

Lessons from the
Life of Solomon

Ellen G. White

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King Solomon
(Sweden, 17th century)

Preface

I RECENTLY came across this series from the pen of Ellen White, which appeared in the 1905-1906 *Review and Herald* articles. A closer inspection showed that some of the material had later been used in the book *Prophets and Kings* (regarding Solomon's life), and some had been taken from the last chapter of an earlier-published book, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (regarding the last years of David's life).

In these articles, however, there are personal applications to the church which were left out of the record of Solomon's life as recorded in the book, *Prophets and Kings*, as that book was intended for general circulation and missionary work. Therefore, there is some material in these articles that doesn't appear anywhere else.

There are also some parts, that are taken from other earlier-published books. The paragraphs regarding the heavenly sanctuary also appear in the book, *Great Controversy*. The paragraphs regarding order in the church appeared in the book *Early Writings* (under the title, "Gospel Order").

I have also included another short series of articles on "The Apostasy of Solomon" in the *Appendix*. This collection could be considered a more expanded version of the life of Solomon, with a wider array of spiritual lessons and warnings.

There is no time in Old Testament history, when the purpose of God, that His people should reach the world with His gospel, was closer to fulfillment than Solomon's day. It was a glorious opportunity, which however was sadly sidetracked. Such an opportunity would not appear again until One "greater than Solomon"¹ would appear on Earth.

God's purpose has not changed. It still remains for the church to complete the work that Jesus began, to...

¹ *Matthew* 12:42.

Isaiah 27

⁶ ...blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

Matthew 24

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Isaiah 60

¹ Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you.

³ And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Revelation 18

¹ And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Therefore, the lessons from Solomon's time, both what was done right, and what was done wrong, remain as guides and warnings to us today.

This is especially so, since the same sad falling away, for the same reasons, led the once pure early Church to depart from the faith, and become the tyrannical Papal system. Satan's methods have not changed since the temptation in the garden, and it is essential that every one who desires to overcome as Christ overcame, be fully aware and awake to those temptations, and to the Lord's remedies.

Every Christian who desires to be successful in coworking with God, and to redeem the failures of the past, needs to understand and practice the spiritual truths revealed in the history contained in this book.

Frank Zimmerman
March 2022

1. The Background

Review and Herald, August 17, 1905

I HAVE been instructed by the Lord to call the attention of our people to the history of Solomon. From the record of his reign we may learn many lessons helpful in avoiding the paths that led to Israel's downfall.

The early life of Solomon was bright with promise. He chose the wisdom of God, and the glory of his reign excited the wonder of the world. He might have gone on from strength to strength, from glory to glory, ever approaching nearer the similitude of the character of God.

The Extent of the Kingdom of Israel

In the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel reached the height of her greatness. Solomon was anointed and proclaimed king in the closing years of his father David, who abdicated in his favor. After the death of David,

1 Kings 4

¹ Solomon was king over all Israel.

At this time,

²⁰ Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude.

²¹ Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river [Euphrates] unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

²⁴ He had dominion...over all the kings on this side the river [Euphrates]: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

²⁵ And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

1 Kings 5

¹ Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of

his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

2 Chronicles 1

¹ Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

The promise given to Abraham and repeated through Moses was fulfilled:

Deuteronomy 11

²² If you shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him;

²³ Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and you shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

²⁴ Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

²⁵ There shall no man be able to stand before you.

Solomon's Opportunity

The last great work of David, in his official position, was to call the attention of the people once more to their solemn relation to God as subjects of His theocracy. Summoning the princes of Israel, with the representative men from all parts of the kingdom, he delivered, in their presence, an inspired charge to his son, vesting him with kingly authority, and bidding him perform faithfully the duties devolving upon him.

1 Chronicles 28

⁹ Know the God of your father,

the aged monarch pleaded,

⁹ ...and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts: if you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off for-

ever.

¹⁰ Take heed now; for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.

Through obedience the Israelites could have stood at the head of the nations of the earth. God would have made them...

Deuteronomy 26

¹⁹ ...high above all nations which He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.

Deuteronomy 28

¹⁰ All the peoples of the earth, [said Moses,] shall see that you are called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of you.

Deuteronomy 4

⁶ The nations which shall hear all these statutes, [shall] say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

None understood these promises better than David. By his own experience he had learned how hard is the path of him who departs from God. He had felt the condemnation of the broken law, and had reaped the fruits of transgression; and his whole soul was moved with solicitude that the leaders of Israel should be true to God, and that Solomon should obey God's law, shunning the sins that had weakened his father's authority, embittered his life, and dishonored God.

David knew that it would require humility of heart, a constant trust in God, and unceasing watchfulness, to withstand the temptations that would surely beset Solomon in his exalted station; for such prominent characters are a special mark for the shafts of Satan.

When he felt that death was approaching, the burden of David's heart was still for Solomon and for the kingdom of Israel, whose prosperity must so largely depend upon the fidelity of her king.

1 Kings 2

¹ ...and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

² I go the way of all the earth: be strong therefore, and show yourself a man;

³ And keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies,...that you may prosper in all that you do, and wherever you turn yourself:

⁴ That the Lord may continue His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, If your children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you (said He) a man on the throne of Israel.

O, what an opportunity was Solomon's! He was to be not merely a warrior, a statesman, and a sovereign, but a strong, good man, an example of fidelity, a teacher of righteousness. With tender earnestness David entreated Solomon to be manly and noble, and to show mercy and loving-kindness to his subjects.

The many trying and remarkable experiences through which David had passed during his lifetime, had taught him the value of the nobler virtues, and led him to exclaim:

2 Samuel 23

³ He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

⁴ And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

Had Solomon followed the divinely inspired instruction of his aged father, his reign might have been indeed a reign of righteousness, so beautifully described in the 72nd *Psalms*:

Psalms 72 [A Reign of Righteousness]

¹ Give the king your judgments, O God,
And your righteousness unto the king's son.

² He will judge your people with righteousness,
And your poor with justice.

- ³ The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
And the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ He will judge the poor of the people,
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.
- ⁵ They shall fear You while the sun endures,
And so long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- ⁶ He will come down like rain upon the mown grass,
As showers that water the earth.
- ⁷ In his days shall the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more.
- ⁸ He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth.
- ⁹ They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him;
And his enemies shall lick the dust.
- ¹⁰ The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute:
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
- ¹¹ Yea, all kings shall fall down before him;
All nations shall serve him.
- ¹² For he will deliver the needy when he cries,
And the poor, that has no helper.
- ¹³ He will have pity on the poor and needy,
And the souls of the needy he will save.
- ¹⁴ He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence;
And precious will their blood be in his sight:
- ¹⁵ And they shall live;
And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba:
And men shall pray for him continually;
They shall bless him all the day long.
- ¹⁶ There shall be abundance of grain in the earth
Upon the top of the mountains;
The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon:
And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.
- ¹⁷ His name shall endure forever;
His name shall be continued as long as the sun:
And men shall be blessed in him;
All nations shall call him happy.
- ¹⁸ Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel,
Who only does wondrous things:
- ¹⁹ And blessed be His glorious name forever;

And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen, and Amen.

