

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, December 31st, 1876.—Theme for General Review: Last things.

COMMIT TO MEMORY. Romans xiv. 10. "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—A portion of the time of this last session for 1876 will doubtless be desired for a conference of the whole school. It would be well so to devote it, the superintendent, as it is his privilege, summing up in brief words the year's work, and faithful teachers reporting on the interest they and their classes have taken in the unfolding of these International Lessons, the whole interspersed with grateful song, and fervent prayer for the abiding favor of God upon the widespread Sunday-school cause.

MONDAY. Last Bible. (a.) Inspiration complete. 2 Tim. iii. 16.—Rev. xlii. 18, 19. (b.) Inspiration adequate to human need. Ps. cxix. 96; Eccl. xii. 13.

TUESDAY. Last Saviour. (a.) Excluding all other rivals. John i. 1-8; Acts iv. 12. (b.) Including all men in the possibility of salvation. Romans i. 16, 17; Rev. xii. 17.

WEDNESDAY. Last Holy Spirit. (a.) If grieved. Acts vi. 61. (b.) With drawn. Hos. iv. 17; Matt. xii. 31-32.

THURSDAY. Last Opportunities. (a.) For the exercise of faith. Heb. ii. 1-4; Acts xvi. 31. (b.) For Christian usefulness. Eph. v. 15-17; 1 Peter iv. 1-7.

FRIDAY. Last Home. (a.) The grave. Job xxx. 23; Ps. lxxxviii. 3; Eccl. iii. 20. (b.) Paradise. Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. v. 1-8. (c.) Hell. Luke xvi. 19-31.

SATURDAY. Last Resurrection. (a.) Of the just. (b.) Of the unjust. Matt. xxv. 31-33; Acts xxiv. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 12-58.

SUNDAY. Last Judgment. (a.) The Judge. John v. 22-27; Acts x. 42. (b.) The standards of judgment. Matt. xxv. 34-46; Rom. ii. 1-16.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASSES FOR QUICK ANSWERS.—Monday.—By whom was the Bible written? Is it right to believe only as much of the Bible as we please?

Tuesday.—How do we know that salvation is possible to all? What more could be done to save the soul than has been done?

Wednesday.—How is the Holy Spirit grieved?

Thursday.—How may we be saved? Rom. i. 17; Acts xvi. 31. Why should Christians improve their time in serving Christ? How should we live? 1 Peter iv. 2.

Friday.—To what long home are our bodies all going? If believing where will our souls go? If unbelieving, where?

Saturday.—Who has been raised from the dead as the "first fruits" of the future harvest? If we do not know with what bodies they shall come, will the resurrection be any the less certain?

Sunday.—Who is to be the final Judge? What is to be the standard of judgment? Ans. Faith working by love. Shall we be judged for any one else? Rom. xiv. 12. Have the blessings of the past year made us any more accountable? Matt. xiii. 12.

BENEDICTION.—"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." Romans xvi. 25, 27.

1. Saul Rejected. 1 Sam. xv. 10-23. Golden Text. What did the Lord command Saul respecting Amalek? How was Saul's disobedience punished?

2. David Anointed King. 1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.—G. Text. Whom did the Lord choose as king in place of Saul? Did he immediately become king?

3. David and Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii. 38-51.—G. Text. Who was Goliath? How did he challenge and defy Israel? Who accepted the challenge? What was the result?

4. David in the Palace. 1 Sam. xviii. 1-16.—G. Text. How was David honored? What wicked plans did Saul devise against him? How were they thwarted? Who became David's firm and grateful friend? Who is our best and greatest Friend? How has he shown his love for us? How should we show our love for him?

5. David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. xx. 35-42.—G. Text. How did Jonathan show his love for David in his trouble? Give an account of their meeting? What covenant of friendship did they form? Did they meet after this? Did David remember his covenant?

6. David sparing Saul. 1 Sam. xxiv. 1-15.—G. Text. When and how did Saul come into David's power? How

did he treat him? Did David spare his life on any other occasion?

7. Saul and his Sons slain. 1 Sam. xxxi. 1-6.—G. Text. With whom were the Israelites at war? Where was the decisive battle fought? With what result? What was the fate of Saul and his son? How did David feel when told of this? 2 Sam. i. 1-27.

8. David established as King. 2 Sam. v. 17-25.—G. Text. What tribe first proclaimed and anointed David king? How long did he reign in Hebron? When was he anointed king of all Israel? What city did he make his capital?

