

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Sunday, Sept. 24th, 1876.—REVIEW: Upon Solomon.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Eccl. xii. 14.

Superintendent and school read Eccl. i. 12-18; ii. 1-11.

DAILY READINGS.

MONDAY. *Solomon Designated and Counseled.* (a) To Bathsheba. 1 Kings i. 28-31. (b) To priests and prophets. 1 Kings i. 32-40. (c) Counseled. 1 Kings iii. 1-11.

TUESDAY. *Solomon Proclaimed King.* (a) First anointing. 1 Kings i. 39. B. C. 1075. (b) Second anointing. 1 Chron. xxix. 22-28. (c) Duration of kingdom. B. C. 975. 1 Kings xi. 42.

WEDNESDAY. *Solomon's Foreign Alliances.* (a) With Egypt. 1 Kings iii. 1; vii. 8; ix. 16. (b) With Phœnicia. 1 Kings v; ix. 10-14; x. 22. (c) With Arabia. 1 Kings ix. 20-28.

THURSDAY. *Solomon's Undertakings.* (a) For Israel a temple. 1 Kings vi. 1-12. (b) For himself a house. 1 Kings vii. 1-12. (c) For Jerusalem a wall. 1 Kings iii. 1.

FRIDAY. *Solomon's Wisdom.* (a) Judicial wisdom. 1 Kings iii. 16-18. (b) Enigmatical wisdom. 1 Kings x. 1-10. (c) Proverbial wisdom. 1 Kings ix. 32-34.

SATURDAY. *Solomon's Folly and Punishment.* (a) Folly. 1 Kings xi. 1-8. (b) Punishment. 1 Kings xi. 9-40.

SUNDAY. *The One "Greater than Solomon."* (a) A warning. Matthew xii. 42. (b) A comfort. Luke xii. 27, 28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs iv. 23.

QUESTIONS FOR QUICK ANSWERS.—Who was Solomon's mother? What year before Christ did he begin to reign? How long did he reign? Making the close of his reign what year before Christ? What daughter of a foreign king did Solomon marry? What did he build for her? 1 Kings ix. 24. What Phœnician king helped Solomon greatly in building both the Temple and his own house? What were Solomon's three great undertakings? In what affair did Solomon show himself to be a just and sagacious judge? What queen failed to baffle Solomon by her enigmas? How many proverbs did Solomon speak? 1 Kings iv. 32. Notwithstanding Solomon's great wisdom, he sinned greatly; what happened to his kingdom? 1 Kings xi. 29-33. Who is revealed to be "greater than Solomon"? Referring to what incident in Solomon's life does Jesus solemnly warn the unbelieving? Appealing to what flower surpassing the glory of Solomon does Jesus strengthen the believer's faith? What was the occasion of all that was sad in the three reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon? Galatians iii. 22. What was the occasion of all that was good? Psalm cxviii. 1. What should be the language of all? Psalm cxxx. 3, 4.

P. S.—Fifteen minutes at the close of the school may well be employed in remarks by the superintendent and teachers, interspersed with prayer and singing. In closing, let all repeat distinctly and solemnly aloud, this grand conclusion, committed to-day to memory:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes xii. 14.

EXPOSITION.—Answers to the above Questions.—Solomon's mother was Bathsheba (1 Kings i. 11), married by David after he had committed adultery with her, and failing to hide his shame had caused the death of her former husband, Uriah. 2 Samuel xi, especially verses 26, 27. Solomon's reign, it is calculated, began B. C. 1015, continued forty years (1 Kings xi. 41), and therefore closed B. C. 975. He had a close alliance with Egypt, marrying, for one of his seven hundred wives (1 Kings xi. 3), one of Pharaoh's daughters (1 Kings iii. 1), and honoring her above all the rest by the erection of a separate palace for her (1 Kings ix. 24); and with Phœnicia, especially with the cities of Tyre and Sidon, in consequence of which, chiefly through King Hiram's friendly services, he was greatly aided in the construction of the Temple, his own palace, and his other edifices (1 Kings v, also ix. 26-28, and other passages); with Syria, enjoying a monopoly of the horse trade between Egypt and that country (1 Kings x. 28, 29. From the "women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, Hittites, and other heathen nations, against God's explicit commands, and to his own shame and hurt, he took to himself wives (1 Kings xi, especially verses 1-8,

In Matthew xii. 42 (compare Luke xi. 31), Jesus refers to the queen of Sheba, Seba on "the south," and to her visit to Solomon, and asserts his superiority to Solomon, and hence the greater wonder that his works and words show, and, but for the sinful blindness and hardness of heart prevalent, would excite. The comparison of the glory of the lilies and that of Solomon's robes, is recorded in Matthew vi. 28, 29, and its lesson is one of the most needed, and, most blessed ever taught and enforced. That Solomon was not given over to sin, but restored, and the love of God rekindled in his heart, was of God's sovereign grace. Go do we see both goodness and severity, and both call "to repentance."

