

WHITHER?

Yes, the years are swiftly passing, one by one they glide away. Where, oh! where is each one leading us—the pilgrims of to-day?

Are we looking for his country, are we seeking one to come? Do our lives declare this plainly, do we show we're going home?

And we ourselves are journeying, ay, before this year is o'er, It may be those who love us best will love us here no more;

Oh! then may our faith grow firmer in the glories still to come; And when the angel voices call us, may we one by one go home!

CHARLOTTE MURRAY.

BEREAN NOTES.

B. C. 997. LESSON XII. A GODLY LIFE. Eccles. 12. 1-14. Sept. 17.

HOME READINGS. MONDAY—The Lesson. Eccles. 12. 1-14.

TUESDAY—Young people. Matt. 19. 13-22.

WEDNESDAY—"Of few days." Job. 14. 1-22.

THURSDAY—"Like grass." Psa. 90. 1-17.

FRIDAY—"He is my refuge." Psa. 91. 1-16.

SATURDAY—"Speechless." Matt. 22. 1-14.

SUNDAY—"The day of the Lord." 2 Pet. 3. 1-14.

TOPIC—Keeping God's Commands the Sum of Wisdom.

GOLDEN TEXT—Godliness is profitable unto all things. 1 Tim. 4. 8.

DOCTRINE—Immortality of the soul. John 10. 27, 28; Rom. 2. 6-9; 2 Tim. 1. 10.

GENERAL STATEMENT. In the concluding words of Solomon contained in this lesson, we are exhorted to remember our Creator, and to fear God and keep His Commandments—These counsels suggest the proper TITLE, A Godly Life.

THE TOPIC gives the general teaching of the chapter. Keeping God's commands the sum of wisdom. The GOLDEN TEXT sets forth the same truth in a little different form, namely, "Godliness is profitable unto all things." The OUTLINE shows that in the lesson a godly life is 1. Favored; 2. Urged; 3. Confirmed; and 4. Solemnized.

Dear teacher, fail not to press home these truths upon the hearts committed to you. Then note the DOCTRINE: Immortality of the soul.

BEREAN NOTES.

The book of Ecclesiastes may be said to be a philosophic inquiry respecting the true secret of life. It is sought in various directions with the conclusion in each case of the nothingness of earthly good—"Vanity of vanities: all is vanity." But in our lesson the secret is found to be in a devout consecration to God, and the practice of godliness. A godly life is a life of hearty reverence and loving obedience.

1-5. A godly life favored by the freedom of youth.

1. REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR—Because he is Creator he has the right of ownership in the work of his hands, and therefore that rightful control which renders obedience to his will obligatory on his creatures. REMEMBER—Keep him in mind; forget him not. Remember him as Creator, Ruler, Protector, Redeemer. Now—Without delay. DAYS OF THY YOUTH—The fresh, best days of life, before sinful habits are fixed or conscience is blunted, while the powers of mind and body are vigorous, and while free from the disadvantages and infirmities of age. EVIL DAYS—Days of enfeebled powers, the part of life in which most people find little satisfaction or pleasure.

2. WHILE THE SUN—This picture of old age is not readily paralleled. To aged people, whose sight is become dim, the sun, moon, and stars appear more or less DARKENED. AS CLOUDS RETURN quickly again after a RAIN, so do the aged hardly recover from one pain or illness before another sets in. Not so with the young.

3. KEEPERS OF THE HOUSE—The body is compared to a house. The arms and hands are its keepers or defenders. In advanced age they lose their strength and skill, and become tremulous. STRONG MEN BOW—Knees, feet, and legs become weak, and unable to bear the frame without a staff. GRINDERS CEASE—The teeth are mostly gone. LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOWS—The eyes grow dim, as Isaac's. (Gen. 27. 1.) and Abijah's (1 Kings 14. 4.) Moses at one hundred and twenty was an exception.

4. DOORS—The lips are the doors of the mouth, and the aged find it needful to shut them in eating. THE SOUND OF THE domestic mill in GRINDING the corn for food (as was the custom) seems low, so hard does hearing become. VOICES OF

THE BIRD—Disturbing sleep in the early morning, so easily are they awaked. DAUGHTERS OF MUSIC—The voice is broken and unmusical in song.

5. AFRAID OF.....HIGH—Dread of high places, from weakness, short breath, or giddiness. FEARS—Apprehensions of injury if they go out. ALMOND TREE—Its blossoms are white like the hair of age. GRASSHOPPER.....BURDEN—So unable to bear its weight. DESIRE.....FALL—Appetite for food fails. The reason of this general feebleness is in the universal law of human decay: MAN GOETH TO HIS LONG HOME, the grave. All are hastening thither. To all the day is coming when MOURNERS, whether hired, according to ancient usage, or voluntary, shall bewail them. The young are free from these infirmities, and may easily remember God.

