

## LESSON OUTLINE.

BY J. L. HURLBUT.

## Solomon's Downward Steps.

## I. A DIVIDED HEART.

*Not perfect with the Lord.* v. 4.

No man can serve two masters. Matt. 6. 24.

How long halt ye? 1 Kings 18. 21.

## II. SENSUAL LUSTS.

*His wives turned away his heart.* v. 4.

Solomon loved....strange women. 1 Kings 11. 1.

The lust of the flesh. 1 John 2. 16.

## III. WORLDLY COMPANIONSHIPS.

*Did he for all his strange wives.* v. 8.

Be not conformed to this world. Rom 12. 2.

Love not the world. 1 John 2. 15.

## IV. RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

*Went after Ashtoreth.* v. 5.

Shalt have no other gods. Exod. 20. 3.

Worship the Lord thy God. Matt. 4. 10.

## V. DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD.

*Kept not....commanded.* v. 10.

Walk in my statutes. 1 Kings 6. 12.

If ye shall turn. 1 Kings 9. 6.

## VI. LOSS OF PRIVILEGE.

*I will....rend the kingdom.* v. 11.

Take....the talent from him. Matt. 25. 28.

Good part....not to be taken. Luke 10. 42.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

## General Statement.

The folly and vice of Solomon's maturity startle us after the wisdom and virtue of his youth. Can an olive tree bear thorns, or a fig thistles, or a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? But Solomon's moral downfall was not so sudden as at first it seems. From the very outset of his career the observant student notices signs of approaching danger. The frequency of God's warnings suggests the flow of an undercurrent of unfaithfulness. No man whose biography is given in the Bible received anything like so many and so solemn warnings of the results of departure from high moral standards as did Solomon. Then, too, we note, even in his prime, repeated transgression of the very law by virtue of which he ruled. Take three or four examples. First, turn from Deut. 17. 17 (the king shall not "greatly multiply to himself silver and gold") to 1 Kings 10. 14-25, where an amazing account is given of the metallic splendor of Solomon's court; an annual tribute of 666 talents of gold; 200 targets of "beaten" gold, each containing 600 shekels; 300 shields of "beaten" gold, each weighing three pounds; a great throne of ivory overlaid with the "best" gold; drinking vessels of "fine" gold; vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon of "pure" gold; the navy of Tharshish every third year bringing gold and silver, besides other luxuries; "all the earth" seeking Solomon with presents of "vessels of silver and vessels of gold;" while as for silver, "the king made it to be in Jerusalem as stones." Secondly, turn to Deut. 17. 16 (the king must "not multiply horses to himself," nor send to Egypt to purchase horses), and then to 1 Kings 10. 28, 29, where we learn that Solomon imported horses from Egypt, buying at the rate of 150 shekels of silver apiece. Thirdly, in Deuteronomy the king is forbidden to "multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away;" but the first three verses of the chapter from which our lesson is taken tell us that Solomon gathered for his harem 1,000 wives and concubines. Here were three conspicuous departures from what appears to have been constitutional law—the legal "manner of the king." A fourth item of disobedience was more likely to be imitated by his subjects, and more serious in its immediate ill effects. In Exod. 34. 16, and again in Deut. 7. 1-3, all Israelites are forbidden to marry women from the Hittite, Canaanite, and other native tribes; in this chapter we learn that Solomon's wives were "strange women," that is, "Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites." It is true that marriage with Ammonites and Moabites was not, so far as we know, expressly forbidden by the early law; but so strong was the feeling against the impropriety of union with them, that the Israelites were ordered (Deut. 23. 3) to refuse to receive them into the congregation "unto the tenth generation." This rigorous prohibition of marriage with heathen is abundantly justified by to-day's lesson; for if foreign wives caused Solomon to sin, it is not likely that his subjects would have been less easily influenced. So immoral were most of the foreigners resident in Palestine that the term "strange women"—that is, foreign women—had become synonymous with persons of professionally evil life. On the surface it might seem that, like many a bright and promising modern youth, Solomon was ruined by sensuality; but it is perfectly clear, as Dr. Joseph Hammond has said, that it cannot have been mere sensuality that led to his enormous error. The greatness of the number of his women, and the fact that 700 of them were princesses when he married them, show that his object was rather to enhance his dignity and renown. Great as was Solomon's wisdom in some regards, he never avoided a fatal weakness for swaggering display. Even in his worship at Hebron in