The Sources of his Prosperity. The inheritance of Solomon was truly regal. He came to the throne in an opportune time. The long and prosperous reign of his father transmitted to him a kingdom wide and strong, a people united and happy, a treasury rich and full. The military genius of David had extended the bounds of his dominions almost to the limits of the original promise. The spoils of many a captured city had come to enrich Jerusalem, and the tribute of nations on all sides was flowing in to lighten the burdens of the people, and swell the consecrated stores held in reserve for the great work of the coming reign.

Solomon's endowments were regal. He possessed a mind of rarest balance, clearest insight, widest comprehension. Doubtless as a child he was gentle, thoughtful, serious; as a youth meditative and studious, yet generous in act, and noble in sentiment; as a young man, discreet beyond his years, wise in the wisdom of the world, full of expedients, a man of peace, yet a man of activity, and skilled in affairs. Being such a man, and inheriting such a kingdom, and such hopes, we should naturally expect prosperity and a happy reign. What more is needed than appears on the surface to help on to greatness and glory!

The roots of Solomon's prosperity lay in nothing less than the divine blessing. They drew vitality and strength from the blessing of God.

Happiness and Safety in it while Consecrated. Riches, honor, power, are not evils. Prosperity has in it no inherent mischief. God gave it to Solomon as a blessing, as a mark of good will. All the things which are included in prosperity are fitted to man's happiness and worth. If a man be right they can do him no harm. Only let all be consecrated, held and used for God's glory, and there is safety and happiness in the midst of overflowing abundance and highest honors.

Can any one conceive of a happier man than Solomon in all the earlier years of his reign, while his heart was yet right with God. All was received as God's gift and used for his honor. And so long as this spirit remained, Solomon was safe amid the gold of Ophir and the adulation of the world.

The Danger of Prosperity. To a being assured in virtue prosperity could bring no danger. To man it is always a trial. Few can bear it uninjured. Wonderful is its power to weaken the loyalty of the pious, and harden the hearts of the wicked. Not even such a man as Solomon could withstand its influence.

The time came when he regarded the wealth which flowed around him as his own, and used it for his own glory. Intercourse with foreign nations had dimmed the sense of the superior worth of his own people, and the supremacy of their God. He began to trespass against the law of God in the multiplication of wives, and in the introduction of horses and chariots in his army. He became ambitious to excel. Great as were his resources, his expenditures were greater. Hence also his selfish disregard of the happiness of the people. While he was growing rich and great they were growing poor. Those schemes of foreign commerce were his not theirs. The 1,400 chariots and the 12,000 horses were a needless burden. The 3,000 useless women, lolling in luxury, and leading away the people, provoked the indignation of the God-fearing men of Israel. The selfishness of the king was preparing his people for revolt, and his kingdom for division.

Moreover, the king became a pleasure-seeker. Solomon was a man of enthusiastic and generous nature. Leaving God

he endeavored to satisfy its hunger with sensual pleasures.

Wealth and flattery had dimmed his moral sense; pleasure had eaten away the substance of his manhood. The many wives had corrupted the heart of the old man. Such is the history of man under prosperity, repeated from generation to generation.

The saddest book of the Bible, is the last confession by the great king, emerging somewhat, as it would seem, from the gloom of his eclipse, made after he had tried every form of earthly good, and found them "all vanity and vexation of spirit"; and mark his final words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, October 1st, 1876.—Stephen's Defence.—Acts vii. 1-19.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

The Young Architect.

BY MRS. R. M. WILBUR.

The room was plain to the extreme, not an article in it that was needed, save two or three plants, that rejoiced in the sunshine of the southern window. It was faultlessly clean, however, and Frank, the Widow Edwards' only son, insisted that his mother was all the ornament needed in their humble home, and she equally rejoiced in her manly, dutiful boy.