9. The Ark brought to Zion. 2 Sam. vi. 1-15.—G. Text. Where was the ark? What did David resolve to do with it? Where was it left? After how long a time was it brought to Jerusalem, and where was it placed?

10. God's Covenant with David. 2 Sam. vii. 18-29.—G. Text. Why was he not permitted to execute it? What covenant did God make with him? How did David humble himself and exalt the Lord? What promise did he plead, and how?

11. Absalom's Rebellion. 2 Sam. xv. 1-14.—G. Text. Who was Absalom? How did he show his ambition? What conspiracy did he form?

12. Absalom's Death. 2 Sam. xviii. 24-33.—G. Text. Give an account of Absalom's death? Where was David? How did he receive the tidings?

1. David's Charge to Solomon. 1 Chron. xxviii. 1-10.—G. Text. When and where was this charge delivered? How did David address the people? What charge did he give to Solomon?

2. Solomon's Choice. 2 Chron. i. 1-17.—G. Text. Where did Solomon assemble the people? Why? What sacrifice did Solomon offer? What was Solomon's request? What answer did the Lord give him?

3. The Temple Dedicated. 1 Kings viii. 5-21.—G. Text. For what purpose did Solomon assemble the elders of Israel? Where was the ark? Who bore the ark into the Temple? Of what was the cloud a symbol? What did Solomon say?

4. Solomon's Prayer. 1 Kings viii. 22-30.—G. Text. Who offered the prayer of dedication? How did God show that he accepted the dedication?

5. Solomon's Prosperity. 1 Kings x. 1-10.—G. Text. Who heard of the fame of Solomon? For what purpose did she visit Solomon? How did he receive her? How did she glorify the God of Israel?

6. The Call of Wisdom. Prov. i. 20-33.—G. Text. Who is the speaker of this lesson? What appeal does Wisdom make? What reproof does she administer? What promise does she give?

7. The Value of Wisdom. Prov. iii. 1-19.—G. Text. What is meant by wisdom in this lesson? What are the fruits of true religion? What are its rewards here? What hereafter?

8. Honest Industry. Prov. vi. 6-22.—G. Text. By what example is industry commended? How is idleness rebuked? To what sins does it lead?

9. Intemperance. Prov. xxii. 29-35.—G. Text. What are the temptations to intemperance mentioned in this lesson? Can a drunkard enter into heaven? What is the remedy?

10. The Excellent Women. Prov. xxxi. 10-31.—G. Text. What characteristics of the virtuous woman are given in this lesson? How shown? What is her reward?

11. A Godly Life. Eccl. i. 14.—G. Text. Who was the author of this book? When did he write it? For what purpose?

1. The Ascending Lord. Acts i. 1-12.—G. Text. How long after the resurrection of our Lord was the ascension? Describe it.

2. The Day of Pentecost. Acts ii. 1-11.—G. Text. For what were the disciples commanded to wait? Why was the gift of tongues conferred?

3. Peter's Defence. Acts ii. 12-28.—G. Text. How did the Jews pretend to account for the gift of tongues? How did Peter deny this charge? What great crime did Peter charge upon the Jews?

4. The Early Christian Church. Acts ii. 37-47.—G. Text. What effect did Peter's preaching produce? What was the character of the new disciples?

5. The Lame Man Healed. Acts iii. 1-11.—G. Text. Whom did Peter and John

see at the gate of the Temple? What effect had his cure on the man? What on the people?

6. The Power of Jesus' Name. Acts iii. 12-26.—G. Text. To what did the people ascribe the miracle? How had Moses prophesied of Christ? What encouragement did Peter give the people to repent?

7. Christian Courage. Acts iv. 8-22.—G. Text. At what were the rulers offended? What did they do? Could the council deny any of the facts asserted? What command did they give to Peter and John? What was the answer?

8. Christian Fellowship. Acts iv. 23-37.—G. Text. What did the disciples do when they heard the report of Peter and John? What prayer did they offer? How did the disciples bear one another's burdens?

9. Lying unto God. Acts v. 1-11.—G. Text. What did Ananias and Sapphira do? Who detected his wickedness? What did Peter call it? Meaning of *lie to the Holy Ghost*? How was their sin punished?

10. The Apostles in Prison. Acts v. 12-26.—G. Text. What wonders were wrought by the apostles? What did the angel command them to do? Did they obey? What effect had this on the rulers?

