call upon him while he is near.

III. The Promise (verses 7-13).

We are (a) to forsake everything that is morally wrong, and (b) to return to Jehovah. (c) This forsaking of sin and sinful thought and return to Jehovah are conditions of abundant pardon. (d) We cannot measure the love and justice of God by the little love and little justice of our own hearts. (e) His word is like the rain of springtime, which makes the earth fruitful. (f) Perfect peace and prosperity are promised to those who seek God.

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

AN INVITATION TO INDIVIDUALS.—In chapter 54 the prophet has set forth the future joy of Zion reunited to Jehovah in a new and everlasting covenant, which is one of the fruits of the salvation brought by the Messiah. He now proceeds to call upon members of the nation as individuals, inviting them to make the fruits of this glorious redemption their own by personally accepting the blessings of this salvation.

Verse 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth

—Compare the similar figure in 12. 3, "Wells of salvation," and in 41. 18, where a promise is given of a miraculous fountain opened by Jehovah for the relief of his people.

Come ye.—Literally, Go. So throughout this chapter.

No money.—In some parts of the Orient, as in Palestine, water is scarce and therefore an exceptionally great boon. Access to a well has often to be paid for. This salvation offered in the prophet's message, though in value like unto that which is most precious and necessary, is still to be obtainable without money and without price.

2. Spend money.—Literally, weigh silver.

Your labor—Or earnings.

That which satisfieth not.—The life apart from God and his salvation is a life of continual spending without any real satisfaction or lasting profit.

Let your soul delight itself in fatness.—And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things" (Isa. 25. 6; comp. also Isa. 58. 14).

3. Incline your ear.—Give heed, and come unto me.—Jehovah; hear and your soul shall live.—The message and invitation are of vital importance. The offer made is that of an everlasting covenant.

The sure mercies of David.—The mercies promised to David and his seed (comp. 2 Sam. 23. 5). These same mercies which were promised to David are here offered to everyone who thirsteth. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5. 6).

4. Him—David, for a witness to the peoples.—A man after God's own heart. David occupied in the heathen world of his time a representative position as the standard bearer of Jehovah, the God of righteousness and mercy, and as such became also a leader, or prince, and commander, that is, an example and ruler, to the peoples (comp. Psa. 18. 43).

5. Behold thou, Messiah, shalt call a nation that thou knowest not.—A nation that thou hast not acknowledged or dost not now acknowledge as thine. "I never knew you: depart from me" (Matt. 7. 23).

The Holy One of Israel.—Jehovah—this phrase being in apposition with the preceding.

6. While he may be found.—In the "acceptable time," in the "day of salvation" (comp. Jer. 29. 12-14; Isa. 49. 8).

7. The unrighteous man.—Literally, the man of evil.

His thoughts.—Thoughts determine character. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23. 7).

8. My thoughts.—The thoughts of Jehovah include his purpose of redemption; they are "past finding out."

Are not your thoughts.—Their vastness and sublimity are beyond the power of the thoughts of men to understand (comp. Mic. 4. 12; Jer. 29. 11). The character of Jehovah's purposes of redemption furnish a motive for eager and expectant hope as well as for repentance.

10. As the rain cometh down.—A detail suggested by reference to "the heavens" in the preceding verse.

**11. Void**—Empty, in the sense of having achieved nothing (comp. 2 Sam. 1. 22).

**12. Be led forth in peace**—By Jehovah himself (comp. Isa. 40. 10; 52. 12; Mic. 2. 13).

**The mountains and the hills . . . all the trees of the field**—All nature shall rejoice with you.

**13. For a name . . . for a sign**—A me-

morial to Jehovah's praise. The glorious transformation of nature.

**The fir trees and the myrtle trees** which have supplanted the **thorns** and the **briers** shall remain throughout future ages as a testimony and monument of Jehovah's goodness and mercy toward his people whom he hath redeemed.

## The Lesson Exposition

### THE UNLIMITED INVITATION

We are told by the Bible expositors that these words were immediately directed to the captive people in exile in Babylon, summoning them to return to Jerusalem. Probably so; but the invitation has a wider and longer range than that; it is God's invitation to a race in moral exile to return to the blessings of the kingdom of God. But the chief thing is the unlimited character of the invitation. Viewed in the short range, if it was to the exiles in Babylon, it was to every one of them; and if, in its long range, it is considered as a call to humanity, it is to every human being. It is like Christ's own direct invitation (John 7. 37), and like the great call in the closing chapter of the Bible (Rev. 22. 17). There are some things in the Bible about which we may have some uncertainty; but there is no uncertainty about God's gracious wish that every one should be saved.

### THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY

The things which the prophet here proclaims are not matters of commerce. However much gold and silver a man might have he could not buy them; and yet however little he may have he may obtain them. This does not mean that spiritual possessions are cheap; on the contrary, it means that they are so valuable that money cannot buy them. And it does not mean that spiritual things are given away; it simply means that the price demanded for them is not a money price. Nevertheless they must be bought. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23. 23). Money is a very cheap thing compared with the investments which duty often demands; and the richest things which money can buy are tawdry baubles compared with the holdings in the kingdom of God the title to which is secured by payment of the coin of the spirit. What millionaire could draw a check sufficiently large to buy the joy and the hope which the poorest saint possesses? And what is any money price compared with the price in self-denial and privation and suffering paid by Livingstone and Gordon in their consecration to duty? Jesus told his disciples what price might be necessary to pay for eternal life (Matt. 19. 29). But let no one conclude that, because the things of the kingdom cannot be bought with

money, therefore the payment of money is never necessary. Money itself has no spiritual equivalent; but it may involve the self-denial that has a large spiritual equivalent.

### THE DELUSION AND THE REALITY

The blessings which the prophet proclaims are realities as contrasted with delusions. Men are laboring and spending their money for that which is not true bread because it is incapable of satisfying hunger. Nothing is more absolutely demonstrated by experience than the fact that wealth cannot secure enduring happiness. Wealthy people may have true happiness, but they do not have it because of their wealth. The poor often have happiness, which proves that wealth is not a condition of happiness. And yet the delusion persists. Men and women still chase the phantom, fancying if they can only get riches they will get happiness. And place and power and worldly honor are equally delusive and disappointing. And the reason is that happiness cannot be bestowed from without, but must always spring from within. A good conscience, a clean heart, a calm faith, a confident hope, the spirit of love, a sense of the divine approval, the absence of carking anxiety, a mind filled with all kindly sentiments and sympathies—these, and not gold and silver, are the conditions of enduring happiness. But these are the things of the kingdom, which are unseen and eternal.

### THE CALL OF THE KINGDOM

The fifth verse of the lesson expresses a great law of the spiritual life. God in the life of a man or a people is always a call to those who have him not. We can see the operation of the law in the influence of individual lives. One life filled and nourished from divine sources is a perpetual appeal to all lives about it plagued with unsatisfied thirst and hunger. The genuine Christian living in the midst of the worldly is a standing demonstration of a better way than that of worldliness. And this is the greatest of all persuasives. The spring of the oasis attracts the thirsty traveler. The disappointed will be drawn to the satisfied, the hungry will come to those who have been filled. And the same is true of nations. So far as any nation

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has truly made the Lord their God, other nations have run unto them. The nation at last that will rule other nations will not be the nation of mightiest navy and army, but the one that makes its laws the laws of the kingdom of God. A nation having more ships and greater armies than others may have a mighty repulsive and defensive power. Other nations may run from such a nation. But a nation great in righteousness will have mighty attractive power. Other nations will run to, and not from, such a nation.

**THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY**

It was a time of special grace to the people to whom the prophet spoke. The tide of affliction was turning back into a stream of mercy. God had sent afflictions, but now he purposed good. It was an hour of peculiar opportunity. Now if men would seek him he might easily be found. This does not mean that God's moods are varying and capricious, that he is sometimes gracious and kindly disposed and at other times cold and distant. It means simply that conditions arise when the graciousness of God can be better manifested than at other times, when the Lord has better opportunities to exercise his loving-kindness than usual. The time for the return of the exiles from Babylon furnished such an opportunity. The prospect of such a return turned the thoughts of the people to the grace and favor of their God. It was consequently the hour for repentance and confession and forgiveness and reconciliation. It was easy then for men to feel that God was mercifully disposed and that he would abundantly pardon. And such times still come in the experience of individuals and of communities. A season of revival is such an opportunity, not because God is less gracious at other times, but because then the minds of men are stirred to a consciousness of their need of grace and to a sense of the divine graciousness. For an opportunity is created not simply by some exter-

nal circumstance, but the state of one's own mind. The hour of strongest inner prompting to a right course is the hour of opportunity. Let that prompting cease and the opportunity may be forever past.

**LIFE'S HIGHEST CONNECTIONS**

How high the heavens are over us, and how calmly the heavens overarch the world! A sense of sublimity and safety comes from the thought that the earth is held in the grasp of powers that operate out of depths far beyond and above its fitful surface. And so the thought of God's relations to our life lifts it out of littleness into greatness. Our destiny is guided not by our own thoughts, but by God's thoughts; our ways are not marked out by ourselves, but God makes ready the paths for our feet. Which means that God has greater plans for us than we can conceive for ourselves; that he can deal more bountifully with us than all our dreams; that he may have great hope for us when we have despaired; that he may be framing songs of rejoicing for us even while we weep and lament. He never forgets his promises though we may forget; he never abandons his purposes though we may have lost sight of them; he never doubts the issue of his word though it may be slow in working out. So the prophet was saying to a disheartened and low-thoughted nation. He was telling them of their God who could bring all things to pass. They had long been in exile and bondage; they had long been led forth in peace; they had been fed upon the meat of affliction, and their cup had been bitter, but a great joy was about breaking forth; their land had long been in desolation and ruin, but soon the fir tree and the myrtle should spring up in the place of the thorn and the brier. The higher powers were uplifting the life of the nation, and great thoughts of God, higher than the thoughts of men, were beginning to unfold.

**THE LESSON PRAYER**

Our Father, thy word for to-day comes to us like the freshness of the morning air, and the prophet's call awakens our souls like the call of the trumpet. The times of our worldly pursuits and pleasures are as if we hungered, and dreamed that we ate, and, awaking, our souls were still empty; or as if we thirsted, and dreamed that we drank, and awaking, found our souls to be faint. Thy Son has called blessed those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, because they shall be filled; and thou hast promised to satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with goodness. Grant us the fulfillment of these gracious promises, for the sake of Him whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. Amen.

## The Lesson Coin Thoughts

## I

Every one of God's invitations is a "gracious invitation."

God invites the prodigal to penitence and to peace.

He invites the backslider to restoration and to rest.

He offers to the wanderer "a welcome home."

## II

The soul can never be satisfied away from God.

Nothing but light can satisfy the optic nerve. Nothing but sound can satisfy the auditory nerve.

The olfactories are made for odors.

The tongue and palate crave flavors.

Empty space is unsatisfactory to the sense of touch.

The soul away from God can never find its greatest good.

## III

Man would be unheeding of God's help if he had no needs.

My need spurs me on till I find the thing that I need.

Great needs have led to great inventions.

Vast desires have led to vast discoveries.

By the urgency of hunger man finds his way to the feast.

Lips that are parched with fever find their way to flowing fountains.

To have some great need has always been one of the greatest needs of man.

You cannot measure the ministry of wealth till you measure the ministry of want.

The good of need has led to the gold of supply.

## IV

God's invitation calls us from weariness to rest.

God's invitation calls us from darkness and death to light and life.

It is the invitation of wisdom to forsake ignorance.

It is the invitation of the right to forsake the wrong.

