

The Sunday-School

FOURTH QUARTER.
LESSON IX.—Dec. 11.

CAPTIVITY OF THE TEN TRIBES.

KINGS 17: 6-18.

The Lesson includes 2 Kings 17, together with a review of Amos and Hosea, who describe in more detail the sins referred to in 2 Kings 17, and Hosea especially sets forth the constraining love of God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* I Pet. 3: 12.

Learn by heart Prov. 1: 29-31; Hos. 11: 8; Matt. 11: 28-30.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.*—The fall of Samaria took place in December, 722, or early in 721. All authorities agree here. It was about six years after the last lesson.

Place.—Samaria, the capital of Israel.

Rulers.—Hosea was king of Israel, the captivity taking place in his ninth year. Hezekiah, king of Judah, sixth year (2 Kings 18: 10). The invasion of Israel, by Assyria, was begun by Shalmaneser IV, but Samaria was captured by his successor, Sargon, who had been his general-in-chief, and began to reign December, 722.

Prophets.—Isaiah and Micah were prophesying in Judah at this time. Amos, after bearing his testimony against the sins of Israel, died some thirty years before the end. Hosea, the prophet of Israel, died shortly before the captivity.

Secular History.—Authentic history began in Greece with the Olympiads, B. C. 776. Rome was founded B. C. 753. Assyria was the dominant, overshadowing power.

THE EPITAPH OVER THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.—V. 6. *In the ninth year of Hosea. Six years after Hezekiah began to reign. The king of Assyria, Shalmaneser IV carried on the war, destroying all the surrounding country, and laid siege to Samaria. Carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Halah. On the Euphrates, not far from Nineveh. In Habor. The present river Khabor, a branch of the Euphrates from the north, the river of Gozan, in northern Mesopotamia. In the cities of the Medes. Far east of Assyria, including modern Persia. These deportations of a whole population, with their women and children, their wagons and flocks, are depicted on Sargon's series of tablets in his splendid palace at Khorsabad.*

What became of Hosea we do not know, only that he disappears from history.

THE MORAL DISEASE FROM WHICH THE NATION PERISHED. — Vs. 7-12. The reason for this calamity was that the people had come into that condition in which it was impossible to destroy the sin without at the same time destroying the sinner. *Turned against the Lord, their God, whom they owed all things. Which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. By a mighty deliverance. Feared. Worshipped. Walked in the statutes. They substituted heathen forms of worship and heathen morals. Whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. The Israelites were committing exactly the same sins in account of which the heathen were driven out before them.*

And of the kings of Israel, who introduced the worship of the golden calf, and the worship of Baal. Did secretly. They cloaked their idolatry with pretenses that it was a worship of Jehovah. From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. The towers in which watchmen were stationed to keep guard over the flocks and crops were always in lonely spots, while fenced cities implied many inhabitants. So the sense appears to be "in the loneliest as well as in the most populous places. Images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree. The hilltops, with groves of trees, were especially selected for heathen shrines. There they burned incense as a mode of worship. And wrought wicked things. The shade of the trees became bowers of iniquity.

THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD. V. 13. *Yet the Lord testified against Israel. He showed them their sin and danger. By all the prophets, who speak forth God's Word. And by all the seers. Those who see visions which God reveals. Prophets of every kind were sent. Elisha, Jonah, Amos and Hosea, who in every way warned and entreated the people. Thus threatenings and warnings from all, but especially from Amos, were placed as barriers in their way.*

AND YET THEY WENT ON IN THE WAY TO RUIN.—Vs. 14-18. *But hardened their necks. It expresses unbending obstinacy and self-will. That did not believe in the Lord. They knew his existence, but they did not trust in his guidance. Statutes. Commands. And his covenant. So the law was called, because it was an agreement between God and his people, he to preserve and defend them, they to obey. His testimonies. His law. And . . . followed vanity. Idols who were absolutely powerless to help them. Became vain. Weak, helpless. Molten images, even two calves. Which Jeroboam had made and placed in Bethel and Dan as centres of false worship. Host of heaven. Represented by Baal, the sun-god. Caused their sons . . . to pass through the fire. This was done in the worship of Molech. The Rabbins tell us this idol was made of brass, and that the head was that of a calf with a crown upon it. It was made hollow, and a furious fire was kindled within it. . . . When the arms were red hot, the victim was thrown into them, and was almost immediately burned to death. Divination and enchantments. These were different ways of seeking to know future events, and of imposing upon the people. And sold themselves to do evil. The metaphor is taken from the practise of men selling themselves into slavery. Therefore the Lord was very angry, with moral indignation, an intense hatred of sin. The result was, as described in V. 6, they "ate the fruit of their own way, and were filled with their own devices." They "set at naught all Wisdom's counsel, and would none of her reproof," till their "fear became as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwind."*

The result was in accordance with the divine laws. An irreligious community tends inevitably to become a "dissolute community."