Frank was going away from home, for the first time. He was too old now to depend on his mother and the odd jobs he could find in their little village for support. So he was to go to Preston as stable-boy, for Squire Williams.

It was their last evening together, and Frank looked as he felt, a little sad. "Ah, mother," he said, "I am glad of the place, because I must work somewhere; but I long so much to be an architect;" and the boy turned over a pile of plans and drawings, over which he had spent many a pleasant leisure hour.

"I do not despair of your being one, now," said his mother. "You won't be a stable-boy always. This will be but the stepping-stone to something better. Nothing can hinder you from being the architect of one thing," she added a moment after.

"Of what?" asked Frank, eagerly.

"Of your own character," she replied, seriously. "You can plan it, and by God's help make it what you wish."

That was all the mother said; but the thought lodged in the boy's heart, and was a greater help than ever his mother dreamed.

Before he had been at Squire Williams' half a year, his character for integrity was so fully established, that his word was considered as sufficient proof or security under all circumstances.

But Frank was not a successful architect of his character, even to this degree, without being first well tested. It was no light trial to the boy when, not long after Preston became his home, his young mistress lost a well-filled purse, under circumstances which looked too suspicious of him to be passed by without notice.

The Squire and his wife both caught him at once in the stable, assuring him that if he would but tell the truth, and restore the purse, he should still keep his position.

Such a charge was quite unexpected to Frank, and the mere accusation made a blush of shame pass over his face, which was mistaken for guilt.

"I will tell you all I know," he answered, as soon as he could recover himself, "and that is nothing. I cannot confess that I have never done, nor restore that I have never had in my possession."

For several days Frank was under a heavy cloud, hourly expecting to be sent home, but never forgetting that clause of his mother's remark, "by God's help." So he prayed much and often, and kept on faithfully doing his daily work.

In a few days the cloud broke, and Frank came out in the sunshine, his character fully cleared in the sight of his master and mistress.

Years after this, when his mother lived in comfort in his own handsome house, and he was the successful and popular architect, Frank Edwards often said that he owed all, by God's blessing, to his mother's words. "He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." —Young Reaper.

Clever Boys.

Do not talk to me about a boy being clever; for if he has nothing but cleverness to commend him, I think but little better of him than if you had told me he could dance the sailor's hornpipe.

The broad sails of a gay rigged ship are pleasant to gaze on; but if the vessel has no ballast, those broad sails may be the means of her destruction. In like manner, the smartness of a boy may attract attention; but if he has no principle to direct his talents, his cleverness may lead him into sin and sorrow.

Smart men have not always been the most useful, nor are clever boys of necessity the most promising. A little principle is worth a deal of cleverness.

When a clever boy is brought to me, I ask these questions about him: "Does he fear God, honor his parents, obey his teachers, speak the truth, act honestly, and behave kindly to those around him?" If he does these things, I hear of his talents with pleasure; but if he does them not, his cleverness is to me nothing.

Give me a boy of common understanding and good principles, who is teachable, patient, industrious and persevering; and I will match him in the long run, against the smartest lad you can find deficient in these qualities.

Now, mind, it is not all cleverness that I undervalue, but unprofitable cleverness. I would have every boy clever if I could; I would have him say to himself, Be my station high or low, with God's help I will do my duty therein with ability.

Cleverness and usefulness should go hand in hand.

How The Blind See.