## V

It is only the *priceless possessions* that money cannot buy.

No man can buy a clear conscience with money.

No man can buy the pardon of sin with money.

No man can buy a pure heart with money.

No man can buy courage with money.

No man can buy manhood with money.

No man can buy spiritual serenity and strength with money.

The priceless blessings of God are "without money, and without price."

## VI

God's thoughts are as much greater than ours as God is greater than us.

God's thought about time enlarges to eternity.

God's thought about life enlarges to eternal life.

Man's thought about his trouble is that it is heavy; God calls man's afflictions light.

Man thinks, "Alas for those who mourn!" God thinks, "Blessed are they that mourn!"

Man thinks, "Blessed are they that feast and are full." God thinks, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Man thinks that the worth of a man's life is measured in money. God thinks that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

What a man is really *worth* depends on what he really is.

## VII

The Word of God to man reveals to man a God of his word.

No opposition can permanently prevent the success of God's Word.

God's living Word shall yet reverberate through all the living languages of literature.

God's wonderful Word will yet awaken this wonderful world.

## The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

Gems of literature stored in memory are treasures that moth doth not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal. Best of these are the words of inspiration in the Bible, and one of its brightest gems is the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. If you have not already learned it "by heart," do not sleep until you count it among your possessions. I know of one with the light and shade of over eighty years upon her brow, sitting with folded hands and dimmed eyes, whose

joy it is to repeat poems she learned in early days, and whole chapters of comfort and promise written upon her mind when impressions were easily made and retained. Especially let us write upon our heart this gracious invitation: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." Is there a time when he may not be found? Is he ever too far away to hear? There is such a possibility, not in God, but in the soul itself; not on his

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part, but on ours. He hears the call of any heart, even of one a "long way off." But the soul's sense of God grows dull; the desire to find him is choked by the lust of other things, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. So much comes between the heart and heaven that it seems useless or unnecessary to call. But in all phases of human experience

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

There are times, not when God is nearer or more ready to hear, but when the heart, moved by the Holy Spirit, is more ready to call, and feels in an unusual way his nearness. There are moments of sorrow or danger when we feel our need of God; times when the word of friend, or teacher, or pastor, stirs us to hear the whisper of the Spirit, "Give me thine heart." Especially in times of revival when others are finding God in a new relationship, we hear the Spirit saying, "Come." These are the tides which, taken at their flood, bring the soul over the bar into the harbor of its rest and peace in God.

I remember a story and picture which fascinated me when a child. It illustrates this thought of opportunity. A man had lowered himself by a rope from a cliff overhanging the sea until he was opposite a ledge where sea

birds laid their eggs. By swaying to and fro the extreme inward swing brought him near the ledge, on to which he sprang; but in doing so he lost his hold of the rope. For one awful moment he stood, the dashing sea below, the inaccessible rocks above. The rope, swinging like a pendulum, came, but not so near that he could catch it where he stood. Each time it swayed it would be farther off, until it would hang far beyond his reach. Breathless he waited for its next inward swing, and, knowing his time was now or never, he made a desperate leap, caught the rope, and was saved. So revivals, opportunities, impulses of the Spirit, convictions, come and go. If they are not seized and used they swing out of reach—they may be, in some cases, forever.

The heart-ear is quick to hear in youth; it grows dull with advancing years. Dear member of my class, if you turn away from the voice which to-day says, "Come," it may never again seem to you so clear and so sweet. If you will only listen you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree. Is it not wise to heed the call of One who can make such a transformation in the heart and in the life? The rope is swaying; do not let it swing beyond your reach.

### The Lesson in Literature and Art

#### 1.

A man's best things are nearest him—  
Lie close about his feet.—*Milnes.*

#### 2. Verse 1.

But what or who are we, alas!  
That we in giving are so free?  
Thine own before our offering was,  
And all we have we have from thee.

—*George Wither.*

#### 3. Verse 2.

We look before and after  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

—*Shelley.*

4. Some people grow terrified when thrown upon their own resources, and feverishly resort to all manner of expedients to beguile the time. They seek the ends of the earth in order to escape the emptiness and loneliness of their own lives. What is one to gain by fleeing his environment? Himself he cannot flee. Upon whatever distant sea his ship may sail, by whatever charming companions he may be surrounded,

whatever lavish gifts fortune may shower upon him, he still finds himself shadowed by the same unwelcome, inexorable self. Wherefore should we spend our "money for that which is not bread," and our "labor for that which satisfieth not"?

#### 5.

Daughters of Time, the hypocrite Days,  
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,  
And marching single in an endless file,  
Bring diadems and gogots in their hands,  
To each they offer gifts after his will,  
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.

I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,  
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily  
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day  
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,  
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

—*Emerson.*

6. Verse 7. God's love precedes all reformation. And there is no man—not a drunkard, not a gambler, not a thief, not a person that is filled full of passions and appetites—who has not a right, to-day, now, here, in his heart, to look up and say, "God help me!" Your sinful-

ness is not a reason why you should keep away from God. It is the very reason why you should go to him. He is to your soul what the physician is to your body. When your body is racked with pains, or is swollen with disease, you go to the physician that he may heal you. And so, the consciousness of your sin, and of the hatefulness of it, is the very reason why you should go to God.—*Beecher*.

7. "Christ comes with a blessing in each hand—forgiveness in one, and holiness in the other; and never gives either to any who will not take both."

#### 8. Verse 8.

God's ways are not our ways, his thoughts are not as ours; He wounds us sore with the cruel thorns, where we have stooped for flowers;

But O! 'tis from the aft-pierced heart those precious drops distill,

That many a life, else all unblest—with healing balm shall fill;

Then give, O give the flower to those who pray it so may be,

But I would choose to have the thorns, with thee, dear Lord, with thee!—*Anon*.

#### 9. Verse 11.

The deeds we do, the words we say—  
Into still air they seem to fleet,

### Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. The great invitation with which this chapter opens has only two or three parallels in the whole Bible. The Master in Matt. 11. 28 speaks forth a bidding of mercy, gracious in spirit and world-wide in its scope, which may be fitly placed alongside of the words of the prophet: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He further says, John 7. 37 and 6. 37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"; "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And the New Testament closes with a passage in which another wonderful invitation occurs: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These invitations, thus collated, sum up the freeness, the urgency, the graciousness, and the blessedness of the provision which the gospel makes for human need and sin.

2. The connection of this lesson with that last studied ought to be noted, since in it we had placed before us the basis which is found in the mercy of God and the atonement of Christ for the welcome here extended to the penitent. The logical order of the appeal would

We count them ever past;  
But they shall last—  
In the dread judgment they  
And we shall meet! —*John Keble*.

#### 10. Verse 12.

##### GLADNESS OF NATURE

Is this a time to be cloudy and sad,  
When our mother nature laughs around,  
When even the deep blue heavens look glad,  
And gladness breathes from the blossoming ground?

There are notes of joy from the hangbird and wren,  
And the gossip of swallows through all the sky;  
The ground squirrel gaily chirps by his den,  
And the wilding bee hums merrily by.

The clouds are at play in the azure space,  
And their shadows at play on the bright green vale,  
And here they stretch to the frolic chase,  
And there they roll on the easy gale.

There's a dance of leaves in the aspen bower,  
There's a titter of winds in that beechen tree,  
There's a smile on the fruit, and a smile on the flower,  
And a laugh from the brook that runs to the sea. —*Bryant*.

be: "Because the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief hath borne the sins of many, and hath made intercession for the transgressors—therefore, come ye to the waters;—come and accept pardon and life, without money and without price." About a century ago Thomas Haweis put this truth into song:

"From the cross uplifted high,  
Where the Saviour deigns to die,  
What melodious songs we hear,  
Bursting on the ravished ear!  
'Love's redeeming work is done;  
Come and welcome, sinner, come!"

"Spread for thee the festal board,  
See, with richest dainties stored;  
To thy Father's bosom pressed,  
Yet again a child confessed,  
Never from his house to roam;  
Come and welcome, sinner, come!"

4. Jeremiah (2. 13) speaking for Jehovah, makes a grievous charge against Israel, which may be compared with the appeal made in the lesson not to spend money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which does not satisfy: "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that

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can hold no water." Akin to this passage is one from Luke (12, 18, 19), where the rich fool in the parable says: "I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." These are all parallel instances of wasted and delusive toil—strength, time, and pains, thrown away without due return. They suggest and illustrate the folly and guilt of an immortal soul, made for a heavenly inheritance, with high ideals of duty set before it, and with great opportunities for growth and service within reach, wasting its very substance, by neglect, by sensuality, by extravagance, in a life devoted to the effort to satisfy a nature which was made for things noble and divine, with "goods" laid up in a bank or a barn.

4. The phrases "while he may be found" and "while he is near" possess elements of gravity and warning which we will do well to heed. Surely they hint that there may come times when he will be no longer "near," a day when he may not be "found." Not, perhaps, as once was urged with tremendous force, that he withdraws himself, and gives over the impenitent man to be lost; but that he finds it not possible, except by interfering with man's freedom of will and liberty of choice, to be of any further service to the man who has refused mercy, abused goodness, squandered opportunity, and chosen for himself the way of the transgressor. One of

Bushnell's most searching sermons is based on the text, "Take away the talent from him," and the title is, "Religious Capacity Extirpated by Disuse." The sinner who delays, palters with his conscience, hardens his heart, renders his moral nature torpid, and at last finds it possible to live without serious thoughts or prayer—how, in reason, can he expect that the Almighty is going to wait at his beck and call, year after year? Nor can he find just ground for complaint if at the last when this life is ended it is said to him, "Thou hast destroyed thyself."

5. "He will abundantly pardon" is a wonderful promise, an assurance of mercy which reaches to the extremity of human need. Beyond all the requirements of justice and law, all the condemnation of conscience, all the sense of need and guilt, and all the threatenings of the doom that rightly is due the sinner, extends this pledge of abundant pardon. Just as the orbit of Neptune is at an almost inconceivable distance outside the orbits of all the other planets in the solar system, being a billion miles from that of Uranus, outorbiting them all, so the exorbitant mercy of the gospel as suggested in this covenant of "abundant pardon" outruns our largest thought of divine grace. It is like the promise, "As far as the east is from the west"—that is an indefinite, a measureless remove, there being no way to measure such a distance—"so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

### The School of Practice

1. If I received an invitation from a friend to dine with him or to receive some valuable gift I would gratefully accept, if possible, or, if impossible, I would at least express my regrets, not treating his invitation with indifference. To-day's lesson brings to me a direct invitation from God. I see and realize that I should not accept it; and I will this week seek to receive the things which God here offers to give.

2. I am sure that it is easier for a young person to begin the Christian life than for an older person to do so. My youth is therefore to me a period of special opportunity to seek and to find God. I am determined that this week I will, forsaking all known evil ways, call upon God for the pardon of my sins, and enter upon his service.

### The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

#### General Preparatory Work

I. *Lesson Material*: Isa. 55, 1-13.

II. There is no *Parallel Passage*.

III. *The Lesson Passage Naturally Divides* between verses 5 and 6, and possibly also between verses 11 and 12. The first five verses contain a free offer of mercy to all, and the last eight verses give reasons for confidence in this offer, and a positive promise, verses 12, 13.