Solomon's entire history might have been in accordance with this inspired prophecy. Exalted to a position of sacred trust, he for a time heeded the wise counsels of David, and brought glory to the name of the God of Israel.

But the later years of his reign were marred by pride, self-sufficiency, self-exaltation. Desire for political power and self-aggrandizement led him to form alliances with heathen nations. The silver of Tarshish and the gold of Ophir were procured at a terrible expense, even the sacrifice of integrity, the betrayal of sacred trust. Association with idolaters corrupted his faith. One false step led to another, until there was a breaking down of the barriers that God had erected for the safety of His people.

Gradually, yet surely, Solomon's life was corrupted by conformity to worldly customs. Looking to the standards of right followed by heathen nations, he began to lose sight of the standard of God's law. Uniting in marriage with worshipers of false gods, at last he gave himself up to idolatry.

A character that had been pure and elevated, became marred and degraded. The mind that was once given to God, and inspired to write the precious words of wisdom found in the book of *Proverbs*,—that noble mind, through evil associations and constant indulgence, became weak in moral power. Solomon dishonored himself, dishonored Israel, and dishonored God.

Sad as is the story of Solomon's apostasy, it portrays the result of separation from God. One false step prepares the way for a second and a third, and every additional step is taken more easily than the last. It is our privilege to take heed to the God-given warning of Solomon's life. As followers of Christ, we are to honor our Master by studying and obeying His teachings. We are to manifest our love and fear of God by re-

fusing to conform to the world's standard of right.

Let us beware of departing from the simplicity of our faith. The Christian's standard of right must ever be the standard that is given in Holy Writ. Constantly we are to guard against every worldly influence that would weaken us in moral power.



David announces Solomon as the next King
(The Child's History of King Solomon, 1868)



Kingdoms of Saul, David, and Solomon
 (biblemapper.com)

2. Preparations for Building the Temple

Review and Herald, August 24, 1905

AT THE time when David committed to Solomon the affairs of the kingdom and the great work of building the temple,

1 Chronicles 28

¹ [He] assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem.

In the presence of the representative men bearing the responsibility of government throughout the kingdom of Israel, David delivered his dying charge. Sustained by the power that accompanies divine inspiration, he told them of his own desire to build the temple, and of the Lord's command that the work should be committed to Solomon his son. The divine assurance was,

⁶ Solomon your son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

King David, in the years of his prosperity, had provided an abundance of the most costly material,—gold, silver, onyx stones, and stones of divers colors; marble, and the most precious woods,—to be used in the construction of the temple. These valuable treasures were committed by him to Solomon.

Be Strong, and Do It

David gave Solomon minute directions for building the temple, with patterns of every part, and of all its instruments of service, as had been revealed to him by divine inspiration. These directions, so precisely given, were not left to be re-

called by treacherous memory, but were carefully and minutely written out, and preserved for the guidance of the builders.

Solomon was still young, and he shrank from the weighty responsibilities that would devolve upon him in the erection of the temple and in the government of God's people. But David said to him,

1 Chronicles 28

²⁰ Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed [by the greatness of the plans]: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you.

¹⁰ The Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.

Free-Will Offerings

Again David appealed to the congregation:

1 Chronicles 29

¹ Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.

² I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God,

—he declared, and then he enumerated the materials he had gathered. More than this, he said,

³ I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of my own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,

⁴ Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal.

“Who then,” he asked of the assembled multitude that had brought their liberal gifts,—

⁵ Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto

the Lord?

There was a ready response from the assembly.

⁶ The chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly,

⁷ And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.

⁸ And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord...

⁹ Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

¹⁰ Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be You, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

¹¹ Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all.

¹² Both riches and honor come of You, and You reign over all; and in your hand is power and might; and in your hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

¹³ Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise your glorious name.

¹⁴ But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of You, and of your own have we given You.

¹⁵ For we are strangers before You, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

¹⁶ O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build You a house for your holy name comes of your hand, and is all your own.

¹⁷ I know also, my God, that You try the heart, and have

pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy your people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto You.

¹⁸ O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of your people, and prepare their heart unto You:

¹⁹ And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for which I have made provision.

²⁰ And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshiped the Lord.

Of Your Own Have We Given You

With deepest interest the king had gathered the rich material for building and beautifying the temple. He had composed the glorious anthems that in after-years should echo through its courts. Now his heart was made glad in God, as the chief of the fathers and the princes of Israel so nobly responded to his appeal, and offered themselves to the important work before them. And as they gave their service, they were disposed to do more. They swelled the offerings, giving of their own possessions into the treasury.

David had felt deeply his own unworthiness in gathering the material for the house of God; and the expression of loyalty in the ready response of the nobles of his kingdom, as with willing hearts they dedicated their treasures to Jehovah, and devoted themselves to His service, filled him with joy. But it was God alone who had imparted this disposition to His people. He, not man, must be glorified.

It was He who had provided the people with the riches of earth, and His Spirit had made them willing to bring their precious things for the temple. It was all of the Lord; if His love

had not moved upon the hearts of the people, the king's efforts would have been vain, and the temple would never have been erected.

All that man receives of God's bounty still belongs to God. Whatever God has bestowed in the valuable and beautiful things of earth, is placed in the hands of men to develop and to test character,—to sound the depths of their love for Him and their appreciation of His favors. Whether it be the treasures of wealth or of intellect, they are to be laid, a willing offering, at the feet of Jesus; the giver saying, meanwhile, with David,

1 Chronicles 29

¹⁴ All things come of You, and of your own have we given You.

It is an honor bestowed upon man that God should entrust to his keeping the riches of earth, and it is done that he may cooperate with God by using these precious gifts in advancing the Lord's work in the earth. None of us can do without the blessing of God, but God could do His work without the aid of man, if He should so choose.

But this is not His plan; He has given to every man his work, and He trusts men as His stewards with treasures of wealth and of intellect. Whatever you render to God is, through His mercy and generosity, placed to your account as a faithful steward. But ever bear in mind,

¹⁴ ...of your own have we given You.

This is not a work of merit on man's part. However wonderful the powers and abilities of man, he possesses nothing which God did not give him, and which He cannot withdraw if these precious tokens of His favor are not appreciated and rightly applied.

Angels of God, with perceptions unclouded by sin, recognize the endowments of Heaven as bestowed in order that

they may be returned in such a way as to add to the glory of the great Giver. For one to use these God-given capabilities for self-gratification or to promote his own glory, dishonors the Creator.