11. The Apostles before the Council. Acts v. 27-42.—G. Text. What charge did the rulers bring against the apostles? What was the advice of Gamaliel? Was this advice followed? What did the apostles then do?

12. The Seven Chosen. Acts vi. 1-15.—G. Text. What dissatisfaction arose in the church? What remedy did the apostles propose? Who were elected?—Baptist Text.

STORY. *David's Charge to Solomon*.—The King's Son, 1 Kings viii. 12-20.

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

8781 The Lucky Loaf 8781

One evening a poor man and his son, a little boy, sat by the wayside near the gate of an old town in Germany. The father took out a loaf of bread which he had bought in the town, and broke it, and gave half to his boy. "Not so, father," said the boy; "I shall not eat until after you. You have been working hard all day, for small wages, to support me; and you must be very hungry. I shall wait till you are done." "You speak kindly, my son," returned the pleased father; "your love to me does me more good than my food; and those eyes of yours remind me of your dear mother, who has left us, and who told you to love me as she used to do; and, indeed, my boy, you have been a great strength and comfort to me; but now as I have eaten the first morsel to please you it is your turn to eat."

"Thank you, father, but break this piece in two; and take you a little morsel, for you see the loaf is not large, and you require more than I do. I shall divide the loaf for you, my boy; but eat it, I shall not. I have abundance; and let us thank God for his great goodness in giving us food, and in giving us what is still better—cheerful and contented hearts. He who gave us the living bread from heaven to nourish our immortal souls, how shall he not give us all other food that is necessary to support our mortal bodies?"

The father and son thanked God, and then began to cut the loaf in pieces, to begin their frugal meal. But as they cut one portion of the loaf there fell out several large pieces of gold of great value. The little boy gave a shout of joy, and was springing forward to grasp the unexpected treasure when he was pulled back by his father. "My son, my son!" he cried, "do not touch the money; it is not ours." "But whose is it, father, if it is not ours?" "I do not know as yet to whom it belongs; but probably it was put there by the baker through some mistake. We must inquire. Run!" "But, father," interrupted the boy, "you are poor and needy, and you have bought the loaf, and the baker will tell a lie, and—"

"I will not listen to you, my boy. I bought the loaf, but did not buy the gold in it. If the baker sold it to me in ignorance I shall not be so dishonest as to take advantage of him; remember him who told us to do to others as we would have others do to us. The baker may possibly cheat us. I am poor, indeed; but that is no sin. If we share the

poverty of Jesus, God's Son, oh! let us share also his goodness and his trust in God. We may never be rich, but we may always be honest. We may die of starvation, but God's will be done, should we die in doing it! Yes, my boy, trust God, and walk in his ways, and you shall never be put to shame. Now run to the baker's and bring him here; and I shall watch the gold until he comes."

So the boy ran for the baker. "Brother workman," said the old man, "you have made some error, and almost lost your money; and he then showed the baker the gold, and told him how it had been found."

"Is it thine?" asked the father, "if it is take it away."

"My father, the baker is very proud, and—"

"Silence, my child; put me not to shame by thy complaints. I am glad we have saved this man from losing his money."

The baker had been gazing alternately upon the honest father and the eager boy, and upon the gold which lay glittering upon the green turf. "Thou art, indeed, an honest fellow," said the baker; "and my neighbor, David, the flax dresser, told but the truth when he said thou wert the honestest man in our town."

"Now I shall tell thee about the gold: A stranger came to my shop a few days ago and gave me that loaf, and told me to sell it cheaply to the honestest poor man whom I knew in the city. I told David to send thee to me as a customer this morning; and as thou wouldst not have the loaf for nothing, I sold it to thee, as thou knowest, for the last pence in thy purse; and the loaf with all its treasure—and certainly it is not small—is thine, and God grant thee a blessing with it."

The father bent his head to the ground, while the tears fell from his eyes. His boy ran and put his arms about his neck, and said: "I shall always, like you, my father, trust God and do what is right; for I am sure it will never put us to shame.—*Little Lessons with great Meanings.*"

Scholars as Co-Workers.