IV. *Comparative Study of the Lesson Text*: Read throughout "Jehovah" instead of the LORD. Verse 1: the figure of thirst is used in Isa. 41, 17; 44, 3; Psa. 42, 1, 2; 63, 1; 143, 6; John 4, 14; 7, 37; and a comparison of these passages will illuminate our lesson; the misery of being forced to purchase the water needed for daily consumption is voiced in Lam. 5, 4. With the last phrase of verse 1 compare Matt. 10, 8 and with the entire verse, Joel 3, 18. Verse 2: "spend" is literally "weigh," pointing to the use of uncoined money; instead of "labor," "earnings"; compare Isa. 1, 19; Psa. 22, 26; Isa. 25, 6; Psa. 63, 5; Jer. 31, 14 with the promise of food and of fatness. Verse 3: "Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby," Lev. 18, 5; Rom. 10, 5; the phrase "sure mercies [blessings] of David" is quoted Acts 13, 34. Verse 4: "peoples" is each case instead of "people" (meaning

other nations); instead of "leader" the margin suggests "prince"; Psa. 18. 43 gives a similar promise on the spread of Jehovah's worship beyond the limits of Israel compare also verse 5; Jer. 30. 8, 9; Mic. 5. 2; Zecl. 8. 22. Verse 5: compare preceding verse; also Isa. 45. 14, 22-24; 49. 6, 12, 23. Verse 6: promises to those that seek Jehovah are given in Isa. 45. 19, 22; 49. 8; Psa. 32. 6; Amos 5. 6; promises to those that call upon him are given in Isa. 58. 9 and 65. 24. Verse 7: compare with the first clause Isa. 1. 16, 19; 58. 6; some of the thoughts of the unrighteous are mentioned in Isa. 32. 7; 59. 7; with the rest of the verse compare Isa. 44. 2; 54. 8, 10; 1. 18; 40. 2; 43. 25; 44. 22. Verse 9: a similar figure is used, Psa. 103. 11. Verse 10: referred to in 2 Cor. 9. 10. Verse 11: compare Matt. 24. 35. Verse 12: Isa. 51. 11; 52. 9; Psa. 105. 43; Isa. 54. 13; Jer. 29. 11. For the first promise of verse 13 compare Isa. 60. 13; 41. 19; the second promise offsets the punishment declared in Isa. 32. 13; with the second promise compare Jer. 33. 9 and 56. 5.

### The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly.

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

Illustrative Material: The pictures in Senior Quarterly are self-explanatory.

#### Constructing the Lesson.

Arrangement of Lesson Facts: Use the Golden Text as the backbone of the lesson.

1. Verses 1-3: All who have longing hearts should seek the Lord, and find satisfaction. 2. Verses 4, 5: All who feel the need of guidance and leadership should seek the Lord. 3. Verse 6: Because God is near *all* should seek him *while he may be found*. 4. Verses 7-9: Because his thoughts and ways are so much higher and holier than ours we should seek the Lord. 5. Verses 10, 11: Because our hearts respond to God's grace as spring flowers respond to spring showers we should seek the Lord. 6. Verses 12, 13: Because where God is not sin and sorrow spring up like thorns and briars, while God turns one's whole pathway of life into a garden, we should seek the Lord.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. See picture, Senior Quarterly. Travellers over the desert are thirsty for fountains and hungry for meat and bread and fruit. But sooner or later everybody hungers and thirsts for other things than food and drink. Mothers get all the good things they can for their boys and girls; but as people grow older they feel more and more plainly that only God can satisfy their deepest wants. No wonder he is called the Fount of every blessing.

2. Study the text according to the Outline suggested above. By the use of the HARD WORDS MADE EASY (Senior Quarterly) explain the different phrases of the text. The figures of verses 8, 9 and 10, 11 can be made vivid to boys and girls. The consideration of each division of this outline may be emphasized by the class reciting in concert and in whispers the Golden text.

Application: This lesson is *all* application. Do not treat it as if it were aimed only at the Hebrews of Isaiah's time, or at grown people. Our boys and girls also have consciences that need appeasing.

#### Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: Urge patient continuance in the Readings for Each Day. Ask the boys and girls to study the Hard Words Made Easy.

Review Work: Write out the first three questions on page 73, and ask each pupil to write answers to them for next Sunday. Ask the pupils to be ready to recite in whispers the Golden Text of this lesson as an introduction to the next.

### The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly, the Senior Quarterly or the Lesson Leaf.]

#### Preparing the Lesson.

For Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

#### Constructing the Lesson.

Suggested Outline:

1. God's Invitation is to All (verses 1-7). Why God's invitation should be promptly accepted: 1. Because every human heart is full of longings, which God only can satisfy. 2. Be-



cause God makes a personal covenant with each one who comes to him. 3. Because God in Christ is ready providentially to lead us through life. 4. Because a time is coming when God

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will not seem so near or be so easily found as now.

2. The Word of Life (verses 8-13). Four additional reasons why we should seek God now. 5. Because the best of us have wicked hearts. 6. Because God is high and holy. 7. Because his Word is sure. 8. Because joy and peace come to those who seek him.

#### Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

Expand and illustrate the eight reasons given in the Outline for seeking God now. Careful explanation of unusual phrases in the text will add much to the interest of the lesson. Be careful not to present God's truth so that the pupils will shrink from it. This passage beautifully exemplifies the earlier invitation—"Come, and let us reason together." Distribute the Eight Reasons among the members of the class, and ask each to write on his pad the Golden Text, together with the Reason or Reasons assigned to him. To distribute these *appropriately* is worthy of much thought and prayer.

SEEK YE } WHILE } HE MAY  
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### The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

Everything that lives craves. Bodies crave food and drink; poetry and color will not satisfy physical hunger. Minds need intellectual nutrition. Souls cannot be satisfied with physical food or knowledge. Physical food springs from the physical world, intellectual food from the intellectual world, spiritual food must come down from heaven. Pardon and guidance and all needed things are promised by God to all who seek him.

Who says "Come"? Do all men thirst spiritually? Does this invitation extend to those who feel able of themselves to procure salvation? (Matt. 9, 13.) If our time and strength are devoted to securing spiritual good how are our physical wants to be met? (Matt. 6, 31-33.) Does Christianity inculcate negligence in business? (Rom. 12, 11.) How can the two pursuits be reconciled? (1 Cor. 10, 31; 2 Thess. 3, 8-10.) In what respects was David a type of Christ? (verse 4; Jer. 30, 9; Ezek. 34, 23, 24.) At what age can the will and affections be most easily surrendered to Christ? Is it possible to delay seeking the Lord until he cannot be found? (Prov. 1, 24-28; Luke 13, 24.) [Pearce.]

### The Responsive Review

1. When should we seek the Lord? "While he may be found." 2. What should the wicked do? "Let mercy upon him." 3. If he returns unto the Lord how will he be received? "The Lord will have mercy upon him." 4. What does God do? "He abundantly pardons." 5. What does the Lord say concerning his Word? "It shall not return unto me void."

### The Church Catechism

47. What are our duties to our family? Our duties to our family are the duties to each other of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant, as set forth in the Scriptures. Colossians 3, 18-22.

## LESSON V. Manasseh's Sin and Repentance

GOLDEN TEXT. Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. [July 30]  
Prov. 14, 34.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Read 2 Chron. 33.]

2 Chron. 33, 1-13 [Commit to memory verses 10-13.]

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Je-ru-sa-lem:

2 But did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Is-ra-el.

3 For he built again the high places which Hez-e-ki'ah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Ba'al-im, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

#### REVISED VERSION.\*

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; and he reared up altars for the Baalim, and made Asheroth, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served

\* The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Je-ru'-sa-lem shall my name be forever.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hin'-nom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to Da'vid and to Sol'o-mon his son, In this house, and in Je-ru'-sa-lem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Is'-ra-el, will I put my name forever:

8 Neither will I any more remove the foot of Is'-ra-el from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers: so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Mo'ses.

9 So Ma-nas'seh made Ju'dah and the inhabitants of Je-ru'-sa-lem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Is'-ra-el.

10 And the LORD spake to Ma-nas'seh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.

11 Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of As-sy'-ri-a, which took Ma-nas'seh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Bab'-yl-on.

12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

13 And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Je-ru'-sa-lem into his kingdom. Then Ma-nas'seh knew that the LORD he was God.

### Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

M. Manasseh's Sin and Repentance. 2 Chron. 33. 1-13

Tu. Evidences of repentance. 2 Chron. 33. 14-20.

W. Grievous sins. 2 Kings 21. 9-16.

Th. Consequences of sin. Deut. 20. 21-29.

### New Canadian Hymnal, No. 319.

The morning light is breaking;

The darkness disappears;

The sons of earth are waking.

### New Canadian Hymnal, No. 328.

Son of my soul, thou Saviour dear,

It is not night if thou be near;

Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise.

### Questions for Senior Scholars

1. Opportunity (v. 1).—Whose son was Manasseh? (2 Chron. 32. 33.) At what age did

them. 4 And he built altars in the house of Jehovah, whereof Jehovah said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Jehovah. 6 He also made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; and he practiced augury, and used enchantments, and practiced sorcery, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. 7 And he set the graven image of the idol, which he had made, in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name forever: 8 neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from off the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them, even all the law and the statutes and the ordinances given by Moses. 9 And Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did evil more than did the nations whom Jehovah destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And Jehovah spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they gave no heed. 11 Wherefore Jehovah brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. 12 And when he was in distress, he besought Jehovah his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 And he prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah he was God.

F. Promise to the penitent. Deut. 30. 1-10.

S. A penitent's prayer. Psa. 51.

S. The prodigal's return. Luke 15. 11-24.

Time.—Manasseh reigned fifty-five years, perhaps from B. C. 686 to B. C. 631, or, according to Usher, from B. C. 694 to B. C. 639.

Places.—Jerusalem; Babylon.

### The Lesson Hymns

#### New Canadian Hymnal, No. 321.

A better day is coming,

A morning promised long,

When girded Right, with holy Might.

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2. *Apostasy* (v. 2-9).—What was Manasseh's character? What had been his father's character? Name some evil acts of his reign?

3. *Expostulation* (v. 10).—To whose rebuke were the people deaf? How did the king treat the prophets of God who warned him?

4. *Retribution* (v. 11).—What judgment was sent on Manasseh? Who at this time was king of Assyria? What did he do to Manasseh?

5. *Repentance* (v. 12, 13).—What was the effect of affliction on Manasseh? Has it always

this effect? What encouragement should we receive from the fact that God heard the prayer of Manasseh? How was his prayer answered? Are promises made during trouble always kept? How did Manasseh keep his? Is there any sin so foul that it may not be pardoned? Of what did the king become assured? Had he ever had any good ground for doubt? What personal lesson may we learn from Manasseh? What lesson affecting national affairs? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

### Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *Manasseh's Sin* (v. 1-10).—Who was Manasseh's father? What kind of a man and king was Hezekiah? How long did Manasseh reign? After whom did Manasseh copy in his conduct as king? What places did he build up for his idolatry? What was the worst thing he did in setting up his idols? Whom did he sacrifice to Moloch? What shows that he was a very foolish as well as a very wicked man? What image did he place in the temple at Jerusalem? What had God promised to his people if they would be obedient to his command-

ments? Whom did this bad king lead into sin? How far into sin did they go?

2. *Manasseh's Repentance* (v. 11-13).—Did God send punishment upon Manasseh without warning? What powerful nation was used to carry out God's judgments? Where did they capture the king? How did they take him to Babylon? When did Manasseh begin to think about God? How did he come before God? What shows the great mercy of God? What did the Lord do for this unworthy king besides forgiving his sins?

### Questions for Younger Scholars

Who became king after Hezekiah died? How old was he? How long did he reign? How did he begin his reign? What did he begin to build? To what did he offer sacrifices? Can you tell what he did in the temple? And what did he make his children do? What at last did the

Lord send him? Where was he taken? Whom did he begin to think about? What change came over him? Did God hear his prayer? What did he do for Manasseh? What did Manasseh do after he came back to his kingdom? What had he lost? *Much happiness.*

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BY REV. S. G. AYRES, D.D.