Brethren and sisters in Christ, God calls for the consecration to His service of every faculty He has given you. He wants you to say with David,

1 Chronicles 29

¹⁴ All things come of You, and of your own have we given You.

3. The Responsibilities of Burden-Bearers

Review and Herald, September 14, 1905

AFTER King David, in the presence of the men in positions of responsibility in his kingdom, had outlined his plans regarding the building of the temple, he appealed to them to cooperate with Solomon in carrying forward this work.

1 Chronicles 29

⁵ Who [he asked of the assembled multitude,] is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?

Willing Service

The response came not only in liberal offerings of treasures to meet the expense of the building, but also in willing service in the various lines of God's work. Hearts were filled with a desire to return to the Lord His own, by consecrating to His service all the energies of mind and body. Those upon whom had been placed burdens of state, determined to labor heartily and unselfishly, using for God the skill and ability He had given them.

David's exhortation to Solomon, and his appeal to the burden-bearers of the nation, should be kept in mind by those who are in positions of trust in the Lord's cause today. In this our day God's people will prosper only so long as they keep His precepts; and those who bear responsibilities are called upon to consecrate their service to the Lord.

Conference officers, church officers, managers and heads of departments in our institutions, laborers in the field at home and abroad,—all are to render faithful service by using their talents wholly for God. The Lord is not pleased with half-hearted service. To Him we owe all that we have and are.

Implicit Obedience

To all engaged in His service, the Lord gives wisdom. The tabernacle to be borne from place to place in the wilderness, and the temple at Jerusalem, were built in accordance with special directions from God. Throughout the ages, God has been particular as to the design and the accomplishment of His work.

In this age, He has given His people much light and instruction in regard to how His work is to be carried forward,—in an elevated, refined, conscientious manner; and He is pleased with those who in their service carry out His design. Only those who, feeling their own inefficiency, obey implicitly the Lord's commands, can be retained in His service.

Uzzah meddled with the ark, notwithstanding the plain command of the Lord to regard it with fear and trembling, and to keep it sacred. He had to be removed from the Lord's work. God changes not. Today He is just as desirous as in the days of Uzzah that men shall know His ways, and that they shall reverence the methods He has outlined for their guidance. They are to carry out the plans He has devised.

When men feel that it is unimportant to obey a "Thus says the Lord" in carrying forward His work, but that their own plans should be followed, they thereby evidence unfitness for any position of trust in His cause. In every effort to advance the interests of His work, we must lose sight of self, and keep in view God's glory.

Satan's propositions appear to present great advantages, but they end in ruin. Over and over again men have found out by experience the result of choosing to follow the plans of men rather than the plans that God has made for us. Will not others gain wisdom from their experience? Let us be afraid of any plans that are not heaven-born.

Often the professed followers of Christ are found with

hearts hardened and eyes blinded, because they do not obey the truth. Selfish motives and purposes take possession of the mind. In their self-confidence they suppose that their way is the way of wisdom. They are not particular to follow exactly the path that God has marked out. They declare that circumstances alter cases, and when Satan tempts them to follow worldly principles, they yield, and, making crooked paths for their feet, they lead others astray. The inexperienced follow where they go, supposing that the judgment of Christians so experienced must be wise.

Those in positions of responsibility who follow their own way are held responsible for the mistakes of those who are led astray by their example. God asks,

Jeremiah 5

⁹ Shall I not judge for these things?

There are those who think that they can improve upon the plan that the Lord has given; that they can mark out for themselves a course better than the course He has marked out for them. Such ones, choosing the things that be of men, harden their hearts against God's leading, and follow their own way. Unless they repent, the time will come when they will look upon the utter failure of their life-work. Man's wisdom, exercised without Christ's guidance, is a dangerous element.

Any recognition or exaltation gained apart from God is worthless; for it is not honored in heaven. To have the approval of men does not win God's approval. Those who would be acknowledged by God in the day of judgment, must here listen to His counsels and be governed by His will. Only thus can they receive the rich blessings that will fit them to receive His commendation. They must hold fast to the truth until the end, refusing to be drawn from their allegiance by any ambitious projects.

Stemming the Tide of Evil

We have not realized fully the importance of studying the counsel given by the Lord, through David, to Solomon, regarding those who are unworthy of confidence. Those who prove untrue are to be dealt with in accordance with the wisdom that God will impart.

Never are God's servants to look upon disaffection, scheming, and deception as virtues; those in responsibility are to manifest their decided disapproval of all unfaithfulness in business and spiritual matters. And they are to choose as counselors in every line of work, only those men in whom they can repose the utmost confidence.

1 Corinthians 16

¹³ Watch, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Those who are elevated to official positions in the Lord's work are ever to guard against incurring the guilt of rash speech, of unfaithfulness, of betrayal of sacred trusts. And only so long as they discharge aright their responsibilities, are they to be retained in office.

Those who bear responsibilities must be wide-awake. It is not the man who drifts with circumstances, and who in an emergency endorses questionable moves, who wins the respect of his fellow men and the approval of heaven. It is the man who, like a rock meeting the tide, stands firm against evil who commands respect.

In a crisis, when many are not fully decided as to the right course, the one who moves steadfastly in the path that God has marked out, with unshaken determination carrying out God's plans, is the one who wins confidence as a man fit to command. Those who occupy positions of responsibility should know "what says the Lord," and they should then stand unflinchingly for the right, stemming the tide of evil.

4. To Every Man His Work

Review and Herald, October 5, 1905

THE student of sacred history will observe that throughout the ages God has distributed the responsibilities of the varied interests of His work in the earth among men whose talents fitted them for service, and who by training might become skillful in the service required.

During Jethro's visit to the camp of Israel, the Lord permitted him to see how heavy were the burdens that rested upon Moses. To maintain order and discipline among that vast, ignorant, and untrained multitude was indeed a stupendous task. Moses was their recognized leader and magistrate; and not only the general interests and duties of the people, but the controversies that arose among them, were referred to him. He had permitted this, for it gave him an opportunity to instruct them; as he said,

Exodus 18

¹⁶ I make them know the statutes of God, and His laws.

Jethro remonstrated against this, saying,

¹⁸ This thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to perform it yourself alone;...you will surely wear away.

And he counseled Moses to appoint proper persons as rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. They should be...

²¹ ...able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.

All matters of minor consequence were to be judged by the men placed over the smaller groups; matters of greater importance were to be carried to the higher officers; and the most difficult cases were still to be brought before Moses, who was to be to the people, said Jethro,

Exodus 18

¹⁹ ...to Godward, that you may bring the causes unto God:

²⁰ And you shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shall show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

This counsel was accepted, and it not only brought relief to Moses, but resulted in establishing order and system among the people.

