



SCHOLARS' NOTES.

LESSON X.—Dec. 6, 1896.

1 Kings 11 : 4-13.

SOLOMON'S SIN.

Commit to Memory Vs. 9, 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Cor. 10 : 12.

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. Turned away from God. Vs. 4-8.
- II. Incurring the Anger of God. Vs. 9-11.
- III. Mercy for David's Sake. Vs. 12, 13.

HOME READINGS.

- M. 1 Kings 11 : 4-13.—Solomon's Sin.
 - T. 1 Kings 11 : 14-25.—Solomon's Adversaries.
 - W. 1 Kings 11 : 26-43.—Solomon's Last Days.
 - Th. Deut. 17 : 14-20.—The King's Duty.
 - F. Deut. 7 : 1-11.—Warning Against Idolaters.
 - S. Exod. 34 : 1-14.—No Other God.
 - S. Gal. 6 : 1-18.—Sowing and Reaping.
- Time.—B. C. 985-980, five to ten years before Solomon's death.
- Place.—Jerusalem, the Mount of Offence; the southern summit of the Mount of Olives.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

In our last lesson we saw 'Solomon in all his glory.' To-day a very different picture is presented to us. Here we see this most magnificent monarch of his time, whose wisdom and wealth were world-renowned, turning from the Lord to whom he owed all that he had and was, his wisdom become folly and his heart corrupt. He not only followed after idols, but publicly established their worship in the midst of God's chosen people. In the sad record of his downfall we read again the oft-told story of the sure evil consequences of sin. By polygamous alliances with women of heathen nations, Solomon flatly and most offensively disobeyed God's plain commands. By this means his heart was turned to idolatry, and he became estranged from God. The Lord in his displeasure stirred up Solomon's enemies against him, and after his death disrupted the kingdom.

QUESTIONS.

How had Solomon disobeyed God's plain commands? What was the result upon his life? What gods did he go after? What is said of him in verse 6? How did he publicly establish idolatry? Where did he build the heathen altars? What made Solomon's idolatry especially wicked? What punishment did the Lord foretell? What forbearance did he promise? For whose sake did he do this? What will surely cause the Lord to depart from us? For whose sake will he show mercy toward us?

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

1. Many lives are ruined by bad friendships.
2. When the heart is wrong all goes wrong.
3. Sin always meets divine displeasure.
4. When we are unfaithful God takes his work from us.
5. The blessing of a good father passes to his son.

THE LESSON STORY.

So far we have learned nothing about Solomon but what was wise and good. But now sin came into his heart, and we see the sad results—not only in his character and life, but also in his kingdom.

This great king, to whom God had given so much blessing, fell into sin because he must have his own way. He was an old man now, and he let his wives, who were heathen women, lead his heart away from the true God. He did not forsake him entirely, but he did not follow him with all his heart, and God was displeased with him. It was wrong for Solomon to offer incense to strange gods, even to please his wives. God wants us to stand up for the right, whether others are pleased or not. You know God had commanded Solomon not to worship other gods, and now he told him that because he had not obeyed his word he should take

the kingdom from him and give it to another. But for David's sake the Lord said he would not do this while Solomon lived. And even then he said he would leave one tribe to Solomon's son.

This sad story shows how weak we are unless we take strength from God every day and every hour. Let us learn to depend upon him as a child depends upon its mother, and we shall then be kept from sin.

ILLUSTRATION.

Have a heart 'fully turned' toward the Lord. Vs. 4, 6, 8. Give God thine heart. A story is told of a colored man who came to a watchmaker with the two hands of his clock, saying: 'I want yer to fix up dese han's. Dey jess doan, keep no mo' kerec' time for mo' den six monfs.' 'Where is the clock?' asked the watchmaker. 'Out at de house on Injun Creek.' 'But I must have the clock.' 'Didn't I tell yer dars nuffin de matter wid de clock 'ceptin' de han's, and I done brought 'em to you. You jess want de clock so you kin tinker wid it and charge me a big price. Gimme back dem han's.' And he went away angry. He was no more unreasonable than you if you are trying to regulate your conduct by avoiding bad habits. Put your heart into the care of the great watchmaker, do not fear to pay the price, and he will give you a 'new heart.' Ezek. 36 : 26. Then love him with all this heart. Go fully after the Lord. Give him the keys of every room in the heart. Let the Holy Spirit come in and do as he will.

Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. V. 8; 2 Cor. 6 : 14. God's commands are explicit. The Israelites were forbidden to make marriages with the Canaanites. Deut. 7 : 3. Christians are bidden to marry 'only in the Lord.' 1 Cor. 7 : 39. The Christian married to an enemy of God is joined to one who has not a thought or feeling in common with him. 'One desires to serve Christ; the other the devil.' One breathes after the things of God; the other sighs for the things of the world. One seeks to mortify the flesh with its affections and desires; the other seeks to gratify these very things. Like a sheep and goat linked together, the sheep longs to feed on the green pastures in the field, while the goat craves the brambles in the ditch. Both are starved. One will not feed on the green pasture, the other cannot. The goat, by superior strength, succeeds in forcing his companion to remain among the brambles. God's chosen people were forbidden to plough with an ox and an ass together. Deut. 22 : 10. It was an unequal yoke. The ox, which the Egyptians worshipped, and the ass, the domestic animal of the Israelites, did not belong together. Jesus said, 'Take my yoke upon you.' Matt. 11 : 29. You cannot be yoked with an unbeliever and with Christ. Servants of hostile masters cannot work in the same yoke. A worldly partner will not have heavenly principles. His business will be conducted to make money and not for the glory of God. There will be trickery, if not dishonesty, and the Christian yoked with Belial is in the service of the devil. If you plough with one whose tastes and tendencies are opposed to yours, you must go his way, he cannot go yours; and you serve Satan while professing to serve Christ. The unbeliever is God's enemy and yours. Then be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers in marriage, or business, or politics, or philanthropy, or religion, lest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord and bring down wrath upon thee from the Lord. 2 Chron. 19 : 2.—'Arnold's Practical Commentary.'

C. E. PRAYER MEETING TOPICS AND DAILY READINGS.

A STRONGER FAITH.

- Through prophecy. John 5 : 36-47.
 - Through miracle. John 14 : 7-12.
 - Through Christ's words. 1 John 5 : 1-12.
 - Through Christ's death. John 12 : 23-32.
 - Through prayer. John 3 : 25-36.
 - Through action. Jas. 2 : 17-26.
- Dec. 6.—How to strengthen our faith in Christianity.—Mark 9 : 14-29.

Probable Sons.

By the Author of 'Eric's Good News.'

CHAPTER IX.

'A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.'

When Sir Edward retired to his room that night, he paced up and down for some time in front of his little niece's picture that she

had given him. His brow was knitted, and he was thinking deeply.

'I am longing to have peace,' he muttered. 'I will arise'—ay, easy to say—it's a hard 'Why cannot I make up my mind to seek it? and bitter thing for a backslider to retrace his steps. How the child stabs me sometimes, and how little she knows my past!'

He stopped and gazed at the picture. 'And the Lord Himself used this as an illustration. I could not want anything stronger.'

A deep-drawn sigh followed, then a heartfelt cry rose to heaven.

'May God have mercy on me, and bring me back, for I can't bring myself!'

The next morning Sir Edward had an interview with his keeper, who brought his son up with him, and as the tall, broad-shouldered young fellow stood before the squire, and in earnest, humble tones asked if he could be given a chance of redeeming his character by being employed on the estate, Sir Edward's severity relaxed, and after a long conversation with him he promised he would give him a trial.

He smiled grimly to himself as father and son left him with warm expressions of gratitude.

'So that is the child's hero! One whose example I might well follow. He has had the courage at last to take the step from which I am still shrinking. Why should I fear that my welcome home would be less full of love and forgiveness than his?'

It was Christmas eve: a wild and stormy day, the wind raged ceaselessly round the old house, howling down the chimneys, and beating the branches of the trees outside against the window panes.

Milly had been very busy for some hours helping Ford to decorate the hall and rooms with holly and evergreen, though Ford would every now and then pause in his work, saying, 'There, Miss Milly, I'm sure we're overdoing it; if the house was full of company now, I would take a pride in it, but I don't believe the master will notice whether it's done or not. It seems to me as he is getting more and more shut up into hisself lately. Christmas is a dull time with us.'

All was finished at last, and Milly went up to the nursery and stood at the window, her bright brown eyes eagerly scanning and taking note of every object out of doors.

'It's a perfect hurricane,' said nurse presently, as she sat with her work in a comfortable chair by the fire. 'If we feel it inland like this, what must it be at sea!'

'I should like to be on the sea,' said Milly. 'I love the wind, but I think it is getting a little bit too rough this afternoon. I'm rather afraid it will hurt the little trees. Ford said if I went out I should be blown away. Oh, nurse, Goliath is cracking so! I wish the wind would knock him over, he is a horrid old tree. I always think he is making faces at me when I run past him. Wouldn't it be nice to see him blown down?'

'You mustn't wish that,' said nurse, getting up from her chair and moving towards the door; 'it's a dangerous thing for an old tree to be blown down. Now I am going downstairs for a short time, so be a good child and don't get into mischief while I am away.'

Milly remained at the window for some minutes after nurse's departure, then her quick eyes noticed a poor wretched little kitten mewing as she vainly tried to shelter herself from the violent blasts around by crouching close to a tree.

In an instant, without thought of consequences, the child darted to the nursery door and down the broad oak staircase.

'Poor pussy, I will run and fetch her in. I expect she has run away from the kitchen.'

Sir Edward was writing at his study table, when an unusually violent gust of wind caused him to raise his eyes and glance out of the window. There, to his amazement, he saw, under the old oak tree on the lawn, his little niece, her golden brown curls flying as she battled with the elements, and struggled vainly to stoop and take the kitten in her arms.

He started up from his seat, but as he did so a blast that shook the house swept by; there was an awful cracking, then a crash, and, to his horror, a huge limb of the old oak came with an awful thud upon the very spot where his little niece was standing.

'My God, save her!' was his agonized cry, as he saw at the same moment the little figure stagger and fall. Then, forgetting his weakness and lack of physical strength, he dashed out of the house, and in another instant was standing over her.

His first feeling was one of intense thankfulness to find that the branch in falling