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Verse 9.—Watkinson, W. L., Noonday Addresses, p. 119. Verse 11.—The Homiletic Monthly, vol. vi, p. 361. Verse 12.—The Pulpit, London, vol. xxx, p. 37. Lewis, G. W., Sermons, vol. ii, p. 74. Verse 3.—Spurgeon, C. H., Sermons, Series iii, p. 311.

### The Lesson Analysis

#### I. *Opportunity* (verse 1).

(a) A youth, who had (b) good example at home, and (c) religious training (d) inherited the prerogatives of a king (e) in a time when a king had unrestricted power; (f) had wise advisers and prophetic guidance, and (g) long life.

#### II. *Apostasy* (verses 2-9).

He (a) deliberately rejected the true religion; (b) chose instead heathenish vices; (c) studied and indulged the evil propensities of his

subjects; (d) identified himself with the worst classes of the nation; (e) virtually surrendered his kingly power to foreign-bred priests; (f) deliberately profaned the temple of God; (g) persecuted good citizens; and, so far as he could, (h) compelled the common people to do evil.

#### III. *Expostulation* (verse 10).

(a) God's warnings and entreaties came through holy human messengers, (b) Manasseh and his people would not hearken.

#### IV. *Retribution* (verse 11).

(a) Judah was invaded. (b) The war was one of exceptional barbarity. (c) The Assyrian king thought he was waging it; (d) he, however, was really a means used by God's providence. (e) The wicked king of Judah was fettered and taken to Babylon.

V. *Repentance* (verses 12, 13).

No one ever stayed from God more willfully, less excusably, or more persistently than did

Manasseh, but (a) God ceased not to love him and to woo him back to righteousness, and (b) affliction led him to pray to Jehovah. (c) Having been a great sinner, he humbled himself greatly. (d) God heard his supplication and pardoned him, and (e) brought him back to his kingdom. (f) He acknowledged Jehovah as God, and tried so far as he could to undo the evil he had done.

### The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

**Verse 1. Manasseh**—King of Judah, son of Hezekiah and father of Amon; 2 Kings 21. 1 gives his mother's name as Hephzibah. He ascended the throne probably about the year B. C. 686, when he was twelve years old. Little is known concerning the actual history of his long reign, though this, on the whole, was probably peaceful and prosperous, except in the matter of religion. The attention of the writer of 2 Kings and also of the Chronicles is centered on the religious aspect of his reign, and the picture unfolded is a dark one indeed. All the superstitious and idolatrous practices of the time of Ahaz were reintroduced and given royal sanction. Foreign worships were blended with the worship of Jehovah, and altars were erected in many parts of the land, and even in the sacred courts of the temple at Jerusalem, unto the gods of the peoples round about Israel. Sorcery, witchcraft, and the dealing with familiar spirits and wizards was resorted to; and the shedding of human blood in religious sacrifices was introduced, and gloomy superstition and cruel fanaticism became a constituent part of religious ceremonies everywhere. This awful apostasy of Manasseh brought upon him the dire punishment of Jehovah briefly mentioned in to-day's lesson (verse 11), and only the timely repentance of the wicked king seems to have prevented the utter destruction of the kingdom at this time.

**2. After the abominations of the nations**—The abominations referred to are specified in the following verses.

**Whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel**—Contrary to the express command of Jehovah, the Israelites on entering Canaan had permitted many of the inhabitants of the land to remain undisturbed among them. These retained their idolatrous religion, and from them as well as from surrounding heathen nations the Israelites learned and copied practices and ceremonies which corrupted and defiled their own religion.

**3. High places**—Compare Word Studies for Lesson of July 2.

**Baalim**—The plural of Baal, which meant

literally *lord*, but which was also the title of the supreme god of the Canaanites, worshipped in different places under somewhat different aspects, hence the plural.

**Asheroth**—The plural of Asherah, a sacred tree or pole; placed beside an altar or shrine bearing sometimes an image or other designation or sign of the god or goddess to whom the shrine was sacred.

**All the host of heaven**—Sun, moon, and stars, the worship of which was expressly forbidden (comp. Deut. 4. 19, and also Zeph. 1. 5).

**4. Built altars in the house of Jehovah**—The erection of altars to strange gods in the courts of the temple, together with the introduction of human sacrifices mentioned in the next verse, formed the climax of abominations.

**6. Pass through the fire**—Offer as living burnt sacrifices to the god Molech.

**Valley of the son of Hinnom**—Literally, the valley of *Ben-hinnom*, south and southwest of Jerusalem, just outside the city.

**Augury**—Consisting, possibly, as among the Romans, in the observing of birds in their flight and of various natural phenomena.

**Sorcery**—Pretended employment of preternatural agencies, magic, witchcraft, etc.

**Them that had familiar spirits**—Persons not unlike our modern spiritualist mediums, who professed to be in touch with the spirit world. The witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28) was such a person.

**Wizards**—Not differing greatly from sorcerers and magicians.

**7. The house of God**—The temple.  
**In this house . . . will I put my name**—Will I myself dwell—the name representing the person as often. The presence of Jehovah, it is assumed, of necessity excludes all other gods. "I, Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God" (Exod. 20. 5).

**9. Did evil more than the nations**—In their apostasy from Jehovah the people under the leadership of their king actually went to greater extremes of idolatry.

**11. Brought upon them . . . Assyria**—The Assyrian monuments testify to the fact of

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a great insurrection in western Asia against Asshur-bani-pal, the grandson of Sennacherib, in which Judah may have been involved. No Assyrian inscription known at present mentions specifically this captivity of Manasseh, though as Dr. W. E. Barnes explains in the Cambridge Bible "the restoration of Manasseh after this to his kingdom is not incredible, for Necho I of Egypt was first put in fetters and afterward sent back to Egypt."

**In chains**—Literally, with hooks—hooks fastened into the nostrils of captives, a cruel practice of the Assyrians.

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### "BETTER IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN"

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It will be remembered that Hezekiah, the father of Manasseh, of whom the present lesson gives an account, had fifteen years added to his life in answer to his prayer (2 Kings 20. 6). That extension of his life, as we pointed out, was a misfortune rather than a blessing. It apparently would have been better if he had died, according to God's first purpose concerning him. Among the advantages to the nation that would have resulted if Hezekiah had died fifteen years sooner would have been the fact that in that case Manasseh would not have been born, which would have been far better. He was but twelve years old at the time of his father's death, and so was born about two years after Hezekiah was raised up from his sickness. It has been suggested that one reason why Hezekiah so earnestly desired to live was the fact that he was childless and hoped for a son to succeed to his throne. There is something worse than childlessness, as many parents have found to their great sorrow. This seems a very clear case in point. It involves some very perplexing questions, nevertheless it appears to be true that it were better if some men had never been born. Why God permits them to be born we may not understand, but Jesus himself declared that the birth of some people is a misfortune (Matt. 23. 24).

### A CORRUPTED YOUTH

The fact was that Manasseh was either born with an unusually evil nature, or that he was ruined in his raising. Probably it requires both assumptions to account for him. He was only seemed a century old when he began to reign, but we cannot tell how much moral perversion in him may have been due to hereditary causes. His paternal grandfather (Ahaz) was a wicked king. Of his mother, Hepzibah (2 Kings 21. 1), we know nothing. It may well have been that she, as the mother of not a few other heirs to thrones, was morally unfit to be the educator of a king. Good on the whole as Manasseh's father was, his later years were his worst. The

**To Babylon**—Babylon, while not at this time the capital of Assyria, was nevertheless one of the royal residence cities, and hence the prisoners may well have been taken thither instead of to Nineveh, the capital.

**12. The God of his fathers**—Jehovah, whom he had forsaken, had not been his God.

**13.** This verse clearly illustrates the purpose of the Chronicler's narrative as a whole, which is to show that apostasy from Jehovah brought destruction upon the nation, while repentance and loyalty to Jehovah brought with it pardon and the blessing of prosperity.

### The Lesson Exposition

historian gives us a picture of him in those last years that is not attractive (2 Chron. 32. 24-26). His moral influence with his son in those days could not have been strong and wholesome. Then evidently there was a court party that had never been in sympathy with the reforms of Hezekiah, and that was waiting an opportunity to overthrow all that he had done. As essential to the purposes of this party of idolatrous reactionaries we may be sure they used every means to poison the mind of the young prince and gain his sympathy. In any case, by whatever means it was accomplished, Manasseh at the age of twelve was a thoroughly corrupted youth. At just that age when by the natural laws of youth he should have found it easiest to have given himself wholly to the service of God, he gave himself with fearful earnestness to a life of sin.

### THE DEBAUCHING OF A NATION

The brief account of the first period of Manasseh's reign gives us a very inadequate idea, unless we can expand it in imagination and supply the details, of the state of things which he brought about in the nation. He inaugurated a veritable carnival of corruption, in many respects even more repulsive and horrible than the excesses of the so-called Age of Reason in the history of France. The lesson chiefly describes the way in which he introduced the abominations of idolatry into the country. The villainess of such as to forbid its being described. And the king and his abettors in iniquity went to extreme excess in the ways of idolatry, for it is said that he made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do worse than the heathen themselves whose religious customs were adopted. He out-Heroded Herod in the deep defilement which he brought upon the nation.

### A REIGN OF TERROR

But all this corrupting of a nation and the overthrow of the true worship was attended with the deadliest persecutions. It was not permitted to be done without opposition and burn-

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ing protest. "The fiercest zeal of the Huguenots in France, of Covenanters in Scotland, against the badges and symbols of the Latin Church, is perhaps but a dim shadow of that which grew to a white heat in the hearts of the worshippers of Jehovah. They spoke out in words of corresponding strength. Evil was coming on Jerusalem which should make the ears of men to tingle (2 Kings 21. 12). . . . Foremost, we may well believe, among those who thus bore their witness was the old prophet, now bent with the weight of fourscore years, who had in his earlier days protested with equal courage against the crimes of the king's grandfather. On him, too, according to the old Jewish tradition, came the first shock of the persecution. Enraged at the rebukes which the aged prophet doubtless administered, the king is said to have caused him to be sawn asunder with a wooden saw; this fate seems to be alluded to in Heb. 11. 37. Habakkuk may also have shared his martyrdom. But the persecution did not stop there. It attacked the whole order of the true prophets, and those who followed them. Every day witnessed an execution (2 Kings 21. 16). The slaughter was like that under Alva or Charles IX. The martyrs who were faithful unto death had to endure not to torture only, but the mocks and taunts of a godless generation (Isa. 57. 1-4). Long afterward the remembrance of that reign of terror lingered in the minds of men as a guilt for which nothing could atone (2 Kings 24. 4)" (McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia).

#### THE STOCKS FOR A FOOL

Manasseh's mad career of folly and crime brought inevitable retribution. God used the kings of Syria and Assyria as his police for the discipline of his people. Verse 10 of the lesson tells us that "the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken." His words were delivered by his prophets, and

many of them the king had caused to be put to death. Then came the Assyrians. We are told nothing of the siege. The resistance was probably weak, for a people so corrupted lacked the spirit for heroic resistance. The king was captured, and, as the account seems to indicate, with a hook in his nose and bound with brass chains, was led away to Babylon. He was the chief fool among the kings of the earth, and God set him in the stocks for the cure of his folly. And God usually provides the stocks for such a fool, whether a king or not.