Chosen Men for Special Duties

Later, when the tabernacle was to be built in the wilderness, chosen men were specially endowed by God with skill and wisdom for the construction of the sacred building. And when it was completed, certain men were appointed to perform certain parts of the holy service. Moses, and Aaron and his sons, were to minister before the tabernacle of witness.

Numbers 18

¹ The Lord said unto Aaron, You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

⁵ You shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

⁷ You and your sons with you shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the veil; and you shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift.

So particular was the Lord that this sacred work should be performed only by those whom He had appointed, that He declared:

⁷ ...the stranger that comes nigh shall be put to death.

Every worker was to know his place, and to perform faithfully the special duties committed to him; and he was to let alone that which another worker had been appointed to do.

To the Levites was committed the charge of the tabernacle and all that pertained thereto, both in the camp and on the journey. When the camp set forward, they were to strike the sacred tent; when a halting-place was reached, they were to set it up. No person of another tribe was allowed to come near, on pain of death.

The Levites were separated into three divisions, the descendants of the three sons of Levi, and each was assigned its special position and work. In front of the tabernacle, and nearest to it, were the tents of Moses and Aaron.

- On the south were the Kohathites, whose duty it was to care for the ark and the other furniture.
- On the north the Merarites, who were placed in charge of the pillars, sockets, boards, etc.
- In the rear the Gershonites, to whom the care of the curtains and hangings was committed.

This plan of carefully apportioning special duties to certain men who were best fitted for these duties, had been carefully studied by David, and followed in his administration of the government of Israel; and now that Solomon was placed upon the throne, David gave particular attention to the perfection of the organization of all branches of the ministrations of the priests and Levites, of the civil officers, and of the army.

1 Chronicles 23

¹ When David was old and full of days,...

² He gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.

³ Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.

⁴ Of which, twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord; and six thousand were officers and judges:

⁵ Moreover four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments.

The four thousand musicians, divided into twenty-four courses, were each led by twelve men especially instructed and skillful in the use of musical instruments. The work of the porters was also definitely arranged.

The priests were divided into twenty-four courses, and a full and accurate record was made regarding this division. Each course was thoroughly organized under its chief, and each was to come to Jerusalem twice a year, to attend for one week to the ministry of the sanctuary.

The Levites, whose duty it was to assist in the sanctuary service, were organized and allotted their part with similar precision.

The care of the treasures was put into the hands of trusty men.

1 Chronicles 26

²⁰ Of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things.

²⁶ ...all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated;

²⁸ And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruah, had dedicated; and whoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren.

1 Chronicles 27

²⁵ And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth;...and over the store-houses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, was Jehonathan;

²⁶ And over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground,...

²⁷ And over the vineyards,...and over the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars,...

²⁸ And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains,...

²⁹ And over the herds that fed in Sharon,...and over the herds that were in the valleys,...

³⁰ And over the camels also,...and over the asses,...

³¹ And over the flocks,...

—were placed men whose experience and training peculiarly fitted them for their respective duties. Thus many men of varied abilities were appointed...

³¹ ...rulers of the substance which was King David's.

Diligence in Business

In His work today, the Lord would be pleased to have those who are engaged in any part of His service, guard against the tendency to take upon themselves responsibilities that they are not called upon to bear. Some of His servants are to direct the business matters connected with His work in the earth; others are to look after the spiritual matters. Every laborer is to strive to do well His part, leaving to others the duties entrusted to them.

For years the Lord has been instructing us to choose wise men,—men who are devoted to God,—men who know what the principles of heaven are,—men who have learned what it means to walk with God,—and to place upon them the responsibility of looking after the business affairs connected with our work. This is in accordance with the Bible plan as outlined in the 6th chapter of *Acts*. We need to study this plan; for it is approved of God. Let us follow the Word.

It is a great mistake to keep a minister who is gifted with power to preach the gospel, constantly at work in business matters. He who holds forth the Word of life is not to allow too many burdens to be placed upon him. He must take time to study the Word and to examine self. If he closely searches his own heart, and gives himself to the Lord, he will better understand how to grasp the hidden things of God.

Let ministers and teachers remember that God holds them accountable to fill their office to the best of their ability, to bring into their work their very best powers. They are not to

take up duties that conflict with the work that God has given them. It is time for our ministers to understand the responsibility and sacredness of their mission. There is a woe upon them, if they fail of performing the work which they themselves acknowledge that God has placed in their hands.

The finances of the cause are to be properly managed by business men of ability; but preachers and evangelists are set apart for another line of work. Let the management of financial matters rest on others than those set apart for the work of preaching the gospel. Our ministers are not to be heavily burdened with the business details of the evangelical work carried on in our large cities. Those in charge of our conferences should find business men to look after the financial details of city work. If such men cannot be found, let facilities be provided for training men to bear these burdens.

Men of experience in business lines, with a practical knowledge of bookkeeping, should be chosen to superintend the keeping of the accounts in our institutions at home and abroad. If such men had been appointed in years past to superintend the financial affairs of our conferences and institutions, thousands of dollars would have been saved, and the efficiency of the ministry would not have been so greatly weakened by the burden of financial cares and perplexities that has too often fallen where it does not belong.

Close investigation of the business transactions in various departments of the cause, are to be frequently made. This work must not be neglected. Never are we to sanction any transactions that imperil the purity of the Lord's church, and of His institutions, which are His appointed instrumentalities.

Those in charge of the work have erred sometimes in permitting the appointment of men devoid of business tact and ability to manage important financial interests. A man's fitness for one position does not always qualify him to fill another position. Experience is of great value. The Lord desires

to have men of intelligence connected with His work,—men qualified for various positions of trust in our conferences and institutions. Especially are consecrated business men needed,—men who will carry the principles of truth into every business transaction. Those placed in charge of financial matters should not assume other burdens,—burdens that they are incapable of bearing; nor is the business management to be entrusted to incompetent men.

Men of promise in business lines should develop and perfect their talents by most thorough study and training. They should be encouraged to place themselves where, as students, they can rapidly gain a knowledge of right business principles and methods. All may improve; no one needs to remain a novice.

If men in any line of work ought to improve their opportunities to become wise and efficient, it is those who are using their ability in the work of building up the kingdom of God in our world. In view of the fact that we are living so near the close of this earth's history, there should be greater thoroughness in labor, more vigilant waiting, watching, praying, and working. All the religious service and every branch of business are to bear the signature of heaven.

“Holiness unto the Lord”² is to be the motto of the laborers in every department. The human agent should strive to attain to perfection, that he may be an ideal Christian, complete in Christ Jesus.

² **Zechariah 14** ²⁰ In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.