INTERESTING SPEECH BY PROFESSOR FAWCETT, THE BLIND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

M. D. Conway, writing to the Cincinnati Commercial from London, under date July 22nd, says:—Professor Fawcett, the blind statesman, left Parliament to be present at the concert given by blind pupils at Devonshire House. It was the first time I had ever heard him speak at any length on the subject of blindness. His speech was marked by its cheerfulness and the entire absence of anything sentimental. He was listened to with breathless interest, when, drawing upon his own experience, he said that the ideal of one who is blind would be to lead the same life as they might have hoped to live if they were not so afflicted. Persons, he said, sometimes imagined that it was hardly polite, or might be even cruel, to describe before the blind beautiful scenes and attractive objects, lest they should make them feel too deeply a sense of their deprivation. But this is a total mistake. The best service that can be done is to treat them and speak to them without regard to their affliction. They are continually and unconsciously cultivating the power of seeing things vividly through the eyes of others. It was within his own experience that things which had been described to him had afterwards become so real that he could hardly persuade himself that he had not seen them before he lost his sight. He dwelt most impressively on the new hope that would light up the heart of the blind as it more and more became known that an American had come here to teach the English how such might be taught the means of helping themselves and rescuing their lives from fruitlessness. He said he had heard that in America 25 per cent of the blind were able to do something for themselves—a fact startling enough to a community which had never until lately imagined the possibility of such a thing, unless in very exceptional cases. You may imagine the great effect produced by this address from a man in Professor Fawcett's situation. He stood as a high type of what a blind man may accomplish under favorable circumstances. The story of his blindness has been often told. He had just graduated at Cambridge with high honors, and was out shooting with his father. His father's gun went off by accident, and in each of his son's eyes entered one shot. The father almost died of grief, but the son was cheerful, and assured his father that blindness should make no difference in the parliamentary and scholastic career to which they had both looked forward. The youth not only fulfilled this promise to his father, but it seems very probable

that his efforts were so stimulated by the circumstances that he has achieved more than he would have done had the accident never occurred. It has always been a characteristic of Professor Fawcett that he is invariably cheerful and happy.

The Women of Servia.

The correspondent of the London News says: "The women to-day wore on their heads red handkerchiefs, with the ends hanging down their backs, and bound on their heads by a velvet fillet, embroidered with coins, in which were often stuck flowers, chiefly of red and white. They were generally dressed in white, but invariably with the brilliant apron sewed down to the skirt, and often with a gaudily-embroidered stomacher—or perhaps breast-plate would be the more descriptive term—studded with coins on black velvet. The working dress of the women in the field, is a short jacket, braided and slashed in the fashion, and of the cut of that worn by the men; a red and yellow kerchief crossed over the bosom; and a petticoat, striped mostly in the parallel stripes of Moorish pattern, but occasionally in checkers, which make the pattern, a tartan; a tapestry-like apron of brighter colors than the petticoat; and bare legs and feet. The men are a fine race, tall, with a certain stateliness and self-respect in every gesture; their faces are almost always good, and often intellectual and chivalric, but in muscular development, the peasant women of Servia can give their husbands a stone and a beating. I took the trouble to-day to measure the waist of a lass who was lounging against the pillar of a tavern where we were having some refreshment. Her waist was a good inch more in circumference than mine, and I am by no means a small boned man. I noticed as we came further south how the ruddy complexion and fair hair, bleached almost to the hue of shabby brick, were being left behind, and giving place to faces of Oriental type—a blending of the Greek and Arab, with clean-cut profile, straight nose, black hair and eyes, and a noble carriage. Occasionally among the women a face of pure Egyptian type was to be noticed—a trace, probably, of the infusion of gypsy blood, which is far from uncommon in Eastern Europe. One woman I noticed leaning dreamily over a garden fence, with a face cast in the very mould of the Sphinx."

What is a Gentleman?

A gentleman is just a gentle man, no more, no less; a diamond polished that was first a diamond in the rough. A gentleman is gentle. A gentleman is modest. A gentleman is courteous. A gentleman is slow to take offence, as being one who never gives it. A gentleman is slow to surmise evil, as being one who never thinks it. A gentleman subjects his appetites. A gentleman refines his taste. A gentleman subdues his feelings. A gentleman controls his speech. A gentleman deems every other better than himself.

Sir Philip Sydney was never so much of a gentleman—mirror though he was of English knighthood—as when, upon the field of Zutphen, as he lay in his own blood, he waived the draught of cool spring water that was to quench his mortal thirst, in favor of a dying soldier.

St. Paul describes a gentleman when he exhorted the Philippian Christians: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of a good report, if there be any virtue, and of there be any praise, think of these things." And Dr. Isaac Barlow, in his admirable sermon on the callings of a gentleman, pointedly says, "He should labor and study to be a leader unto virtue, and a notable promoter thereof; directing and exciting men thereto, by his exemplary conversation, encouraging them by his countenance and authority, rewarding the goodness of meaner people by his bounty and favor; he should be such a gentleman as Noah, who preached righteousness by his words and works before a profane world."—Christian Weekly.

The old mania for Persian cats with long tails has again broke out among the Daimios of Japan. An enterprising captain of a merchant vessel sold three several weeks ago for the large sum of \$4,200.