

The Christian Visitor.

History for Young Persons.—Chap. XIX.

THE KINGS OF NINEVEH.

The most interesting story concerning the king and people of Nineveh is that related in the book of Jonah: and to show its importance, I need only remind you of the Lord's reference to it, when the unbelieving Jews rejected his word. It was a very unusual thing that a prophet of the Lord should be sent to a city of the Gentiles; and Jonah, doubtless knowing the character of the people, and being full of Jewish exclusiveness, did not like to go. You know, however, the remarkable manner in which he was taught that the will of the Lord must be done; and how he was obliged to deliver God's message. The people of Israel were disobedient; and the Lord would show it was possible to make those whom he was preparing to punish them more obedient. It is said that Nineveh was a walled city, sixty miles in extent; for much land was enclosed and cultivated in fields and gardens, that the inhabitants might secure a supply of food if they were shut in by their enemies. The number of inhabitants must have been very great; for God told Jonah that there were 120,000 persons in it that could not tell their right hand from their left; and whether this expression signified very young children, or described the ignorance of the people, the mercy of God is equally conspicuous. He thought also of the much cattle feeding in the pastures within those walls; for not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge. The Assyrians of Nineveh were very wicked people, and idolaters, like all their countrymen: but immediately that the Lord's message was proclaimed through their city, they began to repent; for they believed God. They proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the least even to the greatest: even the king rose from the throne and humbled himself with his people; and all of them turned from their evil way and the violence that was in their hands. (B. C. 862.) In consequence of this repentance, the destruction of the city was delayed till another generation. Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah ii. 9.) He is a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, &c. (iv. 2). In B. C. 771, Pul, the king of Assyria, was suffered to enter the land of Israel; but Menahem, the reigning king, persuaded him to return home, by promising him a great sum of money: this he raised from the wealthiest of his subjects: and as it pleased the Lord to bear still longer with Israel, Pul retired quietly into his own country.

Sardanapalus (supposed to be the son of Pul) was the last of the kings of Nineveh. His immense riches were sadly misused; for he surpassed all who had gone before him in luxury and self-indulgence. He lived constantly in his sumptuous palace, spending his whole time in gross sins or childish follies. Semiramis had acted like a bold and wicked man: Sardanapalus dressed like a woman, and often amused himself in spinning amongst his many wives. Arbaces, the governor of Media, which was a part of his dominions, and Belesis, the governor of Babylon, the second city of his empire, united together, and taking advantage of the king's known weakness, attacked him in Nineveh. Sardanapalus, feeling that he was about to lose everything which he valued, determined that his rebellious officers should not enjoy his treasures. He caused all his precious things to be heaped together in his palace; and then setting fire to the whole pile, he perished in the flames with his wives and servants. How fearful is such an end; yet how much worse will be the everlasting burnings! Where is your treasure? Not I hope in the world that will soon pass away. If your delight is in Jesus you will be happy; for at God's right hand, where Jesus is, there are "pleasures for evermore."

Arbaces (the Tiglath-Pileser of Scripture), who seized upon Nineveh after the dreadful death of Sardanapalus, was the next rod used by God to chasten Israel; he took possession of many of their cities, and carried away a number of the people as slaves. At this time the Syrians, an idolatrous people to the north of Judea who had risen to great power, were permitted by the Lord to afflict the people of Judah for the correction of their sins. Being distressed by the Syrian army, Ahaz, the king, foolishly sent to Tiglath-Pileser for

help; but this only increased their troubles. Pekah, the king of Israel, though his people were brought low, came up against Judah; and 120,000 men of Judah were slain in one day, because they had forsaken the God of their fathers; for Ahaz himself was an idolater, and had encouraged them in this sin. At the same time, the Syrians carried away a great multitude of captives to their chief city, Damascus; and thus Judah was brought very low. The year after, Tiglath-Pileser entered Damascus with a great army, slew Rezin the king, and carried away all his people as captives: thus was fulfilled the prophecy concerning the end of this kingdom (Amos i. 4, 5).

