

distants and 'Piscopals, and Cath'olics have built lately, and they're all a scenerin' at the Presbyterians a cooped up in such a little hole, while they're a swellin' round so grand with their terrer cotten and pressed brick, and all the other fine fixin's."

"Our worship can be just as sincere in a small building—"

"But it aint a question o' worship," cut in the practical Captain, "but of a place to worship in."

"Well, I'll think of it," said Mr. Cresby, unwilling to antagonize by a direct refusal one who seemed so friendly and sincere in his desire to keep the new comer off the social rocks of Woodside; "I'll think of it, and meanwhile I'll call on Jim."

An unexpected shower-bath could not have taken away the Captain's breath more effectually than these words, and before he recovered it the minister had said good-bye and taken his departure towards the coast.

"It's no use, granny. I've tried till I'm tired, and I'm not goin' to try any longer. Poor folks can't sultrich ones, whatever they do—"

"But, Jim, deary, one must ha' patience—"

"So I have."

"An' not be ready to quarrel an' fight—"

"I'm not, granny, but when you're set on first an' pounded, why, you have to pound back. There's Harry Bell, now; he thinks o' nothin' day or night but how he'll get me into some scrape or other that'll make folks more down on me 'n ever. So what's it matter how you act when they're all down on you?"

"It matters to God," said the old woman reverently.

Jim looked up to the blue sky, and then out upon the measureless stretch of blue water at his feet.

"I da'say," he said thoughtfully, "but it's a pity He's so far off."

The intense and natural craving for notice and appreciation which prompted these pathetic words, touched the heart of an unseen listener deeply. Never before had Mr. Cresby been so strongly impressed with the solemn duties of his sacred calling. Not for the purpose of rearing magnificent and expensive structures, or of outstripping other denominations in a race for luxurious appurtenances of religion had he entered this profession, but to minister to spirits dismayed or embittered with the wearying problem of life's different phases, and to lift souls, ignorant or degraded, brutal or dull, into that high light of truth and knowledge which reflects the glories of the Promised Land.

Jim's grandmother was about to reply when she heard the sound of a step on the crisp, hard sand, and glancing up she saw the new minister.

She made a little bow and was about to ask him to enter the cottage, when Jim said gruffly:

"Aren't you 'shamed now, granny, to ask a gentleman to a place old Bell said wasn't fit for hogs to live in?"

Then the lad began to whistle, and resumed his serious scrutiny of the sea.

"If the cottage is as bad as that," said Mr. Cresby, "we must see what we can do to improve it."

Jim stopped whistling and looked up. He saw a pleasant, slender man with dark curly hair, and a very thoughtful look on his mild, pale face, and kindly eyes that seemed to invite one's confidence and affection. Slowly the lad's sullen, suspicious expression passed away, and an instant after he found himself shaking heartily the minister's outstretched hand.

Glancing with much curiosity at Jim, Mr. Cresby was surprised to note that swift change of feature. Evidently he was not the untamed heathen of Captain Bell's imagination, when a few kind words had power to soothe that perturbed spirit and bring a softened look into those restless, defiant eyes.

Sitting down by Jim, Mr. Cresby began to talk to the old grandmother, and by and by she gathered courage to tell him of her troubles—how the cottage roof leaked in rainy weather, and how they suffered when the sea was too rough for the lad to venture out for fish, the sale of which was their only means of subsistence.

"But you do something else when fishing's bad? You can work on the farms, can't you?"

"Aye, sir, if they'd have him, but they won't. They say as Jim was left here a strange baby and no one knowed who's his folks, that he's no better'n a heathen savage. An' so Jim, havin' a heathen's temper, these things all the time, gets kind o' sored an' don't try to suit 'em any more. An' the church members are down on him 'cause he won't 'tend, an' what with th' others refusin' him work, we're often in a bad way."

"But I takes it out in thrashin' their boys, and smashin' the church windows," said Jim, grimly.

Mrs. Parks was speechless at this cool confession, but the minister smiled, and said, as he rose to go:

"But you won't break my church windows, Jim, will you?" and not waiting for an answer he walked away.

