

What Shall We See?

What shall we see at Christmas time?
A throng of happy faces,
Clear, smiling eyes, and fair, smooth brows,
Where care has left no traces;
The pent-up Christmas mirth
In ringing laughter breaking,
And all day long for loving hearts
Unconscious music making.
Yet would we know one joy more bright,
To crown home's tender story,
Then let us lift our hearts, and pray
That we may see His glory.

What shall we see at Christmas time?
The mirth and laughter vanished;
While many a tender, playful rite
By mute consent is banished;
Eyes that must droop to hide
The heart's swift overflowing;
Lips that their loving greetings breathe,
Some long-loved names foregoing.
Yet would we know the light that shines
Above earth's checkered story,
Then let us pray that through our tears
We may behold his glory.

What shall we see at Christmas time?
Pillar and archway brightened,
Chaplet and wreath of clustering green,
With scarlet berries lightened;
The preacher's earnest gaze,
The thronging congregation—
Their voices blended high and low
In chant and supplication.
Yet would we know the thrilling joy
Of the sweet Christmas story,
Then let us pray that through it all
We may behold His glory.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B.C. 980-975] **LESSON XII.** [Dec. 22.

CLOSE OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.

1 Kings 11. 26-43. Memory verses, 42, 43.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.—Ecc. 12. 13.

OUTLINE.

1. Ahijah's prophecy, v. 26-39.
2. Solomon's death, v. 40-43.

TIME.—980-975 B.C.
PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINKS.

The story of Solomon draws rapidly to a close. In accordance with the prophecy made to Solomon, a supplemental prophecy had to be made to the instrument in God's hand of accomplishing this rending of the kingdom into two parts. There is no hint of Solomon's repentance, except it be found in the words of bitter experience written in the book of Ecclesiastes. Enemies also troubled his latter days, and he learned too late the sorrow of transgression.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Repaired the breaches*—Probably openings or breaks in the masonry of the city walls which required the service of so skilled an engineer as Jeroboam. *The charge of the house of Joseph*—The officer in charge of the revenues from the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, or some kindred position of trust. *Clad . . . new garment*—The prophet was wrapped closely in a new outer mantle. *Have a light always*—A figure from the fire always burning on the altar: it means a representative always in the line of direct descent. *Book of the acts of Solomon*—This record has not been preserved as scripture, and we have no knowledge of its contents.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Ahijah's Prophecy.
What new character is here introduced to us?
What had he done that had brought him into note?
What happened that aroused new ambitions within him?
Who was Ahijah?
What was the manner of his prophecy?
What was the matter of his prophecy?

What conditions entered into the promises made to Jeroboam?
What was the effect upon Jeroboam? ver. 26.
In what did his action end? ver. 40.

2. Solomon's Death.
How long did Jeroboam remain in Egypt? 2 Chron. 10. 1, 2.
How long was Solomon's reign?
How old was he at the time of his death?
How happened he to have failed of the long life promised to him?
What books of the Bible are supposed to be the work of Solomon?
What was his character?
What were the defects of his administration?
What light is thrown on the character of his son by the fact that Jeroboam stayed in Egypt while Solomon lived, but returned as soon as he died?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Sin causes loss. Saul proved it. David proved it. Solomon proved it. Have you? Each man has to learn for himself. Experience is only able to teach one at a time, and the father's lesson does not serve for the son?
Solomon's last years were bitter ones. Sin dropped gall into them. It will into any man's life.
Sin is no respecter of persons. It attacks peasant and prince. There is but one shield. See Eph. 6. 16. Will you try it?

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Review all the lessons about Solomon.
2. Write an estimate of his character.
3. Write twenty questions and answers which will tell the story of his life.
4. In what respects was he superior to David? In what inferior? Compare them.
5. Tell the character of the three revelations he had from God.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What word of doom hung over Solomon's closing days? "Thy kingdom is divided." 2. To whom was it foretold to have been given? "Jeroboam, Solomon's chief engineer." 3. To what did the prophecy impel Jeroboam? "To rebel against Solomon." 4. What was the result to Jeroboam? "He became an exile to Egypt." 5. What was this great king's comment upon life at its close? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." 6. What is the lesson it should teach us? "Let us hear the conclusion," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The ruin of sin.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

58. Is there then any special Providence over men?
Yes; our Lord said: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matthew 6. 26.) And to his disciples he said: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Luke 12. 7.)
Psalm 31. 15; Proverbs 16. 9; Romans 8. 28.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.

