

LESSON VIII—November 22nd, 1896.

Rewards of Obedience. PROV. 3: 1-17.

(Commit to memory verses 1-4).

GOLDEN TEXT: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. 3: 6.

PROVE THAT—We should trust in the Lord. Prov. 3: 5.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Questions 63, 64, 65, 66.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 75, 250, 223, 78.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Rewards of obedience. Prov. 3: 1-17. *Tuesday.* God's word in the heart. Deut. 6: 1-13. *Wednesday.* Blessings to the obedient. Deut. 6: 17-25. *Thursday.* The safe way. Prov. 3: 19-26. *Friday.* Despise not discipline. Heb. 12: 1-11. *Saturday.* Doers of the word. Jas. 1: 19-27. *Sabbath.* Friends of Jesus. John 15: 1-14. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. We study to-day a choice portion of one of the most beautiful chapters in the Bible. Try and commit our lessons to memory.

LESSON PLAN. The Rewards of, I. Obedience. vs. 1-4. II. Faith. vs. 5-8. III. Liberality. vs. 9, 10. IV. Patience. vs. 11, 12. V. Wisdom. vs. 13-17.

The reason why we so often forget God's law is that our evil hearts are unwilling to obey it. The heart, the will, and affections must be turned to God. Mere outward obedience, even if we could make it perfect, would amount to nothing. God wants the obedience of loyal hearts.¹ One who keeps God's commandments obeys the laws of health and good morals. He avoids worry and unnatural excitement, hence he is more likely to enjoy a long, prosperous and peaceful life than another who disregards wholesome habits.² "Mercy and truth" stand for "love³ and honesty." These virtues should adorn the character as jewellery does the body, and be as if written upon our hearts, never to be forgotten.⁴ One who is true and kind-hearted is beloved by both God and man. We must use our best judgment in all our affairs, but at the same time never forget that God is the source of all success, and that we are safe and happy only when following the plan he wishes carried out.⁵ One who trusts God will distrust his own feelings and inclinations and so submit himself to the guidance of his wisest and truest Friend. God required the Jews to give one-tenth to him, of all they possessed,⁶ and in the New Testament we are urged to greater liberality, not less.⁷ A great many good people have adopted the Jewish proportion as their *minimum*. They have resolved to give at least one-tenth of all they get to religious or benevolent purposes. All who have done this are willing to testify that the promise of these verses has been amply

fulfilled to them. God never fails to bless the liberal giver.⁸ We should ask for strength and patience to bear whatever our Heavenly Father sees fit to send upon us. We should neither overlook his hand in the chastisement nor murmur at what we are called upon to pass through.⁹ Prosperity is no positive sign of God's favor, but suffering is a mark of sonship.¹⁰ He takes the same means of disciplining us that our earthly parents take. His chastisements are a proof of his watchful love. "Happy" is literally "Oh the blessednesses of the man," and hints at the variety and abundance of the blessings for body and soul, for time and eternity, which those have who take heavenly wisdom as their guide. The "merchandise" of wisdom is the profit that it brings to its possessor. Christ presents the same thought to us in the parables of the Treasure hid in the Field,¹¹ and the Pearl of Great Price.¹² It is worth sacrificing everything for.¹³ Christ is heavenly Wisdom incarnate. Possessing him we have "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."¹⁴ Christ does not promise great wealth and worldly honors to his followers, but those who take him as their Saviour and try always to do what they think will please him, are sure to get as much of wealth and honor as is good for them,¹⁵ and besides will be rich towards God and honored at last before angels and men. Even in this world religion gives contentment and peace of mind, the two greatest blessings that any one can possess.

¹John 14: 1; 15: 14. ²Ps. 34: 12-14; 1 Tim. 4: 8; 6: 6. ³1 Cor. 13. ⁴Luke 1: 63; Jer. 17: 1; 2 Cor. 3: 3. ⁵Phil. 4: 6; Ps. 37: 23; Rom. 12: 6. ⁶Lev. 27: 30-33. ⁷Matt. 10: 8; Mark 12: 41-44; 1 Cor. 8: 12. ⁸Mal. 3: 10-12; Prov. 11: 24, 25; 22: 9; 2 Cor. 9: 6, 7. ⁹Ps. 94: 12; 119: 67. ¹⁰Deut. 8: 5; Heb. 12: 5-8; Rev. 3: 19. ¹¹Matt. 13: 44. ¹²Matt. 13: 45, 46; 16: 26. ¹³Phil. 3: 8. ¹⁴1 Cor. 1: 24, 30; Eph. 1: 17; Col. 2: 3. ¹⁵1 Tim. 4: 8.

LESSONS. 1. God does not want the outward life if we will not give him the heart. 2. Honesty and kindness are the two virtues most admired everywhere. 3. A humble opinion of oneself is most becoming and Christ-like. 4. Disappointment and sorrow are sent to make us better. 5. Strive to "win Christ."