6, 7. Urged by the nearness of death. 6. THE SILVER CORD—The spinal cord loses its power, and the nervous system weakens. GOLDEN BOWL BE BROKEN—The brain ceases its work. PITCHER BROKEN—The large arteries and veins no longer receive and carry the blood. WHEEL BROKEN—As a broken water wheel raises no water from the cistern, the heart stops its beating, and no more propels the blood. This is death. What then?

7. THE DUST—The body is material, and crumbles back to dust again. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." THE SPIRIT—The intelligent, rational moral part of man. RETURN UNTO GOD—It does not, then, go into the grave, as some fancy; nor, as others, is it floating around through space. It goes to God to await, with saints in glory or lost souls in hell, the resurrection of the body and the decisions of the judgment day. Solomon plainly was no materialist, but believed in a soul distinct from the body.

8. VANITY OF VANITIES—Such is human life. How fleeting! Brevity of brevities; all is brevity. Upon man, God's noblest work, frailty is stamped. Death proves earth's nothingness. Now, is there anything better? There certainly is, and the young will find it in remembering God.

8.22. Confirmed by the abundance of revelation.

9. THE PREACHER—Solomon. WISE—Read his discourses of wisdom in Proverbs and this book. GOOD REE—By patient thought. SOUGHT—By severe study.

10. ACCEPTABLE WORDS—Easily understood and appropriate. UPRIGHT—Speaking things as they are. WORDS OF TRUTH—Such as will show the way to God. The preacher and teacher have here a fitting example.

11. AS GOADS—To rouse, awaken, and drive to righteousness. It is better to be whipped to repentance and duty than to be damned. AS NAILS—Truth convincingly uttered to ASSEMBLIES of hearers by wise masters or teachers, is like a nail driven into a wall; it stays. ONE SHEPHERD—God, from whom all true teachers obtain the truth they teach.

12. MANY BOOKS—On the secret and end of life, many books have been, and many still are, written to solve the problem. MUCH STUDY—To find the solution and discover the secret: how many weary heads have ached in vain! Alas! they search in the wrong direction, refusing the guidance of the Bible.

13, 14. Solemnized by the certainty of judgment.

13. THE CONCLUSION—Here is the secret vainly sought elsewhere, the outcome of the whole discussion. FEAR GOD—Cherish a holy, loving reverence for God and his authority, and a dread of offending him. KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS—All of them, great and small, as he has given them in the Bible, for they lay down the true and only rule of human life. THE WHOLE DUTY—For this we are made. For this God lets us live. This is our business here on earth, and in it alone true happiness is found.

14. EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT—A powerful motive to fear and obedience. There is a future life and a judgment-day. Every act, word, thought and THING, whether public or SECRET, forgotten by us or remembered, GOOD or EVIL, must undergo the scrutiny of that day, and the award be heard, "Come, ye blessed," or "Depart, ye cursed!" Surely, faithful, loving service of God is wise and best.

LESSONS. 1. Every consideration of duty, interest and happiness urges the young to begin a religious life and continue it to the end of their days. They cannot safely or wisely leave God and his service out of their lives. 2 Chron. 28. 9; Prov. 22. 6; Lam. 3. 27; Acts 26. 4, 5; 2 Tim. 3. 15. 2. The lesson of immortality and eternity. The soul is immortal and cannot die, but passes away with and forever retains the moral character it possesses here. The resurrection of the body is coming, and the judgment will follow. Eternity turns on this present life. Surely keeping God's commands is the sum of wisdom. Deut. 6. 2; 10. 12; Luke 12. 16-20; Rom. 2. 7-10; 2 Cor. 5. 10.

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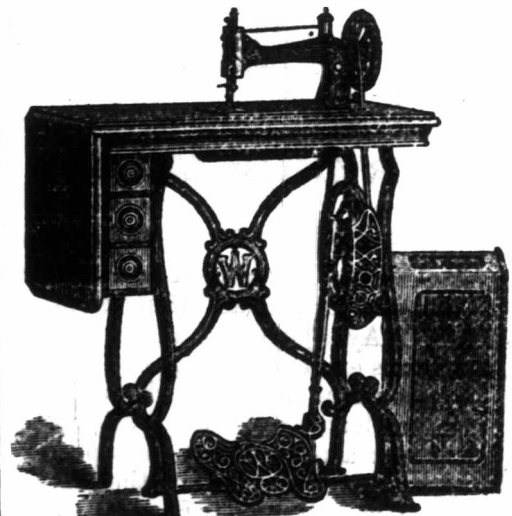
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