#### A PITIABLE REFORMATION

In his captivity and deep humiliation Manasseh repented, and humbled himself before God, and prayed, and at last God heard him and had pity upon him. His repentance, we may believe, was genuine, and as deep as his nature had capacity for repentance. God permitted him to go back to Jerusalem and assume what must have been but the shadow of kingly authority, for he was the vassal of Babylon. Nothing but such affliction could have saved him. It was a hard way of coming to the knowledge, but for him it was the only way, that the Lord was God. He should have known that at the beginning and ordered his ways with reference to it. But we must not overlook the fact that his repentance and reformation did not make his life worth much. He tried in a weak kind of way to undo the mischief he had done to the nation, but it went but a little way. It was negative rather than positive. The Book of the Law was lost sight of, and was only brought to light in the days of his grandson. The ark of the covenant which he had removed was not restored. The prophets whom he had killed could not be recalled. God is merciful, and the sinner that truly repents will be pardoned; but God himself cannot undo the mischief which a sinner has done, nor make great a life whose great chances have been thrown away.

### THE LESSON PRAYER

O Lord, in the story of the king's life which we have studied to-day we have been made to see the folly of sin and the impotence of man in his fighting against God. How little a thing it is for thee to humble the pride of men and to break them with the rod of thy correction! And we have learned also that it is better for a man to be overthrown in his sin than to prosper and prevail; for if affliction had not come upon the sinning king he would not have been brought to repentance. Give us to see what ruin sin works in life, and how beyond all remedy are many of its effects; and may we shrink from putting evil influences in motion, by our words and by our deeds, which, though we repent with bitter tears, we can never arrest. And yet we thank thee that, though we have destroyed ourselves, in thee is our help. Amen.

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## The Lesson Coin Thoughts

## I

Sins are never single; Manasseh multiplied his sins.

Every evil deed is done "in the sight of the Lord."

The results of sin are none the less sure because they are sometimes slow.

"Creeping paralysis" finds the last fiber of the nervous system at last.

The only shadow that ever fell across the face of God was the shadow cast by sin.

Nothing but sin can keep the heart from its heavenly inheritance.

## II

No matter how much a man may wish it, light and darkness cannot dwell together.

If all the scientists of the world were to resolve to hate it so, heat and cold can never be compatible.

Enfolded with every good is the possibility of evil.

All the engineer needs to do to go backward is to reverse his engine; all wrong is the reverse of right.

The engines of wrong are the engines of right reversed.

## III

Sinners and saints start from the same point, but in opposite directions.

Good and evil always travel with their backs toward each other.

Sin is like a ball of rubber flung against a wall, in that it flies back to the hand that flung it.

As a man, by electric processes, may write his name at the other end of a wire several miles in length, so the sinner of to-day may write his sin into future generations.

## IV

Sin dulls the intellect, deadens the sensibilities, and paralyzes the will.

Sin burns the mansion in an hour which it took the architect a year to build.

## The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

Manasseh is one of thousands, yes, ten thousand times ten thousand, who have proved in experience the truth, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"—or "multiply to pardon." So gracious, so loving, so forgiving is God. Pardon does not satisfy him; he multiplies to it righteousness, joy, and peace. When the prodigal comes home the Father does not

Sin scatters and wastes in a moment the gathered treasures of a century.

None but God could make the optic nerve, yet one blow from the hoof of a beast can ruin it forever.

## V

Repentance of sin is not remorse, else Judas had returned to God.

There is nothing which is really redemptive in remorse.

A man may forget his sin, but it is never gone till God forgives it.

Since death is degeneration, there is nothing regenerative in death.

When a man really *repents* toward God he really *returns* toward God.

The penitent *may* shed tears, or not, but he must *forsake* sin.

He is not sorry simply because his aim has hurt him, but because it has hurt God.

## VI

The darkest sins sometimes approach us as "angels of light."

The possibility of a shadow is in the sunlight itself.

Persistence in evil-doing lessens the possibilities of well-doing.

The wickedness that was *erected* by Manasseh, the man, was *involved* in Manasseh, the boy.

The nature of the full-grown *python* is in the *python egg*.

## VII

The more Manasseh built up the bad the more he tore down the good.

The man who is always building up the good is always tearing down the bad.

He who enlarges the world's good lessens the world's evil.

Every good thing has some vital relation to *all* good things.

Every wrong is a part of the sum of *all* wrong.

give him the place of a servant. He puts him back in the place where by birth he belongs. He brings forth the best robe, and puts the symbol of royalty and love upon his finger. There is nothing left to remind him of the shame of the old life, for that would darken hope and hinder progress. The past is blotted out. God does not wish the forgiven sinner to be looking for sins which he has cast behind his back. God is between him and his sins; he has no occasion to look beyond God. Nothing is so

depressing to one who is honestly facing toward the right as to be reminded that so long he faced the other way. When one has turned a new leaf it is discouraging to be told how badly blotted the one before it is. We are tempted to say, "It is no use; this new page will be like the other before it is finished, and people will always turn to the blotted page." But the God who "abundantly pardons" drowns the sins in the depths of the sea, and sets the free soul full sail over the waves, with a clear sky from which his transgressions have been blotted out as a thick cloud. Among the things multiplied to pardon this beautiful gift is promised. It is said, "to him that overcometh—that is, to him who by the grace of God gets the victory over sin—I will give the morning star." Ah! a new day! a new beginning! Yesterday's sun set in clouds, but to-day rises clear. The morning star shines. It promises a full, long day. Yesterday was lost, but this new day with its opportunities is mine. If God is willing to forget yesterday I need not darken his new day with hopeless thoughts. He gives me, with his forgiveness, the morning star, "His favor precedes my day. He makes me glad before I have learned to be good." This is the way of the God who abundantly pardons. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are his thoughts higher than our thoughts.

### The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. Manasseh is unique alike in extreme wickedness, sincere penitence, and thorough reformation. The reformation of Julius Caesar or of Henry V, or, to take a different class of instance, the conversion of Saint Paul, was nothing compared to the conversion of Manasseh. It was as though Herod the Great or Caesar Borgia had been checked midway in a career of cruelty and vice, and had thenceforward lived pure and holy lives, glorifying God by ministering to their fellow men. . . . Manasseh becomes in the Old Testament what the Prodigal Son is in the New: the one great symbol of the possibilities of human nature and the infinite mercy of God.—*Professor W. H. Bennett.*

2. A people that gives up God is like a people that gives up a territory: it is a lost people. There is only one greater folly than that of the fool who says in his heart, "There is no God," and that is the folly of a people that says in its heart that it does not know whether there is a God or no.—*Bismarck.*

3. *Verse 2.* I preach and think that it is more bitter to sin against Christ than to suffer the torments of hell.—*Chrysostom.*

4. *Verses 3-5.* Travelers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that they do not even leave room for their

Manasseh had been notoriously wicked. Such perversity in the son of a good father seems doubly inexcusable. No doubt those who knew the father gave the son up with a hopeless sigh, or even with disgust. But Hezekiah knew how to pray. Surely one who pleaded with God for Jerusalem, prayed often for this son. The prayer chain is long and strong. It seems not to hold the boy or the youth, but its invisible links stretch over the years to the man in exile and in trouble. "When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom." His repentance was sincere and his pardon was equally so. He had a new chance; the rest of his life was spent in undoing as far as he could the evil he had done in the dark years of his sin. To repent of sin and to forsake it is our part. To abundantly pardon is God's part. If we have done our part no sinful past should cast its shadow over the forgiven present. It is a new day, with the morning star shining.

"Every day is a fresh beginning:

Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain.

And spite of old sorrow and older sinning,

Take heart with the day and begin again."

families. How many men there are who fill their hearts with the idols of sin, so that there is no room for the living God, or for any of his holy principles!—*Bate.*

5. *Verse 9.* It was a sound reply of an English captain at the loss of Calais, when a proud Frenchman scornfully demanded, "When will you fetch Calais again?"—"When your sins shall weigh down ours."—*Brooks.*

6. *Verse 10.* Whosoever sins against light kisses the lips of a blazing cannon.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

7. *Verse 10.* Those solemn imperatives and their awful responses—"Thou shalt not"—"I will;" "Thou shalt"—"I will not"—make up, then, all that the man knows of intercourse with God. This is sin, in the ultimate and finished type of it. This is what it grows to in every sinner, if unchecked by the grace of God. Every man unredeemed becomes a demon in eternity.—*Dr. Austin Phelps.*

8. *Verse 11.*

God hath yoked to guilt

Her pale tormentor—misery.

—*Bryant.*

9.

When thou hast drained a swallow's milk and plucked

A hog's soft wool, from thorns refreshing juices  
sucked,  
Seen rocks bear olive-nuts, the sands pome-  
granates yield.

A Pariah's will annul decrees the Sultan sealed,  
A harder task to try thy vaunted force re-  
mains—  
To shield a wicked man from retribution's  
pains.

—*Oriental, translated by W. R. Alger.*

**10. Verse 11.** As you stood some stormy day  
upon a sea cliff, and marked the giant billow  
rise from the deep to rush on with foaming  
crest, and throw itself thundering on the trem-  
bling shore, did you ever fancy that you could  
stay its course, and hurl it back to the depths  
of ocean? . . . Still more vain and foolish his  
thought, who fancies that he can arrest or turn  
aside the purpose of God, saying, "What is the  
Almighty that we should serve him? Let us  
break his bands asunder, and cast away his  
cords from us!" Break his bands asunder!—  
How he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh!  
—*Guthrie.*

**11. Verse 12.** If you would not have afflic-

tion visit you twice, listen at once to what it  
teaches.—*James Burgh.*

**12.**

Go, let me weep—there's bliss in tears,  
When he who sheds them inly feels  
Some lingering stain of early years  
Erfaced by every drop that steals.  
The fruitless showers of worldly woe  
Fall dark to earth and never rise;  
While tears that from repentance flow  
In bright exhalation reach the skies.  
Go, let me weep.

—*Thomas Moore.*

**13. Verse 13.**

A true repentance shuns the evil itself  
More than the eternal suffering or the shame.

—*Shakespeare.*

**14.** Often it is said of the penitent thief on  
the cross that one such case is recorded in the  
Scriptures, that none may despair of repentance  
on a deathbed; and but one, that none may pre-  
sume. It is like crossing Niagara over the  
rapids on a tight rope. One Blondin out of  
forty millions may have done it, and reached  
the hither shore in safety; but would you or I  
risk it for that?—*Professor Phelps.*

### Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

**1.** Godly parentage, or, on the other hand, an  
ungodly ancestry, is not the final factor in the  
determination of character and destiny. Here  
we have Manasseh, whose father, Hezekiah, had  
been a devout and faithful king, revealing evil  
traits from his youth, and turning out to be a  
proverbial type of wickedness. Manasseh's son,  
Amon, as we find a little later in the story, fol-  
lowed in the footsteps of his father, "trespass-  
ing yet more and more"; while the next in line,  
Josiah, becomes a pattern of child-devotion,  
youthful piety, and reformatory zeal during his  
reign of thirty-one years. We have not all the  
data necessary for deciding what other elements  
helped to decide the character and life of these  
and other men in Scripture; the fact to be em-  
phasized is that good children sometimes come  
forth from ungodly homes, and sons and daugh-  
ters who have had religious influences about  
them in childhood are found doing wrong despite  
all their privilege and training. Personal choice  
—what some call the personal equation—is the  
final factor in each individual case.