Solomon oversees the Workers that build the Temple
(van Heemskerck, Met Museum)

5. Order and Organization

Review and Herald, October 12, 1905

OUR God is a God of order. Everything connected with heaven is in perfect order; subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host.

The Jewish Economy

During the days of Moses, the government of Israel was characterized by the most thorough organization, wonderful alike for its completeness and its simplicity. The order so strikingly displayed in the perfection and arrangement of all God's created works was manifest in the Hebrew economy.

- God was the center of authority and government, the sovereign of Israel.
- Moses stood as their visible leader, by God's appointment, to administer the laws in His name.
- From the elders of the tribes a council of seventy was afterward chosen to assist Moses in the general affairs of the nation.
- Next came the priests, who consulted the Lord in the sanctuary.
- Chiefs, or princes, ruled over the tribes.
- Under these were "captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens";³ and, lastly,
- Officers who might be employed for special duties.

Reorganization at the Beginning of Solomon's Reign

In planning for the administration of the affairs of the kingdom, after David abdicated in favor of Solomon, the aged king and his son and their counselors regarded it as essential that everything be done with regularity, propriety, fidelity, and dis-

³ *Deuteronomy* 1:15.

patch. So far as possible, they followed the system of organization given Israel soon after the deliverance from Egypt.

The Levites were assigned the work connected with the temple service, including the ministry of song and instrumental music, and the keeping of the treasures.

The men capable of bearing arms and of serving the king were divided into twelve courses of twenty-four thousand each. Over every course was a captain.

1 Chronicles 27

³⁴ The general of the king's army was Joab.

¹ The courses...came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year.

Thus every group of twenty-four thousand served the king one month during each year.

David appointed Jonathan, his uncle, as...

³² ...a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe.

Ahithophel also was...

³³ ...the king's counselor...

³⁴ And after Ahithophel was Johoiada...and Abiathar.

³³ ...Hushai...was the king's friend.

By his prudent example, the aged king taught Solomon that:

Proverbs 11

¹⁴ In the multitude of counselors there is safety.

The thoroughness and completeness of the organization perfected at the beginning of Solomon's reign; the comprehensiveness of the plans for bringing the largest number possible of all the people into active service; the wide distribution of responsibility, so that the service of God and of the king should not be unduly burdensome to any individual or class,—these are lessons which all may study with profit, and which the leaders of the Christian church should understand and fol-

low.

This picture of a great and mighty nation living in simplicity and comfort in rural homes, every person rendering willing and unsalaried service to God and the king for a portion of each year, is one from which we may gather many helpful suggestions.

Order in the Christian Church

There was order in the church when Christ was upon the earth, and after His departure, order was strictly observed among His apostles. And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as the Lord unites His people, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to undo this unity and to destroy it.

It is Satan's studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he sometimes deceives even the professed people of God, and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality; that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course.

But if we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief; for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization.

All who desire the cooperation of the heavenly messengers, must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high, will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and unity of action, and then the angels of God can cooperate with them.

But never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder.

All such evils are the result of Satan's studied effort to weaken our forces, to destroy courage, and to prevent successful action. God desires that His work shall be done with system and exactness, in order that He may place upon it the seal of His approval.

The Result of Organized Effort

It is nearly half a century since order and organization were established among us as a people. I was one of the number who had an experience in laboring for their establishment. I know of the difficulties that had to be met, the evils that organization was designed to correct, and I have watched its influence in connection with the growth of the cause. At an early stage in the work, God gave us special light upon this point; and this light, together with the lessons that experience has taught us, should be carefully considered.

From the first our work was aggressive. Our numbers were few, and mostly from the poorer classes. Our views were almost unknown to the world. We had no houses of worship, but few publications, and very limited facilities for carrying forward our work. The sheep were scattered in the highways and byways, in cities, in towns, in forests. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus was our message.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁶ You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are:

²⁹ That no flesh shall glory in His presence.

³⁰ But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and

redemption:

³¹ That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

Our numbers gradually increased. The seed that was sown was watered of God, and He gave the increase. At first we assembled for worship, and presented the truth to those who would come to hear, in private houses, in large kitchens, in barns, in groves, and in schoolhouses; but it was not long before we were able to build humble houses of worship.

As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization, there would be great confusion, and the work could not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.

Yet the feeling against organization was very strong among our people. The Adventists generally, who had withdrawn from the churches of the various denominations under the call of the second angel's message to come out of Babylon, opposed organization, and many Seventh-day Adventists were fearful that church organization would bring us under condemnation.

We sought the Lord with earnest prayer that we might understand His will, and light was given to us by His Spirit, that there must be order and thorough discipline in the church,—that organization was essential. System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe. Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law among God's people on the earth.

We had a hard struggle in establishing organization. Notwithstanding that the Lord gave Testimony after Testimony upon this point, the opposition was strong, and it had to be

met again and again. But we knew that the Lord God of Israel was leading us, and guiding us by His providence. We engaged in the work of organization, and marked prosperity attended this advance movement.

As the development of the work called us to engage in new enterprises, we were prepared to enter upon them. The Lord directed our minds to the importance of educational work. We saw the need of schools, that our children might receive instruction free from the errors of false philosophy, that their training might be in harmony with the principles of the Word of God.

The need of a health institution had been urged upon us, both for the help and instruction of our own people and as a means of blessing and enlightenment to others. This enterprise also was carried forward. All this was missionary work of the highest order. Our work was not sustained by large gifts and legacies; for we have few wealthy men among us.

Our work has steadily advanced. What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to the Bible plan. The body has been...

Ephesians 4

¹⁶ ...compacted by that which every joint supplies.

As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual.

In some parts of the work, it is true, the machinery has been made too complicated; especially has this been the case in former years in the tract and missionary work; the multiplication of rules and regulations made it needlessly burdensome. An

effort has been made to simplify the work, so as to avoid all needless labor and perplexity.

The business of our conference session has sometimes been burdened with propositions and resolutions that were not at all essential, and that would never have been presented if the sons and daughters of God had been walking carefully and prayerfully before Him. The fewer rules and regulations that we can have, the better will be the effect in the end. When they are made, let them be carefully considered, and, if wise, let it be seen that they mean something, and are not to become a dead letter.

Do not, however, encumber any branch of the work with unnecessary, burdensome restrictions and inventions of men. In this period of the world's history, with the vast work that is before us, we need to observe the greatest simplicity, and the work will be stronger for its simplicity.

Let none entertain the thought, however, that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study, and many prayers for wisdom that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord, I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled.

At God's command, "Go forward,"⁴ we advanced when the difficulties to be surmounted made the advance seem impossible. We know how much it has cost to work out God's plans in the past, which has made us as a people what we are. Then let every one be exceedingly careful not to unsettle minds in regard to those things that God has ordained for our prosperity and success in advancing His cause.

