

LESSON IX—November 29th, 1896.

The Fame of Solomon. I KINGS 10: 1-10.

(Commit to memory verses 6-8).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Matt. 12: 42.

PROVE THAT—God gives liberally. Jas. 1: 5.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Questions 67, 68, 69.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 157, 29, 21, 164.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The fame of Solomon. I Kings 10: 1-13. *Tuesday.* Excelling in greatness. I Kings 10: 14-23. *Wednesday.* World-wide renown. I Kings 10: 24-29. *Thursday.* Unsatisfying. Eccl. 2: 1-11. *Friday.* Supremacy of God. Ps. 89: 1-8. *Saturday.* A greater than Solomon. Matt. 12: 38-42. *Sabbath.* The glory of Christ. Rev. 1: 9-18. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. We read in Lesson III. that "that there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." Our lesson gives an account of one of these royal seekers after wisdom. Parallel passage 2 Chr. 9: 1-12.

LESSON PLAN. What the Queen, I. Heard. vs. 1-3. II. Saw. vs. 4, 5. III. Said. vs. 6-9. IV. Gave. vs. 10.

1. She'ba—Now called Yemen, or Arabia Felix, on the east shore of the Red Sea (Matt. 12: 42). Concerning the name of the Lord—Solomon's fame was connected with the temple he had built to the name of the Lord and with the wisdom divinely bestowed upon him. To prove him—To test his wisdom and cleverness. Hard questions—riddles. Compare Samson's (Judges 14: 12-14), perhaps in Prov. 30: 15-31 we have the answers to similar puzzling questions. Orientalists are very fond of this kind of mental exercise. 2. A very great train—An extensive caravan accompanied by an armed escort as became wealth and dignity. Arabia has always been famed for its spices. Communed with him—Doubtless they had frequent interviews and besides exchanging riddles, they talked about the great questions of religion and statesmanship. 3. Solomon was able to solve all her questions and explain her difficulties satisfactorily. 4. The house that he had built—his palace, not the temple, as is evident from the domestic details following (ch. 7: 1). 5. The meat of his table—Its quantity, variety, &c., (ch. 4: 22, 23). All the table service was of gold (ch. 10: 21). The sitting of his servants—The nobles and principal officers who sat at the royal banquets in the order of their rank. The attendance—Lit "standing." Of his ministers—servants also, not ministers of state, but personal attendants. Those who stood to serve the king and his guests (Acts 13: 5). His ascent—A stately causeway over the Tyropoean valley between Mt. Zion and Mt. Moriah, of which the remains have been discovered (2 Kings 16: 18). There was no more spirit (breath) in her

—She was amazed and lost in admiration (Josh. 5: 1). She had expected to find herself in some degree the equal of Solomon, but all thought of rivalling him in anything was banished completely. 6. This frank confession shews that the queen was a generous, unselfish woman, without a spark of jealous envy in her breast. 7. Fame usually exaggerates but there are some things which must be seen in order to be appreciated (1 Cor. 2: 9). 8. Happy are thy men—Lit. "O the happinesses of thy men," as in Ps. 1: 1; 2: 12, &c. The plural suggests the number and variety of the advantages enjoyed by Solomon's servants. It is clear that the queen of Sheba valued wisdom above riches and rubies. Her intercourse with Solomon had been of such benefit to her mind and heart that she envied those who could always enjoy such improving discourse. The company of the wise and good is always to be preferred to that of the rich and great who lack these qualities. 9. Blessed be the Lord thy God—It is not likely that the queen became a convert to the true God. She does not say "my God;" she makes no offering to the temple; and it was quite consistent with a heathen belief to acknowledge Jehovah as the God of Solomon and the source of all his prosperity, without feeling under any obligation to worship him too, far less to accept him as the only living and true God (ch. 5: 7; Ezra 1: 3). Her compliment to Solomon here is a very graceful one. 10. A hundred and twenty talents of gold—Over three million dollars, some say six. Compare Hiram's gift (ch. 9: 14). With the interchange of princely gifts this famous visit came to an end.

LESSONS. 1. We should not let slothfulness or love of ease keep us from church or Sabbath school. 2. The fame that comes because of our devotion to God is alone worth having. 3. We should seek the society of the wise and good. 4. We should not envy, but imitate, those who excel us in any virtue. 5. Good rulers are God's gift.