**2.** Alongside of this royal transgressor may  
be placed many others like him in the history of  
Israel and Judah. Solomon himself, when the  
(*1 Kings 11, 1-7*), became a monumental state  
transgressor in this regard; and for three hundred  
years, either habitually or occasionally, and for  
long terms of years—in spite of the ministry of  
the prophets, whose special function often was  
to denounce image-worship, and the other asso-

ciated sins to which the people were singularly  
prone—the northern kingdom, and in smaller  
measure at last the people of Judah also, gave  
themselves up to the abominations of heathen-  
ism.

**3.** An interesting question arises: What were  
the specific causes that prompted the Hebrew  
nation to sin after this abominable fashion?  
Why did idolatry become their one besetting  
and peculiar sin? It would take a volume  
rather than a paragraph to answer fully this  
question. A hint or two may be given. There  
was idolatry in the blood of the Semitic ances-  
try from which Abraham descended; image wor-  
ship and all manner of false and degrading  
forms of religion were in vogue among the na-  
tions round about them; they were in the midst  
of pagan superstitions and idolatries in Egypt  
for hundreds of years; the alliances that were  
made by marriage, as in the case of David and  
Solomon and Ahab, with daughters of neigh-  
boring kings; the political exigencies of the  
hour in their relation to adjacent peoples; and  
especially the sensual and vicious practices as-  
sociated nearly always with heathen rites, and  
the iniquitous example of heathen rulers, all were  
notable agencies in leading the nation astray.  
From this evil, as is well known, the chosen  
people were not purged until they had been dis-  
ciplined and scourged by the long years of the  
exile. When they came back from Assyria and  
Babylon they were cleansed from their idol-  
atries.

4. Manasseh is not the only example of the practice of a double worship to be found in history. In 2 Kings 17, 33 the colonists who were imported into Samaria to take the place of the people who had been led away into captivity are specimens of this habit. "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods." British annalists tell also of a Saxon king, in early days, who had an altar for Christ in one corner of his chapel and one for Satan in another place in the building. There are people in our own time who on the Sabbath day go through all the forms of decorous and reverent worship in Christian churches and through the week serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. The traditional story of the man who, in a critical situation, not knowing into whose hands he might fall, prayed, "Good Lord, Good Devil," is, after all, not an exaggeration.

5. "When he was in affliction he . . . humbled himself . . . and prayed." Many a transgressor becomes so hardened that he cannot offer acceptable and genuine prayer. Others are reminded by trouble and suffering of the sins they have committed; they seek the Lord's mercy with a penitent spirit; they find grace to help in time of need. The psalmist well says: "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." The prodigal bethought himself of his father's house when he was on the verge of starvation. We heard a stranger once testify in a social meeting: "I thank God for the stroke of the rod and

for the ministry of sorrow. But for these I would have been a wanderer all my life. By loss and bereavement I was brought to my senses, led to pray, and induced to give my heart to God."

6. "Times, enchantments, witchcraft, familiar spirits, and wizards"—these are still a brooding horror which enshrouds the heathen world with dread and darkness beyond description. China is filled with a demoralizing belief in signs and sorceries; all of Africa is under the control of the demonized witch doctor; and even in Christian countries there are men and women who, having turned from the revelation of the Bible, and lost faith in the immortality of the soul and even in the existence of a divine Father, are turning to spiritists, who "peep and mutter"; to the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research, to theosophy, to Hindu mystics and Indian fakirs, for help and comfort in order to reassure themselves that there is life beyond death. The truth is that those who give up Christ and the Bible open their hearts for all sorts of strange and miserable delusions. Whatever may be the origin and the actual basis of the "lying wonders" of so-called witchcraft and spiritualism, we have good ground in the biblical commands (Exod. 22. 18; Lev. 19. 26. 31; Deut. 18. 10, and other places), and in the announcement (Rev. 21. 8) that "sorcerers" are among the classes shut out of heaven, to be on our guard against all practices and persons that assume to deal with the supernatural in this forbidden way.

### The School of Practice

1. I am not a king, and I have not the power to corrupt and bring ruin upon a nation. But I have personal influence, and I may help or harm those with whom I am associated, and I am responsible for this influence. I am resolved that this week I will do nothing by word or example that will lead anyone into wrong ways, but, on the contrary, I will do whatever seems most likely to help others to do right.

2. Wrong ways, I am sure, in every case as certainly as in the case of Manasseh the king, will bring punishment and downfall. My own sins if continued must bring ruin to me. It is not wise to wait, as the king did, until the affliction caused by sin comes, before repenting. This week I will try to forsake every evil practice of which I am aware, and earnestly seek the forgiveness of my sins.

### The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

#### General Preparatory Work

I. *Lesson Material*: 2 Chron. 33. 1-13. In preparing the lesson the entire chapter should carefully be read.

II. *The Connection*: See WORD STUDIES. Manasseh was son and successor of the good Hezekiah.

III. *Parallel Passage*: 2 Kings 21. 1-18.

IV. *The Lesson Passage Naturally Divides* after verse 9, verse 10, and verse 11, giving us four scenes: 1. Manasseh's Apostasy, verses 1-9; 2. Jehovah's Protest, verse 10; 3. Jehovah's Punishment of Manasseh, verse 11; and 4. Manasseh's Repentance, verses 12-14.

V. *Comparative Study of the Lesson Text*: Verse 3: instead of "groves" read "Asheroth"; for Hezekiah's overthrow of high places see 2 Chron. 31. 1; 2 Kings 18. 4; for the law against Asheroth see Deut. 16. 21. Verse 4: for a previous defilement of Jerusalem and the temple see 2 Chron. 28. 24; for Jehovah's promise concerning them see 2 Chron. 7. 16. Verse 5: the two courts of the house of Jehovah are explained in 2 Chron. 4. 9. Verse 6: for Manasseh's bad model see 2 Chron. 28. 3; dealings with wizards and

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familiar spirits are prohibited in Lev. 19. 31; 20. 27. Verse 7: compare verse 16; also (for the last clause) verse 4. Verse 8: compare 2 Sam. 7. 10. The Revision greatly improves verse 9. Verse 11: for "among thorns" read "in chains": the margin suggests "with hooks. Verse 12: compare 2 Chron. 32. 26.

### The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.] *Preparing the Lesson*

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

**Illustrative Material:** The strange figures representing Egyptian idols, frequently shown in Onward and in Bible Dictionaries, very well illustrate this lesson.

**Getting Ready:** The teacher who has succeeded in getting each of his class to read the carefully selected LITTLE READINGS day by day during the week will have easy work on Sunday. Careful study of the HARD WORDS MADE EASY should be encouraged. The Golden Text thoroughly memorized will be a treasure for life to the pupil. Outline: 1. Manasseh's Perversity, verses 1-9; 2. The Lord's Patience, verse 10; 3. Manasseh's Punishment, verse 11; 4. Manasseh's Repentance, verses 12, 13.

### Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. *Manasseh's Perversity.* Begin with his opportunities. He had a good father; had good advisers; had all power in his hands, as if he were President and Congress and Supreme Court all in one. How did he use his opportunities? He was bad, and made his people bad. Do not dwell too long on the details of his crimes; but observe that he degraded the temple of the true God by bringing into it false worship; that he was cruel to his own children; and that, not content with being a wicked idolater himself, he made his people wicked and idolatrous.

2. *The Lord's Patience.* The first ten words of verse 10 tell a pathetic story. God sent to Manasseh one prophet after another who urged him tenderly and kindly to stop doing evil and to worship God, but both he and his people were self-willed and bad.

3. *Manasseh's Punishment.* God was not cruel when he helped the soldiers of the Assyrian king to capture Manasseh, and bind him with fetters, and take him to prison in far-away Babylon. Manasseh was punished for his own good and for the good of his people.

4. *Manasseh's Repentance.* It is comforting to learn that in his affliction he turned to the Lord, and encouraging to find that God restored the repentant king to his kingdom.

**Application.** Adapt to your pupils the SCHOOL OF PRACTICE.

**Home Work for Pupils.**

**Advance Work:** Call attention to the pic-

tures in the Senior Quarterly and in the Lesson Notes of Onward. Urge the Little Reading for Each Day during the coming week.

**Review Work:** Ask each pupil to bring next Sunday to-day's Golden Text carefully written out, from memory, if possible.

### The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Quarterly, the Senior Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.

### Preparing the Lesson.

For the Lesson Material and Study Material for the Teacher see note on GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, above.

**Illustrative Material:** Verse 6 is illustrated in Illustrative Notes, p. 242, by a picture of a Magic Bowl with Hebrew inscriptions. The altars mentioned in verses 3, 4, and 5 are illustrated by pictures in the same book, pp. 243, 244. Compare also the pictures in the Illustrated Quarterly.

### Constructing the Lesson.

**Study GENERAL PREPARATORY WORK, WORD STUDIES, LESSON EXPOSITION, and SCHOOL OF PRACTICE.** Make up a Lesson Plan by a comparison of the two already given with the LESSON ANALYSIS, page 557. For example: 1. Sin. 2. Warning. 3. Persistency. 4. Punishment. 5. Penitence.

### Teaching the Lesson.

1. *Sin.* By a rapid survey of the lesson text make vivid its events. The details of sins should be dwelt upon only long enough to impress their exceeding sinfulness on the minds of the pupils. Dwell upon modern idolatry in Christian lands; not those time-worn topics, crucifixes and rosaries, but mortgages, bank accounts, "stock," any



earthly treasure on which the human heart is unduly set. The thousand desirabilities of mod-

ern life are used by some as so many servants to do the bidding of God, and by some are turned into idols as real as Baal or Astarte. Young people have other idols quite as really worshipped; for where the treasure is, there the heart is also.

**2. Warning.** The Lord speaks to us as he spoke to Manasseh and to his people. How? To them by a succession of prophets; to us in a thousand ways—by home influences, sermons, Sunday school lessons, the Bible, etc.

**3. Persistency.** Strong will power is a talent which may be turned into a practical vice or a practical virtue. If Manasseh had used his will on the side of God he would have been one of the saints of all the ages.

**4. Punishment.** This word is used for convenience' sake. God often brings hardships in our way to help us to be good. Manasseh's affliction was corrective. Perhaps none of our class have had severe afflictions yet. Some may have. All will have. What is their effect upon us?

**5. Penitence.** Watch the process. Manasseh (1) turned from false gods to the true God; (2) humbled himself greatly; (3) prayed (with the intimation that he used similar persistency in prayer as he had used in sin). God (1) heard his prayer; (2) granted it; (3) brought him back to home and royal power.

In our Golden Text the words "nation" and "people" are equivalent. A nation may be exalted in wealth, power, reputation, or may be degraded, impoverished, defamed. How? Our Golden Text teaches that not "might" or "power" is to be depended on. It is righteousness which exalts, and sin which degrades. What is thus true of nations is true also of persons. Let the pupils write on their pads:

SIN DEGRADES EXALTS } ANY PEOPLE.  
SIN DEGRADES } ANY PERSON.

#### The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

The gist of this lesson is, that God hates the

sin but loves the sinner. Study the passage textually. Note:

**1.** A man may leave his wealth and position to his son, but cannot bequeath his character.

**2.** The rule of bad men cannot undo the rule of God. The God of righteousness sits in heaven, and, in the vigorous imagery of the prophet, holds his opponents in derision. None can withstand his power. He will not interfere with the free will of any man, not even of Manasseh; but he will overthrow the champion of wickedness and bring his counsels to naught.

**3.** The God of justice is the God of mercy. He never closes his ears against the prayer of sincere penitence. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Remember the story of the prodigal son. Remember the woman that was a sinner. Remember Zaccheus the publican. Remember the thief on the cross. Remember Manasseh.