⁴ **Exodus 14** ¹⁵ And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore do you cry unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they *go forward*.

The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant. In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as leader.

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.

6. The Gift of Wisdom

Review and Herald, October 19, 1905

SOLOMON, in his youth, made David's choice his own. Pure and noble in character, he was named Jedidiah,

2 Samuel 12

²⁵ ...the beloved of the Lord.

Above every earthly good he desired a wise and understanding heart. Upon him there rested great burdens of state, which he felt unable to bear alone. Not only was he to strive to be a just ruler, but he was also to carry out the long-cherished plan of his father, by building a temple at Jerusalem. As he began to comprehend the magnitude of this special work, and of the duties connected with his kingly office, he sought the great Source of wisdom for divine guidance.

An Offering At Gibeon

Early in his reign, King Solomon went with his chief counselors to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God, and to reconsecrate himself to the Lord's service. In the time of Moses the Israelites were commanded to bring their sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. During David's reign the ark of the covenant had been brought to Jerusalem, and set...

1 Chronicles 16

¹ ...in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it.

And there,

¹ ...[He] offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

The old tabernacle of the congregation was still at Gibeon. David left...

³⁹ Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon,

⁴⁰ To offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which He commanded Israel.

2 Chronicles 1

² [With] the captains of thousands and of hundreds,...the judges, [and] every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers,”

³ Solomon...went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness.

⁴ But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

⁵ Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.

⁶ And Solomon went up there to the brazen altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.

These sacrifices were offered by Solomon and his men in positions of trust, not as a formal ceremony, but as a token of their earnest desire for special help. They knew that they were insufficient, in their own strength, for the responsibilities entrusted to them. Solomon and his associates longed for quickness of mind, for largeness of heart, for tenderness of spirit.

A Noble Choice

2 Chronicles 1

⁷ In that night...

1 Kings 3

⁵ In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream...and God said, Ask what I shall give you.

Solomon answered the Lord with these words:

⁶ You have showed unto your servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before You in truth, and in

righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; and You have kept for him this great kindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

⁷ And now, O Lord my God, You have made your servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

⁸ And your servant is in the midst of your people which You have chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

⁹ Give therefore your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this your so great a people?

¹⁰ And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

2 Chronicles 1

¹¹ And God said to Solomon, Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of your enemies, neither yet have asked long life; but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge my people, over whom I have made you king;

1 Kings 3

¹² Behold, I have done according to your words: lo, I have given you a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like you before you, neither after you shall any arise like unto you.

¹³ And I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches, and honor,

2 Chronicles 1

¹² ...such as none of the kings have had that have been before you, neither shall there any after you have the like.

1 Kings 3

¹⁴ And if you will walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as your father David did walk, then I will lengthen your days.

God promised that as He had been with David, He would be with Solomon. If the king would walk before the Lord in up-

rightness, and if he would do all that God commanded him, his throne would be established, and his reign would be the means of exalting Israel as the light of the surrounding nations,—as...

Deuteronomy 4

⁶ ...a wise and understanding people.

1 Kings 3

¹⁵ And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream.

2 Chronicles 1

¹³ Then Solomon came from his journey to the high place that was at Gibeon,

1 Kings 3

¹⁵ ...to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

2 Chronicles 1

¹³ [And] Solomon...reigned over Israel.

An Understanding Heart

The Lord imparted to Solomon the wisdom that he desired above earthly riches, honor, or long life. His petition for a quick mind, a large heart, and a tender spirit, was granted. He became the wisest of earthly monarchs, because God gave him superior wisdom and an understanding heart.

1 Kings 3

²⁸ And all Israel...feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

The hearts of the people were turned toward Solomon, as they had been to David, and they obeyed him in all things.

2 Chronicles 1

¹ Solomon...was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

For many years Solomon's life was marked with devotion to

God, with uprightness and firm principle, and with strict obedience to God's commands. He directed in every important enterprise, and managed wisely the business matters connected with the kingdom.

His faithfulness in carrying out the directions of God regarding the construction of the temple, resulted in the erection of the most magnificent building the world has ever seen,—a building that could not be excelled for richness, beauty, and costly design; and this caused his fame to spread among the nations everywhere.

1 Kings 4

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

³⁰ And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

³¹ For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

³² And he spoke three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

³³ And he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springs out of the wall: he spoke also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

³⁴ And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

All nations acknowledged, and marveled at, Solomon's superior knowledge and wisdom, the excellence of his character, and the greatness of his power. Many came to him from distant parts of the world to see the manner of his government, and to receive instruction regarding the conduct of difficult affairs. The power of his understanding, the extent of his knowledge, the glory of his reign, commanded the wonder and admiration of the world.

7. Counselors in Need of Wise Discernment

Review and Herald, October 26, 1905

AT THE beginning of his reign, when King Solomon was entrusted with many responsibilities connected with the Lord's work, his prayer was:

1 Kings 3

⁹ Give therefore your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and bad.

Here is a lesson for those occupying positions of responsibility in God's cause today,—not only those in charge of large and varied interests, but those also who are entrusted with the lesser responsibilities. Officers of churches and Sabbath-schools, leaders of small companies, laborers engaged in evangelistic work,—these are as verily in need of divine discernment as are officers of large conferences and institutions.

Acts 10

³⁴ God is no respecter of persons.

He who gave to Solomon the spirit of wise discernment, is willing today to impart wisdom to His children. The apostle James writes:

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

And Paul refers to teachers of truth who have faithfully studied the Scriptures, as:

Hebrews 5

¹⁴ ...those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Solomon realized that he lacked discernment. It was his great need that led him to seek God for wisdom. In his heart

there was no selfish aspiration for a knowledge that would exalt him above his brethren. He desired to do faithfully the work that had been committed to him, and he chose the gift that would be the means of causing his reign to redound to God's glory.

Receiving to Impart

The Lord provides men and women with all that they need. And His gifts are bestowed upon those only who can make a proper use of them. To some He can grant greater discernment than to others, because He sees that they will use this gift to His glory.

When a laborer desires heavenly wisdom more than he desires wealth, power, or fame, God will not disappoint him. Such a worker will learn from the Great Teacher not only what to do, but how to do it in a way that will meet the divine approval.

The man upon whom the Lord has bestowed special wisdom, will be enabled, by God's blessing, to train those with whom he is associated in labor to be quick of understanding, trustworthy, and true to principle. His consecrated zeal, his wise counsel, his piety, will be an inspiration to his fellow workers. They will be led, not to praise and exalt the human agent, nor to become dependent on him, but to go themselves to the Source of all true wisdom for the help they need.

