

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson VI.—Third Quarter, For Aug. 5, 1917.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, II Chron. xxxiii, 1-20—Memory Verses, 12, 13—Golden Text, Isa. lv, 7—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

There are so many things in the affairs of this world which we cannot understand that we can only find rest in remembering that the Lord liveth, and He is not discouraged, and He shall finally subdue all things unto Himself. It therefore becomes us to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him (Isa. xlii, 4; Rev. xvii, 14; Ps. xxxvii, 7; Phil. iii, 10, 21). That Abaz should be such a wicked king, Hezekiah, his son, such a good king and Manasseh, his son, such a monstrosity of iniquity is surely a strange sequence of events, which I certainly do not profess to begin to understand, but I rest in Him who foresees and overrules all things. There is something worthy of prayerful consideration in the fact that Hezekiah had fifteen years added to his life after his serious illness (Isa. xxxviii, 5), but did not render to God for this extension of time as he should have done (II Chron. xxxii, 25).

Manasseh must have been born about three years after that illness, as he was twelve years old when he began reign (xxxiii, 1), and the question presents itself. Was it a real blessing to Hezekiah to have his life thus prolonged? When we are determined to have our own way God sometimes indulges us, even though He knows it is not the best thing for us, as when He gave Israel their request, but sent leanness into their soul (Ps. cix, 15). A mother once told me that when her two boys were very young they were sick unto death, but she would not give them up, and God let them live. But they grew up to give her a broken heart. Whole hearted submission to the perfect will of God is the better way. Contrast the Lord Jesus at the age of twelve about His Father's business and returning to the lowly home at Nazareth, there to be subject to Mary for the next eighteen years (Luke ii, 42-52).

Manasseh's reign was the longest of any of the kings of Judah, fifty-five years, and part of it was the very worst, according to the record in lesson verses 3-10. He wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord and caused Judah and Jerusalem to err and to do worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel, and, though the Lord spake to him and to his people, they would not hearken (verses 2, 6, 9, 10). He was surely controlled by the devil during that part of his reign.

The Lord permitted the kings of Assyria to take him and bind him and carry him to Babylon, and there in his affliction he humbled himself greatly before God and prayed unto Him, and God heard him and brought him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then he knew that Jehovah was God (verses 11-13). In the Apocrypha there is a prayer recorded as his, part of which is: "Thou, O Lord, according to Thy great goodness, hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against Thee. * * * I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea; * * * I have set up abominations and have multiplied offenses. O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities, wherefore, I humbly beseech Thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not with mine iniquities."

Whatever his actual prayer was, God, who reads the heart, saw that he was sincere and abundantly pardoned him, according to Isa. lv, 7. Whatever encouragement there is in this and in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and of the penitent thief for any and every sinner, however great, to turn to the Lord, for He came to save sinners, and His word ever stands, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi, 37). He is not willing that any should perish and has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (II Pet. iii, 9; Ezek. xxxiii, 11). His cry to sinners is, Look unto me and be saved; incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live. And to His own who have wandered He cries: O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end! O that my people had hearkened unto me and Israel had walked in my ways! (Isa. xlv, 22; lv, 3; Deut. xxxii, 29; Ps. lxxxii, 13). When restored to Jerusalem and to his kingdom he endeavored to right some of the wrongs he had done and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. He offered peace offerings and thank offerings unto the Lord and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel (verses 14-17).

Such a change in such a man must have impressed many and turned many to the Lord, but we shall see as we go on in our lessons that the turning of the people away from God was very desperate, and it was not long until Judah was carried into captivity for her sins. The turning away from God and His word in our day is as God foresaw that it would be (II Tim iii, 1-5; iv, 3, 4; I Pet. iii, 3, 4; Luke xvii, 26-30), but He will build His church and take her to Himself and bring her back with Him in glory, and Israel shall then welcome Him, and they shall never be unrighteous any more, but shall be a blessing to all nations, and the earth shall be filled with His glory through Israel, His chosen messengers, according to Ps. lxxvii.

CONTENTED!

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RATIFICATION NOTICE

In the Orphans' Court of Carroll County; June Term, 1917.

Estate of George S. Valentine, deceased. On application, it is ordered, this 3rd day of July, 1917, that the sale of Real Estate of George S. Valentine, late of Carroll County, deceased, made by Sarah C. Valentine, Executrix of the last Will and Testament of said deceased, and this day reported to this Court by the said Executrix, be ratified and confirmed, unless cause be shown to the contrary on or before the 1st Monday, 6th day of August, next; provided a copy of this order be inserted for three successive weeks in some newspaper printed and published in Carroll county, before the 5th Monday, 30th day of July, next.

The report states the amount of sale to be \$1800.00.

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