**4.** Adversity has moral uses. Afflictions, especially those which come as the result of sin, are proofs of God's love quite as much as of his justice.

"Afflictions, though they seem severe,  
In mercy oft are sent;  
They stopped the prodigal's career,  
And caused him to repent."

**5.** In Manasseh's repentance, as in the return of the prodigal son, we see the influence of a godly father's prayers and instructions, effective though slow in working.

**6.** Repentance includes an honest effort to undo all evil done: and it is a sign of Manasseh's sincerity that he removed the strange gods and cast them out of the city. Reformation is the only trustworthy evidence of repentance.

**7.** The best moral reformer is he that is godly from his youth up. This statement does not at all discount Manasseh's sincerity, or the efficacy of his repentance, or his later usefulness as a child of God; but he *could not* now do all that he *could*. It was left to Josiah, who turned to God in his childhood, to destroy the foreign abominations.

#### The Responsive Review

**1.** What did Manasseh do when he became king? *He worshiped false gods and made his people do so.* **2.** What did he do in God's house? *He brought idols into it.* **3.** What did he do with his children? *He made them pass through fire in honor of false gods.* **4.** What did God do? *He made him the captive of the king of Assyria.* **5.** What did Manasseh do? *He repented of his sin and prayed to God.* **6.** What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"Righteousness exalteth,"* etc.

#### The Church Catechism.

**48.** What are our duties to our country? Our duties to our country are to render due honour to rulers; to observe the laws of the land in the fear of God and to support their authority; to contribute our just share to the expense of government; to promote the public well-being; and to exercise our franchise for the public good.

Matthew 22. 21.  
Romans 13. 1.

# Primary Teachers' Department

## Primary Notes

THE quarter opening with July is in many schools a broken one. Teachers are often absent as well as pupils, lessons are more or less interrupted, the little ones feel the summer languor, and there are days and hours when the teacher wonders if it is really worth while to go through the form of keeping up the primary class during the Sabbaths of the heated season!

In nearly all Sunday schools there are children to whom the Sabbath is the brightest of all the days. Said a mother, when asked if her little four-year-old enjoyed the primary class, "O yes; she wonders why there isn't Sunday school every day." To some it is the one place where love is shown them; to some it is a place of refuge from loud, angry voices, and perhaps from quick, impatient blows. "I love to come here," said a child of the tenements; "it's all so still and nice here!"

CHRISTIAN patriotism should be taught in the primary class. The celebration of the Fourth is one of the seasons when there may well be a little special teaching along this line. Have the children sing "My country, 'tis of thee," making the meaning of *freedom* very plain. Tell why men have always been willing to die for their country, and help the children to see that our own land is peculiarly blessed in having the freedom to worship God. It is desirable to have the flag displayed in the class room, and if possible to have a flag drill, on the Sabbath nearest the Fourth.

"How can I learn to talk simply to children?" asks a primary teacher who has not been long in the work.

Listen to children talking to one another, and try to get the child's point of view. Read really good children's books—books written for children. They are numerous in these days. Read good books about children, such as *Children's Rights*, by Kate Douglas Wiggin, and *Study of Child Nature*, by Elisabeth Harrison. But, above all, learn to talk with children outside the class room. Tell them stories, and mark what holds them and what does not. An earnest effort will surely bring success.

SOME things a primary teacher needs and ought to have are a separate room, a blackboard, a musical instrument, a clock, little low seats, a class Bible—the larger the better—shades for the windows, and pictures, appropriate and suggestive, on the walls. Many other things are desirable, but these are really necessary to good work. And they are not hard to secure even in

the poorest school, if the teacher is tactful and patient and truly loves her work.

## Important

"GET the mother, and you have the whole family."—*D. L. Moody.*

"Make a league of prayer with the parents to pray daily for God's blessing on the class."—*Mrs. W. F. Crafts.*

## The Summer School

ARE you going to the Summer School nearest you this year? Are you longing to be a better teacher—to know how you can best teach the little ones intrusted to your care? Hear what Mrs. Barnes says in an imaginary talk with primary teachers on needs and possibilities:

"A primary union is suggested as the only proper remedy, and its benefits are enlarged upon. Our teacher admits that she lives within a few miles of one; but, 'I cannot afford fifty cents every week to reach it.' Then is suggested a list of helpful books; but our teacher replies, 'My means are limited, I cannot buy them.' Another ventures the suggestion that these books might be placed in the school library, as they would be helpful to all. Then one enthusiastic one says, 'Why, you must go to the Summer School at Asbury Park this summer; I went last year, and I have been bubbling over with enthusiasm ever since.' 'But the cost,' our teacher starts to say, but is interrupted with, 'O, I was not through: my school sent me last year, paid all my expenses; and your school should do the same for you.' 'And did it help you?' the first inquires. 'Help me?' our energetic one exclaims; 'Help us?' is heard from different parts of the room, 'why, it is next best to a primary union all the year; you *must* go.' There are several of these primary schools now, held in different parts of the country.

## Child's Consecration Hymn

"JUST as I am," Thine own to be,  
Friend of the young, who lovest me;  
To consecrate myself to thee,  
O Saviour, dear, I come, I come.

In the glad morning of my day,  
My life to give, my vows to pay,  
With no reserve and no delay,  
With all my heart, I come, I come.

I would live ever in the fight,  
I would work ever for the right,  
I would serve thee with all my might,  
Therefore to thee I come, I come.

## International Bible Lessons

## THIRD QUARTER

## LESSON I—July 2

## SENNACHERIB'S INVASION. 2 Chron. 32. 9-23

GOLDEN TEXT: "With us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." 2 Chron. 32. 8.

## Primary Notes

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON



*Introductory to the Quarter's Lessons.* The Old Testament lessons will fill the next six months. This quarter's Golden Text is, "The Lord is thy keeper" (Psa. 121. 5). Make this the keynote of the twelve lessons.

Look forward, dear teachers, and see how this gracious truth is emphasized in Hezekiah's danger and rescue, in his prayer, in the vision of the suffering Saviour and in Isaiah's "invitation," in Manasseh's sin and repentance and Josiah's good reign and his treatment of the book of the law; even in Jehoiakim's ill treatment of the Word, and in Jeremiah's dungeon experience the Lord is still keeper, and in Judah's captivity, while "The Life-Giving Stream" and "Daniel in Babylon" bring out the triumphant note.

How will God keep us? Talk a few minutes about "keeping." Show some precious thing, or mention something kept in a box for safety, or gold kept in a safe or a bank. But these things do not know that they are safe. Pass on to the child kept safely in the house, and the child kept safely along a dangerous path because father walks beside him. Thus lead up to the thought of our Lord's nearness and power, able to keep, and ready always to do it—keeping from harm, keeping from fear and from sin.

Keep the lesson thoughts before the children for review. Small shields may be prepared, with the thought for the day, and hung up each week tied with pink ribbon to a cord stretched across the blackboard. If not by this plan, by some other, at least by writing on the board, preserve the thoughts and review constantly.

*Approach to the Lesson.* The talk on God's keeping will be a sufficient point of contact. Now recur to the stories of Old Testament times which we had last year. Recall that beautiful building, the temple. Once we learned about its being shut up for a long time. Then a good king opened its doors. It was December 4 of last year that we heard about Hezekiah, who did this, and called the people together to God's house. Now

we come back to learn more about this king. We find him in trouble, and we see how God helped him.

*A Great Trouble.* Do good people have trouble, then? Why does not God keep away such things from them? But, then, earth would be just like heaven, and this is not to be just yet. Good people have enemies who try to hurt them. God does not take his children out of this world where trouble comes, but he keeps them in trouble so that it cannot hurt them, and in good time he takes the trouble away. A little boy going with his father begged to go back home when they came to a very rough, muddy place. His father did not allow this, nor did he take away the bad place. He just helped his boy through it, so they went safely on. God treats his children in this way, and so he saved and kept Hezekiah in his trouble, which came from a heathen king.

Describe the threats of the powerful Sennacherib, the great conqueror, who made up his mind to fight against Jerusalem and Hezekiah. Explain title of lesson if taught. Invasion means coming in, and coming in to make trouble and turn others out. Portray the fright of the people, the fierce manner of the heathen king as he sent messages to Hezekiah, who had done all he could to keep him out by stopping the water brooks and getting ready as best he could. Sennacherib's pride and his boasts and wicked words against God may be very briefly told.

*The Prayer and the Answer.* Picture Hezekiah and Isaiah kneeling before God, telling him the story of the trouble, asking help from heaven. They knew God was their keeper, so they turned to him. In a storm you may be safe in the house, but you must not stay outdoors; you must run into the house.

Tell of God's answer. He has many angels as messengers to send. He sent an angel to trouble the Assyrians, to take the life of the captain and hundreds of soldiers, and to send the army home. The king who had dared to say God could not help, any more than a heathen idol, was pun-



ished. Hezekiah and his people, who trusted and prayed, were saved.

*The Lord Our Keeper Gives Help.* Teach Golden Text and illustrate this lesson truth, showing how God keeps and helps children daily.

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*Thought for Teachers.* Remember the aim in teaching this dramatic lesson. It is to impress the thought that God is with us, to help us and fight our battles—battles against wrong and sin. Make a study of childish temptations before teaching.

LESSON II—July 9

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER. Isa. 38. 1-3

GOLDEN TEXT: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psa. 46. 1.

Primary Notes



*Approach.* This lesson aims intensifies that of last Sunday. God is present to help; we must ask help; God gives it. So teach that when Hezekiah's prayer is mentioned the answer will be instantly associated with it.

Lead up to this, after the review, by a little talk of getting into trouble more than once, and getting out again the same way. Tell of a boy who was lost and found after much trouble. He said: "I knew father would come and get me. I kept calling and calling, and by and by he heard. Then he came, and I was safe." This boy got into trouble again. He fell down and hurt himself. He could not get up, but he knew his father was not far off. He called and called, and father came and carried his boy home. Did this father say, "I helped my boy once, and that was enough"? Did the boy say to himself, "I called father once and he helped me, and I must not ask him again"? No, indeed. As often as the boy got into trouble he called for his father. As often as the father heard his child calling he answered and helped him. Our Father in heaven is like that father, and like our own dear fathers. How often do you think your fathers would come to help you if you were in trouble and called for help?

We find in the story to-day that King Hezekiah had another time of trouble: what it was, what he did, and how God helped. God was still this king's keeper. Is he ours just as truly and as much?

*The Great Trouble.* This time it was not some one coming to fight him, some one coming from far away. It was an enemy that crept into the palace, and no one heard. It was sickness. Could a king be sick? Yes, for even palace doors cannot keep out sickness. Listen to what the good prophet Isaiah writes about it, as God told him to put it down in the Bible: "In those days like Hezekiah sick unto death." Why, he was like the nobleman's son we learned about once who was "at the point of death" and Jesus healed him. It was "the second miracle in Cana." But

Hezekiah lived long, long before Jesus came. Was there power to heal him then? Yes, Jesus was the same while in heaven as when he lived below.

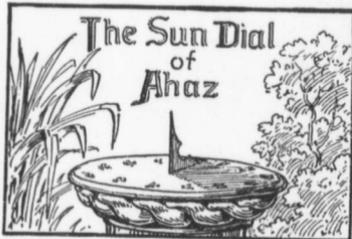
There came a message to the king. Isaiah came to tell him to get ready to die. Whatever he had to do must be done quickly, for the time was short.