God has been greatly dishonored by those who lean upon human beings. He who has said to all who believe on Him as a personal Saviour,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,

—will guide and teach those who recognize Him as their leader and instructor.

Guarding the Purity of the Church

As the work of God advances in our time, there is an increasing need of men of keen discernment,—men who know God and trust in Him for their understanding,—men who are working for His name’s glory.

In the days of Israel men were set apart as judges, to decide regarding what was right, and what was wrong. Surrounded by corrupting influences, they endeavored faithfully to warn the people against the things that were wrong, and to exalt righteous principles, and thus to keep the cause of God from contamination with evil.

His cause is just as sacred now as it was in ancient times. Today men in positions of trust, in every place, should be faithful guardians of the purity of the church and everything connected with it. We need, O so greatly! keen discernment and clear spiritual eyesight. In this day of sin and abounding iniquity, our eyes need to be anointed with the heavenly eye-salve, that we may see all things clearly.

The great and solemn truths for this time, as outlined in the book of *Revelation*, are to be proclaimed to the world. Into the very designs and principles of the church these truths are to enter.

The interests of God’s cause are sometimes imperiled by the unadvised movements of those who, cherishing self-esteem and seeking for self-glorification, lose sight of the object for which our institutions are established. Failing to realize the importance of bringing men and women to a knowledge of the truth for this time, they allow to enter these institutions wrong influences, which tend to disparage present truth, and to retard greatly the spiritual growth of the workers.

Institutions that were established for the specific purpose of extending the knowledge of the last message of mercy to be given in our world, should be kept free from every worldly,

commercial influence. With sanctified judgment our brethren in responsibility must discern between good and evil, and be faithful to their God-given trust.

So long as he remains consecrated, a man whom God has endowed with wise discernment and unusual ability, will not manifest an eagerness to obtain high positions, to guide, to control, to rule. None upon whom have been placed sacred responsibilities, are to grasp at power as did Satan in the heavenly courts. Of necessity men must bear responsibilities; but instead of striving to gain the supremacy, every true laborer will pray for an understanding heart, that he may glorify God by discerning between good and evil.

The man at the head of any work in God's cause is to be a man of intelligence, a man capable of managing large interests successfully, a man of even temper, Christlike forbearance, and perfect self-control. He only whose heart is transformed by the grace of Christ, can be a proper leader.

The path of men in positions of trust is not a path free from all obstruction. In the place of becoming faint-hearted and discouraged, those to whom God has entrusted responsibilities are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. They are to consult, not unconsecrated men who are boastful and who show a masterly independence, but the great Source of all wisdom.

They are to be faithful workers, always laboring in co-partnership with the Master Worker. Strengthened and enlightened by Him, they will stand firm against every unholy influence, and will discern the right from the wrong, the good from the evil. They will approve that which God approves.

With earnestness they will strive to guard against the introduction or the maintenance of wrong principles in households, churches, institutions, and conferences. By maintaining a vital connection with heaven, they will ever be wise to discern between good and evil.

8. The Building of the Temple

Review and Herald, November 2, 1905

THE long-cherished plan of David to erect a temple to the Lord was wisely carried out by Solomon, who...

2 Chronicles 2

¹ ...determined to build a house for the name of the Lord.

Solomon's Letter to Hiram

1 Kings 5

² Solomon sent to Hiram [“the king of Tyre” vs. 1], saying,

³ You know how that David my father could not build a house unto the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet.

⁴ But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

⁵ And, behold, I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spoke unto David my father, saying, Your son, whom I will set upon your throne in your room, he shall build a house unto my name.

2 Chronicles 2

⁴ Behold, I build a house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to Him, and to burn before Him sweet incense, and for the continual showbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God. This is an ordinance forever to Israel.

⁵ And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods.

⁶ But who is able to build Him a house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? who am I then, that I should build Him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before Him?

⁷ Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning

men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide.

⁸ Send me also cedar trees, fir-trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that your servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with your servants,

⁹ Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great.

1 Kings 5

⁶ You know that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

2 Chronicles 2

¹⁰ And, behold, I will give to your servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

Hiram's Reply

1 Kings 5

⁷ It came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which has given unto David a wise son over this great people.

⁸ And Hiram...

2 Chronicles 2

¹¹ ...answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon [saying], Because the Lord has loved His people, He has made you king over them.

¹² Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who has given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build a house for the Lord.

1 Kings 5

⁸ I have considered the things which you sent to me for...

2 Chronicles 2

¹³ And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with under-

standing, of Hiram my father's,

¹⁴ The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with your cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David your father.

¹⁵ Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord has spoken of, let him send unto his servants:

¹⁶ And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as you shall need: and we will bring it to you in floats by sea to Joppa; and you shall carry it up to Jerusalem.

The Gathering of Material

1 Kings 5

¹⁰ So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir-trees according to all his desire.

¹¹ And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

¹² And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as He promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

¹³ And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

¹⁴ And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

¹⁵ And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bore burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

¹⁶ Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

¹⁷ And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

¹⁸ And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and

stones to build the house.

The Building Erected

1 Kings 6

¹ It came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel,...

2 Chronicles 3

² ...in the second day of the second month,...

¹ [That] Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Of the inner temple,—the building containing the holy place and the most holy place,—we read:

1 Kings 6

² The length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

⁷ The house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought there: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

¹⁵ He built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

¹⁸ The cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.

The Most Holy Place

¹⁹ The oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

²⁰ And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.

²¹ So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and

he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.

²² And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

²³ And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.

²⁴ And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.

²⁵ And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.

²⁶ The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.

²⁷ And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.

²⁸ And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

²⁹ And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm-trees and open flowers, within and without.

³⁰ And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

2 Chronicles 3

⁶ He garnished the house with precious stones for beauty.

1 Kings 6

³¹ For the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side-posts were a fifth part of the wall.

³² The two doors also were olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm-trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm-trees.

³³ So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall.

³⁴ And the two doors were of fir-tree: the two leaves of the

one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.

³⁵ And he carved thereon cherubims and palm-trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.

2 Chronicles 3

¹⁴ He made the vail of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.

The Furniture of the Holy Place

2 Chronicles 4

¹⁹ Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the show-bread was set;

²⁰ Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the oracle, of pure gold;

²¹ And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, made he of gold, and that perfect gold;

²² And the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers, of pure gold: and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy place, and the doors of the house of the temple, were of gold.

The Courts

2 Chronicles 3

¹⁵ He made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapiter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits.

¹⁶ And he made chains, as in the oracle, and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made a hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains.

¹⁷ And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right Jachin,⁵ and the name of that on the left Boaz.⁶

⁵ Jachin: He shall establish.

⁶ Boaz: In it is strength.

1 Kings 6

³ The porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

³⁶ He built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

2 Chronicles 4

⁹ Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.