The new minister worked very earnestly for the good of his people, and a little too earnestly—some thought—for the improvement of one who was not of the fold.

Since their first conversation Jim had discriminated in the matter of church

windows—Mr. Cresby's remained unshattered while others were riddled and ruined.

The Captain often reproached Mr. Cresby for his excessive interest in Jim, and opined that the minister's time might be better occupied in working up the project of a new church. But there was a change for the better in Jim, and the day came when the Captain realized it.

Late one stormy afternoon Jim stood on the shore watching the waves toss a little boat whose occupant was crying faintly and pitifully for relief. He knew that voice, but did not stir, for the insults which the Captain's son had so often heaped upon him clogged his heart with anger in that terrible hour, and the sweetness of revenge stole over his embittered senses, and soon the cry grew fainter, and then ceased.

"I could save him, but I won't," he murmured, and turned his back upon the sea. Then a hitherto unknown emotion brought a blush to his brown face, and through the memory of his benefactor the voice of conscience spoke. In an instant he was struggling through the foaming waters, and soon reached a form that was sinking for the last time. When Jim got back to shore he found Mr. Cresby and Captain Bell, both in a speechless state.

"Dunno as I'd ha' gone for him once on a time," he said as he laid his burden in the Captain's arms, "but 'cause I knowed him—" pointing to Mr. Cresby—"I had to."

Two years have passed, and though Captain Bell still worships in the same old church—and seems content to do so—a substantial cottage has been built for Jim's grandmother, and Jim himself has passed with credit his first year at school.

"I wish we could have had a new church in the bargain," said the Captain one day, reviewing past events with Mr. Cresby, "though I'm more'n willing to have the money we collected go to Granny Parks and Jim. I s'pose it's just the same to the Lord," he added.

"Indeed it is," said Mr. Cresby, "for 'inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"—N. Y. Observer.

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

LESSON XI, December 15, 1889.

SOLOMON'S FALL.

1 Kings xi. 4-13.

COMMIT VERSES 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Cor. x. 12.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings xi. 1-13.

Tu. Deut. vii. 1-12.

W. Deut. xvii. 14-20.

Th. Ex. xxxiv. 1-14.

F. Jas. i. 1-17.

Sa. Gal. vi. 1-10.

Su. Luke xii. 29-48.

TIME.—B.C. 985 to 980; five or ten years before Solomon's death; ten or fifteen years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, and the southernmost summit of the Mount of Olives, called the Mount of Offence.

SOLOMON.—Now 50 to 55 years old, having reigned thirty to thirty-five years. He died B.C. 975, after a reign of forty years.

INTRODUCTION.—The height of Solomon's glory was about the time of the visit of the Queen of Sheba. Confident in his wisdom and strength, Solomon multiplied wives contrary to God's express command, and by them was led astray as God had foretold. The story of his fall is the subject of to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—4. When Solomon was old: fifty to fifty-five years old. His wives: he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. Many of these wives were for the sake of an alliance with the neighbouring nations. He disobeyed God in two respects: (1) he was forbidden to multiply wives (Deut. xvii. 17); (2) he took wives from forbidden nations (Deut. vii. 1-4). Turned away his heart: Solomon's sin was (1) idolatry; (2) disobeying God's command as to his wives (see above); (3) extravagance; (4) oppression; (5) tolerance of false religion; (6) encouragement of immorality and cruelty (see under Astarte and Milcom); (7) he dishonoured the God who gave him all he had; (8) he sinned in spite of repeated warnings; (9) he led Israel into sin. 5. Ashore: also called Astarte, the Phoenician Venus, and worshipped with immorality and debauchery. Zidonians: inhabitants of Zidon, now Sidon, twenty miles north of Tyre. Milcom: the same as Molech. An idol made of brass, to which human sacrifices, especially of children, were offered. Ammonites: descendants of Lot, by his son Ammon. They lived east of the Jordan, north of Moab. 7. A high place: i.e., a place of worship on a hill-top. Chemosh: the chief god of the Moabites, and much the same as Molech. 9. Which had appeared unto him twice: at Gideon (1 Kings iii. 5) and at Jerusalem (1 Kings ix. 2). 11. To thy servant: Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (1 Kings xi. 26-37). 13. One tribe: Ju-

dah, in which Benjamin was also absorbed.

SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND SPECIAL REPORTS.—Solomon's temptations to sin.—How so wise a man could do what he knew was evil and injurious to himself and others.—Solomon's sins.—Tolerance of idolatry.—Effect of bad companionship.—Barriers and hindrances in the downward way.—Ashore: Molech.—The consequences of Solomon's sin.—The Golden Text.

QUESTIONS.

REVIEW.—What queen came to visit Solomon? What did she learn of his wisdom in words? In works?

INTRODUCTION.—How long after the queen's visit shall we place our lesson for to-day? How old was Solomon? How near the end of his reign?

SUBJECT: THE DOWNWARD COURSE.

I. THE TEMPTATION (v. 4).—Who led Solomon astray? How many wives had he? (xi. 3). Was this contrary to God's command? (Deut. xvii. 17.) What other command did he break in doing this? (1 Kings xi. 1, 2; Deut. 7: 1-4.) Why were inter-marriages with these nations forbidden? What similar command is given in the New Testament? (2 Cor. vi. 14.) Is any one safe that goes into bad company? How was Solomon's wealth a temptation? (Deut. viii. 11-14; 2 Chron. xxvi. 15, 16; 1 Tim. vi. 8-11). Is the anxiety to be rich as dangerous as riches themselves? What is the force of the warning in the Golden Text? How may we be enabled to overcome temptations? (Matt. xxvi. 41; 1 Cor. x. 13; Heb. ii. 18.)

II. THE SIN (vs. 4-8).—What was the first of this series of Solomon's sins? (See above.) What effect did this have upon his character? (v. 4). What is said of the importance of a right heart? (Prov. iv. 23). Whose example should Solomon have followed? What did he do to favour idolatry? Was this a right tolerance? Who was Ashoreth? Milcom? Molech? Which of the commandments did he break in doing this? In what ways may we break this commandment? Of what other great sin was Solomon guilty? (ix. 20-23; xii. 4, 14). Which of the commandments did he break in this?

III. BARRIERS AND SAFEGUARDS (vs. 9, 10).—What two special influences for good did God throw around Solomon, one of promise (iii. 5-14), and one of warning (ix. 1-9)? How much of God's Word did he have? Should his wisdom have kept him pure? Did he know what was right? Had he taught others? How should God's goodness have preserved him? What barriers has God put in the way to keep us from sinning? (See Prac. Sug.) Does God do all that wisdom and love permit to make us good?

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES (vs. 11-13).—How did God feel towards Solomon on account of his sin? (v. 9.) What is meant by the Lord's anger? Was this in itself a severe punishment? What does Christ say of those who sin as Solomon did? (Luke xii. 47, 48). What sad consequences followed Solomon's sin, to himself? to the nation? Can we do wrong and not injure others as well as ourselves? How was justice tempered with mercy? Does God love to show mercy?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. If Solomon with all his wisdom, fell, we should be doubly on our guard.

II. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

III. The best worldly gifts of God may become temptations.

IV. The fall of men is gradual, from sin to sin.

V. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life?

VI. God puts many barriers in the way of sin.—His Word, His Holy Spirit, His blessings, special providences, conscience, lesser punishments, the example of others, the love of Christ.

VII. No one can sin and escape the consequences of sin to himself and others.

VIII. God tempers justice with mercy.—Peloubet.

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We all must deal with the visible while here in the flesh; yet it is well to be admonished by such words as were then spoken. To act so that no harm may come to the soul, no temporary suspension of conscience follow our words or manner of life—this ought to be the chief ambition of the Christian. That is to say, we should ever remember that there is only one real life. The fitful present will soon vanish away. The value of earthly honours bears no possible comparison to the riches of the inheritance of the saints in light.—N. Y. Christian Advocate.

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