B.C. 1000.] [December 29.

Prov. 23. 29-35. Memory verses, 29-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Wine is a mocker strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Prov. 20. 1.

OUTLINE.

1. Woe, v. 29, 30.
2. Warning, v. 31-35.

TIME.—Sometime during Solomon's reign many of the proverbs were produced. We follow the common chronology of our English Bible (A. V.) and call the year 1000 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

An isolated lesson, having no relation to the lessons of the quarter.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Woe, sorrow, contentions, etc.* All these are as distinct characteristics of drunkenness to-day as then. *Babbling*—Maudlin talk of the drunkard. *Wounds without cause*—Gotten in drunken quarrels. *Mixed wine*—The Oriental nations all drank their wine largely mixed with water, but sometimes with aromatic spices to make it stronger. *Wine . . . red . . . giveth colour . . . moveth aright*—All these are indications of the quality of the wine. *An adder*—Some sort of very venomous serpent.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Woe.
What answer will you make to the questions of ver. 29?
What answer does the author make to the same questions?
What is the warning which these verses give?
What is the woe which they suggest? Isa. 5. 11; Joel 1. 5.
How much has the effect of intemperate drinking changed in three thousand years?
Do the Scriptures pronounce woe upon any but the drinker? Hab. 2. 15.
Is there any hint here of success in drinking moderately, or of escape from these woes by moderate drinking?

2. Warning.
Who gave the warning of the text?
What is the only safety suggested by these verses?
In what respect is the picture of ver. 32 true?
To what other sins does intemperance lead?
What is the singular thing about this habit?
What instance of heed to this warning can be found in the Scripture history? Dan. 1. 8, 12, 15.
When should a man begin to practise the advice given here?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Who hath woe? The drunkard.
Who hath sorrow? The drunkard.
Drunkenness destroys money, time, health, strength, power, social standing, business standing; more, it destroys the soul.

Is not this woe and sorrow?
The only safety lies in total abstinence.
The first drink does not make a drunkard. But the first drunkard would never have been but for the first drink.

Alcohol is in no sense a food—so science says. But it does destroy the brain.
The drinker is wholly selfish. He drinks only to satisfy himself. He is the meanest man that lives.

The drinker plays with eternity; he stakes the price of his soul against his appetite. He is a fool.
The drink-seller is the fool-maker, the fool-driver, the fool-killer. He is himself the prince of fools.
Read ver. 34, and Hab. 2. 15.

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Study some of the evil results of intemperate use of intoxicating drink in the Scriptures: 1 Kings 16. 9, 10; Gen. 9. 20-25; Dan. 5. 1-4, etc.; 1 Cor. 6-10.
2. Study the following references: Isa. 5. 11 and 22; Prov. 23. 20, 21; 20. 1; Eph. 5. 18; Psa. 75. 8; Prov. 27. 22.
3. Read the story of the Rechabites: Jer. 35. 1-10. Also the true law of Christian living: Gal. 5. 14-26.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Against what sin is this lesson directed? "Against the sin of intemperance." 2. What is intemperance? "Excess of any kind." 3. What particular excess is here denounced? "Excessive use of intoxicating drinks." 4. What warning do the Scriptures pronounce against the seller of intoxicating drinks? "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink." Hab. 2. 15. 5. What warning to the user of these drinks? "Wine is a mocker," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The deceitfulness of sin.

PRAYER is the preface to the book of Christian living; the text of the life sermon; the girding on the armour for battle; the pilgrim's preparation for his journey. It must be supplemented by action, or it amounts to nothing.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN said: "The eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin. If all but myself were blind, I should neither want a fine house nor fine furniture."

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