The Sunday School Times enumerates the various co-workers on whose assistance the Sunday school teacher can count, if he will recognize and seek their help. It mentions among these the pastor, the superintendent, his fellow-teachers, God himself; and closes with a recommendation that the scholars also should be enlisted in the effort for their own improvement. Their help, it says, the teacher cannot afford to slight or undervalue:

He has not only a work to do over them, but he has a work to do with them. Many a teacher fails of success because he does not co-work with his scholars in his labors for their good. He studies for them, but not with them; he prays for them, but not with them; he feels for them, but not with them; he plans for them, but not with them. He does a great deal. They do very little or perhaps nothing. The trouble is, he thinks he has all the work to do—and he does it. He does not try to co-work with his scholars. As a matter of course, they do not co-work with him. Now, in addition to all that he does for them, he has a work to do with them. He needs to get down alongside of them, to learn their ways of thinking, planning and doing, and to understand their purposes, preferences and needs. He has a mission to study with them, to talk with them, to feel with them, to pray with them, that they and he may pursue the same direction—the direction which he knows to be the right one, but which they are not likely to take when it is merely pointed out to them. The best taught scholars are always those with whom their teacher is a co-worker. No teacher fully fills his place as a teacher, who does not recognize and consider his scholars as his co-workers.

Undecided Young Men.

A world of trouble is occasioned to girls by the indecision of character of young men. A pretty girl is living in the neighborhood of half-a-dozen young men. She is not only beautiful, but she is good, well educated and accomplished. Perhaps there is not one of those young men who would not take a peculiar interest in her, for she is a general favorite; but they observe that one of their number seems to have got the start of them; he is a regular and frequent visitor, and his attentions do not appear to be at all displeasing in the

quarter where they are bestowed; so the others fall back, or turn eyes elsewhere.

The young man who has brought all this about goes on from week to week; from month to month; it may be even from year to year, without any definite plan for the future, or so much as any clear decision in his own mind of what he wishes to do. He likes the young lady; he knows that his visits are pleasant to himself and acceptable to her; he would not like to see her receive particular attention from another; yet he says not a word about engagement and marriage, the end and aim, so far, of woman's life.

He has gradually won her affections, until he has become "the ocean to the river of her thoughts." She could not bear to break with him, to be separated from him; for she loves him as she fondly believes, and perhaps truly, as she can never love another! But how harrowing is the state of doubt and uncertainty in which she drifts on?

Reflection should make young men careful how they win hearts they do not wish to wear. They have no right to monopolize a girl's society, so long as they are in a state of entire indecision as to their own wishes and purposes.

But while the fault may rest with the young men, the folly rests as much with the young women. They should be early wise, and guard their affections from becoming fastened upon a young man from whom they have no assurance, and of whom they know nothing more than that he is an agreeable companion. They should beware of young men of indecision of character, who having once ingratiated themselves into favor, will waddle along, as if it were no part of their duty to give to the future, and the happiness of others a single thought.

An Objector Answered.

"I don't like so much talk about religion," said a rude stranger in a city boarding house, to a lady opposite, who had been answering some questions with regard to a sermon to which she had been listening. "I don't like it. It's something that nobody likes. It's opposed to everything pleasant in the world. It takes away his liberty, and it isn't natural."

"O, no!" answered the lady, "it isn't natural. We have the best authority for saying so. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.' True religion is rowing up stream; it is sailing against wind and tide."

A pause for a few moments followed; then the stranger began again.

"People who speak and think so much about religion are queer, anyhow. I wish they could only know how people speak and think about them; nobody likes them, for they are like nobody; they are so very peculiar."

"But I am so impressed with the manner in which your language accords with Bible language, that I shall have to introduce another quotation from that blessed book. 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people.'"

"Does the Bible say they are peculiar, then? That's odd. That book, somehow, has got a dose for everybody. Yet, ma'am, you must allow that the commands that book lays upon us poor sinners are hard. It's thou shalt not, and thou shalt not, all the time. Why, its precepts and views of things are not only systematic, tyrannical, but they are narrow, very narrow."

"Yes," replied the lady, "the year narrow, for the Bible says they are. 'Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life.' We have to struggle hard to keep in this narrow way, if we once get in it. It is too narrow for the service of two masters. It is too narrow for covetousness, envy, and all other evil passions. Hatred can find no place for so much as the sole of its foot, in the narrow way. Good deeds, kind words, faith, hope and charity, occupy all the ground, and will continue to hold it to the end."

The stranger listened, surprised and annoyed, and at last arose and left the room, apparently a more thoughtful not a better man.

The weakest spot in every man is where he thinks himself to be the wisest.