While Ahaz was yet reigning over Judah, the king of Israel was killed; and, after some years of confusion, Hoshea, his murderer, obtained the kingdom. The miseries of Israel fast increased. Shalmaneser, who succeeded Tiglath-Pileser as king of Nineveh, first subjected them so far as to make Hoshea promise to hold the power as his servant, and pay him a yearly tribute. But Hoshea, soon becoming weary of the Assyrian rule, asked the help of the Egyptians. Shalmaneser then besieged Samaria, the royal city of Israel. Hoshea resisted for three years; but at the end of that time he was taken prisoner by the king of Nineveh, and carried captive to Assyria with almost all his people (B. C. 721). From that time the, the great mass of the Ten Tribes have lost and confounded among the nations, and not distinguished as the people of God. This was the sentence pronounced by the prophet Hosea—they should be called Lo-ammi, that is, "not my people;" but it is certain that the Lord knows where their descendants are; and in due time he will recover the lost, and reunite them with Judah, under one head, even Christ, "and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God," &c. (Eze. xxxvii). Hosea was especially the prophet of Israel; and as the judgments which he foretold are literally fulfilled, so must we expect the promised blessings yet to come upon them.

The kingdom of Israel lasted two hundred and fifty years from the time of its separation from Judah.

The captives were at first chiefly settled in the cities of Media; and that province formed a part of the Assyrian empire till it was erected into an independent kingdom by Deioces, an ambitious Mede, who began to reign B. C. 710.

[To be Continued.]

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

NAMES.

Alfred, means peace; Anna, gracious; Beula, married; Caroline, noble minded; Charles, stout; Chloe, green heel; Catharine, pure light; Deborah, a bee; Dorcus, a roebuck; David, beloved; Eve, she lived; Esther, hidden, secret; Ellen, valour; Emma, a noble; Francis, free; George, a farmer; Gertrude, true to her trust; Henry, honour; Hannah, merciful; Julia, soft; Lucifer, light-bearer; Mary, a tear; Martha, bitterness; Margaret, a pearl; Robert, famous in counsel; Roger, desire for rest; Richard, large hearted; Rachel, a sheep; Sarah, princess; Susannah, a lily; Sophia, wisdom; Sophronia, prudence; Thomas, a twin, or two hearts; William, a shield; Walter, an army.

Parental Example.

If your children love you, their tastes, and their notions of excellence will correspond with the traits of your character. Thus, it is of the highest importance that, while you win their devoted affections, you present them in your own self, with a model of holiness. Every blemish upon your character—every excellence that you lack, has a power to mislead your children, which is proportionate to the love they bear you. There is no view that is calculated so tenderly to press upon unregenerated hearts the necessity of personal, consistent piety; and there is no view, but that of the Saviour, that is more powerful upon believing parents, to excite them to live near to God.

How can you expect your children to love and obey God, unless they see by your con-

duct that you yield him obedience and love? They quickly learn to understand his commands, and they shrewdly discern the amount of your reverence for them. And if they find that those who are their models have no conscientiousness toward God, how can you expect them to revere his laws?

How can you expect them to PRAY to God, unless they see you pray, and thus confess your dependence, going to him for all things? If you would teach them to pray, and to be chiefly mindful of God and unseen and eternal things, there must be something—some arrangement holding a prominent place amid your household, calculated continually to cultivate these spiritual habits. Precepts will effect but little. Let them see that you are ever mindful of God, and of the great end of your spiritual existence—that you are thus mindful when you first wake from slumber, and when you lie down at eventide. Let them see that God is so prominent in your thoughts, that you cannot undertake the duties of the day without his blessing, nor rest in quiet at night without a committal of yourself and your beloved household to his kindness and care. Let them see that while they are your children, you acknowledge yourself to be a child of a great Father, and kneel down with affection and simplicity, and sincerity, to pour out your soul before him. Let your language in these exercises be simple, and your words few, that your children may neither be weary, or entirely uninstructed. O what a place and a posture is this for the parent, by solemn illustration, to teach his family the beauty of penitence for wrongs committed, and the delights of chastened love and obedience!

EXAMPLE is a mighty instrumentality—the most potent instructor. What God is—heaven is; and what the parent is—that may the family be expected to be. An evil or even a deficient example here, may prove a curse which nothing but the grace of God can avert; whereas, a devout, prayerful, holy example, is that instrumentality, which God has expressed both by his word and dealings, an abundant readiness to bless.

Pages might be easily and appropriately added here, on the importance of guarding against the evil influences of a wicked world, which, notwithstanding all parental diligence, tend to seduce the heart from God. The truth is one of awakening import—that our children are to be educated, if possible, in the exercise of feelings, thoughts and habits entirely different from those with which the world is full, and with which they must daily meet? We not only have good influences to secure in that domestic circle which—God be praised—is a place we can control; but we have an army of evil influences to resist—an army opening on every hand their devouring mouths to consume our offspring. Oh how many parents have trembled and wept and prayed, as they have been obliged to send forth their little lambs from the domestic fold, amid these ravaging wolves! Many hearts have ached, and many hairs have hastened to be gray, as the dubious progress or the sad downfalls of these little ones have been painfully and anxiously watched.