*The Prayer and the Answer.* How wonderfully like the last lesson this one is! We can divide up the story in exactly the same way. This is a comfort, for if two things happened so alike, long ago, they can again. In one trouble and in another we will find God our keeper, and may come and talk to him about everything as this king did. Hezekiah did not talk to anyone else about the message. He did not even say, "Send for a new doctor, and see what he says." He had a message from God, and to God only he would speak. Listen. "Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed unto the Lord." He turned away from even the dearest face on earth. Looking away from everything else, he prayed to God. No one else could help. "And Hezekiah wept sore." He was very much troubled and very much in earnest. Don't you think so? He did not just "say his prayers," as we do sometimes, not thinking of the words. Now hear the answer. "Thus saith the Lord, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years."

If time allows tell of the sign given, but do not make too much of this.

*Lesson Truth: The Lord Our Keeper Hears Prayer.* Enlarge upon and illustrate fully. God will always answer, but sometimes may have to say "No."

*Thought for Teachers.* To strengthen children in prayer is not only the object of this lesson, but one constantly before us. Lead to such loving thoughts of God, that whatever he gives will be trustfully taken.



Ask children to repeat this verse after you:

"Now we guard our hearts in prayer,  
 Closely guard the heart.  
 Lest with holy, earnest thoughts  
 Bad ones have their part;  
 When we to our Father pray,  
 Let us mean the things we say."

## LESSON III—July 16

## THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR. Isa. 52. 13 to 53. 12

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53. 6.

## Primary Notes



**Approach.** Lesson-aim, to teach the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

There was once a man who owed another some money. He had promised to pay it, but when the time came he had nothing with which to pay. But, poor as he was, he had a friend who loved him, and had been a friend of his father before him. The man in debt went to his friend and told him all the story. He could not ask the man to whom he owed money to forgive him, for it was an honest debt and he had promised to pay it. The money must be paid, but how? "I will pay it," said the good friend, and so he did, taking it out of his own purse. "Now," said the one whose debt was paid, "I owe you the money, and I will pay it when I can." "But I know," said the friend, "how poor you are and how hard it will be for you to pay. I have a right to say what you shall do, because I have taken your place, as the one in debt, and I have a right to forgive you if I choose. I do forgive you all that debt. You need not pay me that money, for it is too big a sum."

The man was so thankful that he said, "But what can I do to show you how I thank you for all this?" The friend said: "Be my friend now forever. If anybody tries to hurt me, or talk against me, do you stand up for me. If I need anything done, I'll come to you and you may help me. As long as you live, I shall want you to belong to me as my friend."

Do you not think the man whose debt was paid was glad to show his thankfulness by loving and pleasing his friend, by standing up for him always, and doing whatever he asked? I think he was glad to do this. If not, he surely was not thankful, and it would be a sad pity.

**Our Best Friend.** The story to-day is about our very best Friend. He did more for us than any other could, because of his great power. He saves us from something worse than debt and poverty. He forgives our sins. We owed a great debt. It was a debt of obedience. We could not be perfectly obedient, always good, always sinless as the angels are. Jesus, our Saviour, took our place. He was obedient for us, he took all the punishment of disobedience, and now he has a right to say what shall be done. He has a right to forgive us, because he

has done all that we ought to do. He has borne all that we ought to bear.

Isaiah, the prophet, hundreds of years before Jesus came, told how Christ should suffer for us all. He said that people did not receive but despised this man of sorrows who came to save from sin. He told how this Saviour was bruised and hurt for our sakes, and how quiet he was, even like a lamb that never complained when led to be put to death. There was no other great enough, no other good enough to take the place of the sinners in all the world, all the sinners. But Jesus could do this. The Father loved us so that he gave his Son, and the Son loved us so that he gave himself, and so the Golden Text says, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Iniquity is sin, the load of it, the stain of it. Jesus now can set us free, and forgive us because of what he has done for us.

**Lesson Thought.** The Lord our keeper forgives sin.

**Thought for Teachers.** No "lesson help" can do for us what must be done before we can teach this lesson. Let us not try to make the children understand fully just why it is, but lead them to believe that so it is, that Jesus died for our sins, suffering for us. Establish them in this unquestioning faith and love.



## LESSON IV—July 23

## THE GRACIOUS INVITATION. Isa. 55. 1-13

GOLDEN TEXT: "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found." Isa. 55. 6

## Primary Notes



**Approach.** Lesson-aim, to make the Invitation perfectly clear, and lead to its acceptance in childlike trust and joy.

A little talk about invitations. Every child knows what an invitation is, and what must

be done with it. Nobody pays for it, nobody

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forces another to give it, but something must be done with it. The invitation must be answered, and one must say yes or no. If one does not say yes it means no. If one does not go to a party it means staying away. It is even more impolite to give no answer at all than to answer "No."

Once a little boy was very thirsty indeed. He had come a long way in the heat, along a rough, hard road, and he was very tired. A child saw him and said: "Come here and play with me. I have a new toy to show you." But the boy said, "No, thank you." He did not care for the toy or the play just then. Soon a kind woman saw him and said: "Poor boy, how tired and thirsty you must be! Come in and rest and have a cool drink of water." This invitation the boy was glad to accept, though he had refused the other. When he was invited to take what he needed most he said, "Yes, I thank you." How strange it would have been had he refused the rest and the cool drink when he needed them so much! How strange if he had not known that he was thirsty and tired!

Jesus our Saviour knows what people need for their hearts, as well as for their bodies. He offers what they need. Why don't all take it? Perhaps they are too busy with other things to stop and think what they need most. Maybe they don't want to take what Jesus offers to give. But still the Lord keeps on inviting people to come and get the love and help which is better for the heart than water for thirsty people.

Long, long ago, God told his servant Isaiah to speak to the people about what he was ready to give, and so to-day we learn about

**The Gracious Invitation.** What is it? Gracious means of grace, and grace means what is not deserved. A naughty child does not deserve the father's love, care, and forgiveness, but how often the father gives all to the runaway boy if only he will come back.

**Who Invites?** Make it very clear that Jesus, who years afterward said he would give the water of life freely, here calls "Come, all ye who are thirsty."

**Who Are Invited?** All who are thirsty. Those very thirsty, those only a little thirsty, big people, little people—everybody may come.

**How Are All Invited?** Freely, to take without money or price, and the invitation comes lovingly, as well as freely.

**To Whom Are All Invited to Come?** To Jesus. He is the best Friend. Why should people spend money for what is not good, when Jesus will give freely all that is best for them? There is love enough for all, and help for everyone.

**Now is the Time to Come,** without even waiting to care more or for anything.

**Lesson Thought, Jesus Our Keeper Invites**

Us. The kind woman who gave the boy a drink couldn't keep him from being thirsty again. Jesus can give us help now, and keep us always from evil and harm.

**Thought for Teachers.** These figurative lessons are beset with a peril of their own. Guard against vague or mistaken notions by making clear that Jesus's love, power, and help are needed as we need water and will be as freely given.

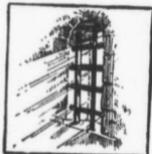


### LESSON V—July 30

#### MANASSEH'S SIN AND REPENTANCE. 2 Chron. 33. 1-13

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14. 34.

#### Primary Notes



**Approach.** Lesson-aim, to teach repentance as a sorrow for wrongdoing which leads one to do so no more.

Once a boy set out along a plain road to find his uncle's house.

His mother told him exactly how to go, and there was no need of losing the way. But the boy met some merry fellows who were going another way, and when they came to the turn in the road they begged him to go with them. They said, "You can take another turn by and by, and get back to this straight road by a path through the fields after we have had our fun in the woods." At last Harry turned off the straight road and went with the boys, "just for a little while," he told himself. But he could not go as fast as the others, and at last they got tired of him and ran off. What could Harry do then? He tried to find the path that led across to the right way, but could not find it. The only thing to do was to turn right round and go back the way he came till he reached the right road again. This he did, and when he found the plain way he kept straight on. Now, when Harry turned

right round and went the other way, which led back to the right road, he repented, for repentance is to turn around and go the right way.

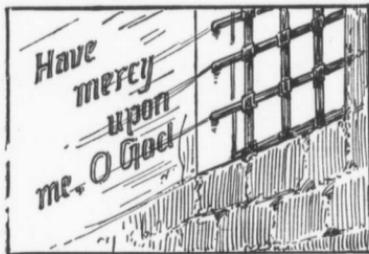
*The Boy King.* Tell about Manasseh, the twelve-year-old king, of his good father, in whose ways he did not walk, and of his long years of idol worship. Dwell upon this being worse because the boy's father had set him a better example.

*Manasseh's Sin.* First, he did not worship God as his father did. Next, he did worship a false god, and, worse than all, put up an idol, a carved image in God's house. Not doing right leads to doing wrong.

*The Punishment.* God says he will punish sin, and he must. A father punished his boy for doing wrong, saying, "If I don't, he will keep on."

*The Repentance.* Describe the turning of the king's heart to God, after which God forgave and brought him back home.

Put five steps of repentance on board, and drill children upon them: First, feel sorry; second, say so; third, "Please forgive me"; fourth, turn right around; fifth, follow Jesus.



### Whisper Songs for July

FIRST LESSON  
LORD of the living,  
Master of death,  
Breathe on me, giving  
Life by thy breath.

SECOND LESSON  
Singing or sighing,  
Saviour divine,  
Living or dying,  
Still we are thine.

THIRD LESSON  
Suffering Saviour,  
Bearing our sin,  
Help us, we pray thee,  
Heaven to win.

FOURTH LESSON  
Hark! he is calling,  
"Come unto me,"  
Lord, we are coming—  
Coming to thee.

FIFTH LESSON  
Keep us, O keep us  
Close to thy side,  
Lest the world lead us  
Far into pride.

### Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

#### Third Quarter

(Strike the bell softly three times. At once begin to repeat, children following:)

The bell has struck its one, two, three:  
"Be still!" is what it says to me,  
For this is God's most holy day,  
And I am here to learn his way.  
So now, with all my heart, I'll seek  
To hear the words that he will speak.

*Teacher.* The Lord is in his holy temple.

*Class.* Let all the earth keep silence before him. (All fold hands and bow heads.)

*T.* Dear Lord, bless our Sunday school today.

*C.* Amen.

*T.* This is the day which the Lord hath made.

*C.* We will rejoice and be glad in it.

SINGING. A familiar praise song.

WHISPER PRAYER. (After teacher.)

Lord, help me, when I try to pray,  
Not only mind the words I say,  
But may I try with watchful care,  
To have my heart go with my prayer.

PRAYER.

CREED.

BRIEF REVIEW.

GIVING SERVICE.

*T.* What does our Lord say about giving?

*C.* It is more blessed to give than to receive.

BIRTHDAY OFFERINGS.

CONCERT RECITATION.

We bring our gifts to Jesus,  
And lay them at his feet;  
O, give them, Lord, some work to do,  
Some holy service sweet;  
Our hearts, our lives, our offerings take,  
And bless them for our Saviour's sake.

ADDITIONAL LESSON.

MOTION EXERCISE.

Take my hands, dear Jesus,  
(Hands outstretched.)

Let them work for thee;  
Never let them idle,

Or in mischief be. (Drop hands.)  
Let me lift them humbly,

(Lift hands.)

As I now draw near,  
Let me fold them softly

(Fold hands.)

As thy word I hear.

LESSON TAUGHT.

ECHO PRAYER.

*T.* Little children, love one another.

*C.* Even as Christ hath loved us.

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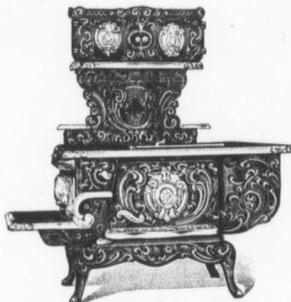
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