

LESSON IX—November 29th, 1896.

The Fame of Solomon. 1 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. 1 Kings 10: 1-13. *Tuesday.* Excelling in greatness. 1 Kings 10: 14-23. *Wednesday.* World-wide renown. 1 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.

She'ba is now called Ye'men, or Arabia Felix, "Happy Arabia." It lies on the southwestern corner near the mouth of the Red Sea. Such is the abundance of spices produced there that the perfume is said to be perceptible to those on vessels passing along the coast. Wherever Solomon's ships came there his fame went and in every part of the world it was known that he had received his wonderful wisdom from the God to whom he had erected a magnificent temple. Many kings sent ambassadors to his court, but the Queen of Sheba determined to pay him a personal visit. This was no slight undertaking, for instead of stepping on board an express train, she had to fit out an immense caravan with a suitable military escort and provisions, and cross a great desert infested with robber tribes. Her journey was over 2000 miles long and must have occupied four or five months, at the slow pace of camels. How much trouble and expense she was willing to incur in order to meet with a wise man, yet how little we are willing to sacrifice for the sake of learning from Christ.² It is good to have a wise friend with whom we can talk about the serious questions that puzzle us, and who will patiently and with sympathy give us help.³ We may lay our questions before a wiser than Solomon and He will answer them all for us. There is nothing that can trouble us which the Holy Spirit will not, in some way, help us to understand or to bear with patient resignation, if we try to do God's will in everything. When Solomon undertook to do fitting honor to such a distinguished lady

we may be sure that the banquets, and reviews, and receptions were the grandest ever seen. But all Solomon's glory will be eclipsed some day when King Jesus comes to reign, and if we are his we shall see it.⁴ Fame usually exaggerates the truth, but Solomon's wisdom and wealth were far beyond any report. When we come to see "the king in his beauty" we shall find that "the half has not been told us."⁵ Those who have never seen Christ by faith cannot have any idea of the blessings he is able to bestow.⁶ The Queen of Sheba seems to have been a very generous hearted woman. She had no jealous envy of Solomon, but a noble envy of his people because they had such a wise king. She evidently valued wisdom above riches and rubies. The company of the wise and good is a blessing and ought to be preferred to that of the rich and great. We should try to make our conversation and example helpful to others. Foolish talk does much harm.⁷ Evil words sting the heart and stain the soul.⁸ It is not likely that the Queen of Sheba became a worshipper of the true God.⁹ But she acknowledged Jehovah as the God of Solomon and the source of all his prosperity. Her compliment to the king is a very graceful one. Such enormous wealth shews how rich and prosperous Sheba must have been. The queen was willing to give all this in order to shew her admiration for a fellow mortal, who could only give presents like them in return. Jesus asks only our hearts¹⁰ and he will give heaven and himself. ¹¹

¹1 Kings 10: 15. ²Matt. 12: 42. ³2 Tim. 2: 23; Mal. 3: 16; Eph. 5: 19; 1 Thess. 5: 11. ⁴Isa. 60: 3, 6, 9, 17. ⁵1 Cor. 2: 9. ⁶1 Cor. 2: 14, 15; Matt. 13: 11; Rom. 8: 7. ⁷Matt. 12: 37. ⁸Jas. 3: 13. ⁹ch. 5: 7; Ezra 1: 3. ¹⁰Prov. 23: 26. ¹¹2 Tim. 4: 8; 1 Pet. 5: 4; Rev. 2: 10.

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.