Pleasure, Fame and Power.

The experience of most wordlings has been Solomon's sorrow, repeated with the variations incident to altered circumstances, and the diminished intensity to be expected in feeble men—vanity and vexation of spirit all over again. And as we are sometimes more impressed by modern instances than by Bible examples, we could call into court nearly as many witnesses as there have been hunters of happiness—mighty Nimrods in the chase of pleasure, and fame, and power.

We might ask the statesman, and as we wished him a "happy new-year," Lord Dundas would answer, "It had need to be happier than the last, for I never knew one happy day in it." We might ask the successful lawyer, and the warriest, luckiest, and most self-complacent of them all would answer, as Lord Eldon was privately recording when the whole bar envied the Chancellor, "A few weeks will send me to dear Encombe, as a short resting place between vexation and the grave." We might ask the golden millionaire, "You must be a happy man, Mr. Rothschild?" "Happy! me happy! What, happy! when just as you are going to dine you have a letter placed in your hands, saying, 'If you do not send £500, I will blow your brains out?' Happy! when you have to sleep

with pistols at your pillow?" We might ask the world-favoured warrior, and get for another answer the "Miserere" of the emperor-monk Charles V., or the sigh of a broken heart from St. Helena. We might ask the brilliant courtier, and Lord Chesterfield would tell us, "I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and I do not regret their loss. I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which move the gaudy machines! and I have seen and smelled the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decorations, to the astonishment of an ignorant audience." We might ask the dazzling wit, and, faint with a glut of glory, yet disgusted with the creatures who adored him, Voltaire would condense the essence of his existence into one word, "Ennui." And we might ask the world's poet, and we would be answered with an imprecation by that splendid genius, Byron, who

"Drank every cup of joy—heard every trump
Of fame; drank early, deeply drank; drank draughts
That common millions might have quenched—then died
Of thirst, because there was no more to drink."

Be Diligent.

The Christian should be diligent. He has a great work to do. Every branch of benevolence, of reform, demands his attention. The world is so full of sin and misery that he must be perpetually at war, battling against sin. His time to work is short, and hence he should work while the day lasts. Dilatoriness is a great discouragement to the brotherhood; one indolent brother will often destroy the flock. How often the devoted pastors has been discouraged, and his ways of usefulness hedged up by the backwardness of his members. His preaching flies back into his face, his prayer meetings are dull and thinly attended; no prayers go up for him on the success of his efforts from the family altar, or the closet, and he feels as if wind and tide are against him, and he faints under his burden. But where there is diligence, the word has free course, the prayer room is a sacred place, and from the closet goes up such entreaties for the success of the truth, that it seems that an invisible hand drives on the car. Diligent ministers are a comfort to the people. Small talents and great diligence surmount formidable obstacles, but great talents and little diligence sink under the weight of a straw. Let us all be diligent.—Morning Star.

The Resistless Argument.

Mr. VAN LENNEP, Missionary to Constantinople, states an interesting fact respecting a Turkish pasha, who in a recent trip of the steamer from Smyrna, conversed very fluently and intelligently with the passengers in French and Italian, on European science, art and politics. In the course of conversation, he told them that if they supposed, from his acquaintance with the language, he had adopted the religious views of their people, or was a sort of infidel, like many of his people who had become half Europeanized, they were mistaken, as he was a real Musselman, a Turk of the old stamp. "But," said he, "if I were to become a Christian, I should become a Protestant." As they all expressed surprise, he went to the library of the steamer, and taking up an English Bible, asked them if they had read it. They all said they had not. "Read it," said he, "and you will know my reason; I read it once through in Italian,"—and pointing to his head and heart—"it remained here and here."

Endure Hardship.

As a gladiator trained the body, so must we train the mind to self-sacrifice, "to endure all things," to meet and overcome difficulty and danger. We must take the rough and thorny road as well as the smooth and pleasant; and a portion at least of our daily duty must be hard and disagreeable; for the mind cannot be kept strong and healthy in perpetual sunshine only, and the most dangerous of all states is that of constantly recurring pleasure, ease, and prosperity. Most persons will find difficulties and hardships enough without seeking them; let them not repine, but take them as a part of that educational discipline necessary to fit the mind to arrive at its highest good.—[Education of the Feelings, by Charles Bray.]