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

No nation and no individual can attain the highest good from life without supreme consecration to God.

The "rise and fall" of Israel is a picture of what is going on continually among individuals.

There is a "too late." One may disregard the laws of health for a time, and the restorative powers of nature may make recovery possible; but there is a point beyond which the disease is incurable.

We are never to forget God's loving-kindness, that uses every means to lead us to repentance and a better life.

God is always working in us and around us for a better life in our souls.

THE RUBBER GLOVES.

There is nothing more innocent-looking than a charged electric wire, but few things are more dangerous. The other morning I saw a lamp-tender stop at a corner of the street, and let down the globe which holds the electric lamp. He looked at it, but he did not touch it until he had taken a pair of rubber gloves out of his pocket, and put them on.

Then I remembered that a workman in that same city, coming in the early morning to replace the carbons of the lamp, had been killed by the discharge of electricity remaining in the wires after the current had been shut off at the power-house. He forgot the possible danger; he neglected the assured means of safety; and he paid the penalty with forfeit of his life.

It made me think of possible reminders of peril in the surroundings of temptations which we imagine we have wholly overcome. We all know that the smell of wine excites the sleeping alcoholic appetite. We may think that we are proof against the temptation to speak evil of our neighbors; but, if we get into the circle of gossip and backbiting, we may find our sleeping appetite for malicious sarcasm re-awakening. We may think that sensuality is dead, but the touch of an impure book or word or play will start it back to fearful life. We may have armed ourselves against unrighteous anger, but a moment's lack of vigilance in the face of some small provocation may give room for a storm of bitterness which we shall long repent.

We are sent into a world of temptations, and our business, like the lamp-tender's, requires us to handle matters in which a remnant of temptation may be found. Our only chance is never to touch the world without putting on the non-conducting gloves of prayer. If, standing at our side and knowing that we grow by overcoming, God does not at once and wholly answer when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation." He will surely answer when we add, "Deliver us from evil." And as the prudent lamp-tender puts on gloves for every lamp he handles, we must protect ourselves by prayer in every new experience, not knowing where the remainder of Satan's power may lurk.

An Efficient Treatment of Catarrh

Will first destroy the germs that excite the disease. Then there are numberless sore spots in the mucous membrane to be healed. Every requirement of a perfect cure for catarrh is found in fragrant healing Catarrhzone, which not only instantly kills the germs, but restores the diseased membranes to a normal condition and prevents the relapse which is sure to follow the use of ordinary remedies. Catarrhzone is a specific cure for catarrh that relieves quicker, is more pleasant, more certain to cure than any other known remedy. Failure is impossible, lasting cure is guaranteed. Use only Catarrhzone. Two months' treatment \$1.00; trial 25c. Get it to-day.

Why is a beehive like a bad potato? A beehive is a bee holder, a beholder is a spectator and a specked 'tater is a bad 'tater.

Ayer's

One dose of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral at bedtime prevents night coughs of children. No croup. No bronchitis. A

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Keep the bowels open with one of Ayer's Pills at bedtime, just one.

A man went out to sow clover seed. He sowed across the field and back. He examined closely and saw no clover springing up, so he quit sowing and went home, declaring his failure. Foolish man. Just like some brethren who want the preacher to quit and go home if the seed he sows does not spring up immediately.

Trial Proves Its Excellence.—The best testimonial one can have of the virtue of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil in the treatment of bodily pains, coughs, colds, and affections of respiratory organs, is a trial of it. If not found the sovereign remedy it is reputed to be, then it may be rejected as useless, and all that has been said in its praise denounced as untruthful.

Why is Westminster Abbey like a fireplace? It contains the ashes of the grate (great).

A sprained ankle is not an uncommon accident. Pain Killer relieves and cures almost as if by magic. The greatest household remedy. Avoid substitutes. There is but one Pain Killer, Perry Davis'. 25 and 50 cents.

What kind of church would yours be, if the members were all just like you?

We must go from heated rooms to the cold outer air, and the change sets us coughing. Curing winter colds is not hard if you take Allen's Lung Balsam. A neglected cold is troublesome and dangerous.

Have your wife and children gained anything by your joining the church?

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