The Furniture of the Courts

2 Chronicles 4

¹ Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

This stood in the court of the priests.

¹⁶ The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks, and all their instruments, [he made] of bright brass.

² Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

1 Kings 7

²⁵ It stood upon twelve oxen [cast of brass], three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east.

2 Chronicles 4

⁵ And the thickness of it was a handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths.

1 Kings 7

³⁹ And he set the sea on the right side of the east end [of the court of the priests,] over against the south.

2 Chronicles 4

⁶ He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

These vessels were cast...

¹⁷ ...in the plain of Jordan,...in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah.

¹⁸ Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.

Completion of the Work

1 Kings 7

⁵¹ So was ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 7

¹¹ Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord,...and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord,...he prosperously effected.

1 Kings 6

³⁷ In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif:

³⁸ And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

9. The Ark of the Covenant

Review and Herald, November 9, 1905

BEYOND the inner veil of the wilderness-tabernacle built in the time of Moses, was the holy of holies, where centered the symbolic service of atonement and intercession. In this apartment was the ark, a chest of acacia wood, overlaid within and without with gold, and having a crown of gold about the top.

It was made as a depository for the tables of stone, upon which God himself had inscribed the ten commandments. Hence it was called the ark of God's testament, or the ark of the covenant, since the ten commandments were the basis of the covenant made between God and Israel.

The cover of the sacred chest was called the mercy-seat. This was wrought of one solid piece of gold, and was surmounted by golden cherubim, one standing on each end. One wing of each angel was stretched forth on high, while the other was folded over the body in token of reverence and humility.

The position of the cherubim, with their faces turned toward each other, and looking reverently downward toward the ark, represented the reverence with which the heavenly host regard the law of God, and their interest in the plan of redemption. Above the mercy-seat was the Shekinah, the manifestation of the divine presence; and from between the cherubim, God made known His will.

Throughout the times of Moses and Joshua, and of the judges and kings of Israel, the ark of the covenant was regarded as a symbol of God's presence among His people.

- It was the ark that led the way for the hosts of Israel when they crossed the Jordan and entered the promised land.

- Surrounded by a halo of glory, the ark was borne around the walls of Jericho by priests clad in the dress denoting their sacred office.
- During the conquest of Canaan, Gilgal was the headquarters of the Jewish nation and the seat of the tabernacle.
- Afterward, Shiloh, a little town easy of access to all the tribes, was chosen as a place most suitable for the tabernacle of the congregation.
- The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli's house, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined.
- Through the providence of God, the ark was returned, uninjured, to the Israelites, and was placed in the house of a Levite at Kirjath-jearim, nine miles distant from Jerusalem.
- There it remained for many years, until David, at the head of a triumphal procession, with sacrifices, and dancing, and music, brought the ark to Jerusalem, and deposited it in the tent that had been prepared for its reception.

The Transfer of the Ark to the Temple

After Solomon had finished building the temple, he assembled the elders of Israel, and the most influential men among the people, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David. These men consecrated themselves to God, and, with great solemnity and reverence, accompanied the priests who bore the ark.

1 Kings 8

⁴ And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

⁵ And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sac-

rificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

Solomon followed the example of his father David. Every six paces he sacrificed. With singing, and with music, and great ceremony,

1 Kings 8

⁶ The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

⁷ For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

A most splendid sanctuary had been made, according to the pattern showed to Moses in the mount, and afterward presented by the Lord to David. In addition to the cherubim on the top of the ark, Solomon made two other angels of larger size, standing at each end of the ark, representing the heavenly angels guarding the law of God.

It is impossible to describe the beauty and splendor of this sanctuary. Into this place the sacred ark was borne with solemn reverence by the priests, and set in its place beneath the wings of the two stately cherubim that stood upon the floor.

The sacred choir lifted their voices in praise to God, and the melody of their voices was accompanied by all kinds of musical instruments. And while the courts of the temple resounded with praise, the cloud of God's glory took possession of the house, as it had formerly filled the wilderness-tabernacle.

¹⁰ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord,

¹¹ So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.

A Shadow of Heavenly Things

Like the earthly sanctuary built by Moses according to the pattern shown him in the mount, Solomon's temple, with all its services, was...

Hebrews 9

⁹ ...a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices.

Its two holy places were...

²³ ...patterns of things in the heavens.

Christ, our great High Priest, is...

Hebrews 8

² ...a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there...

Revelation 4

⁵ ...seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.

He saw an angel...

Revelation 8

³ ...having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the "seven lamps of fire" and the "golden altar," represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again,

Revelation 11

¹⁹ The temple of God was opened,

—and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld...

¹⁹ ...the ark of His testament,

–represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God. In the ministration of the earthly tabernacle, which served...

Hebrews 8

⁵ ...unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,

–the holy of holies was opened only upon the great day of atonement, the typical day of judgment, set apart for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Therefore the announcement,

Revelation 11

¹⁹ The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament,

–points to the opening of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, at the end of the twenty-three hundred days,⁷ –in 1844,⁸—as Christ entered there to perform the closing work of the atonement. Those who by faith followed their great High Priest, as He entered upon His ministry in the most holy place, beheld the ark of the testament.

The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work

⁷ **Daniel 8** ¹⁴ And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

⁸ The 2300 days, or “years” (in prophecy, a day often stands for a year), started at the same time as the 70 weeks ($70 \times 7 = 490$ days, or “years”) of *Daniel 9:24*, which were allocated to the Jewish nation. This time period began with the “commandment to restore and build Jerusalem” (*Daniel 9:24*), including the street and the wall. There were three decrees recorded in the book of *Ezra*, but the final one, from Artaxerxes was the most complete (see *Ezra 7*). This decree went into effect in 457 BC, and 2300 years from that date yields 1844 AD. In 1844, Christ entered upon His final work in the heavenly sanctuary, symbolized by the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament types, and called the “cleansing” of the sanctuary, which meant the removal of the sins that were transferred there by the confessions of God’s people. When Christ returns, He comes “without sin” (*Hebrews 9:28*), that is, no longer as a minister to remove sin. His work as a Priest is finished, and only “he that is holy” (*Revelation 22:11*), purified from all sin, will be ready to meet Him.

in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects, and be able to...

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ ...give to every one that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them.

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin, by humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people.

Leviticus 23

²⁷ Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

²⁸ And you shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.

²⁹ For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.

In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life, should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin, and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged in by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery.

Malachi 3

² Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? for He is like a refiner's fire, and

like fullers' soap:

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Every one must be tested, and found without...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Matthew 22

¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

¹² And he said unto him, Friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.

Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For more than sixty years this work has been in progress.⁹ Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Savior's admonition,

⁹ This article was written in 1905. The fulfillment of the Day of Atonement began in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844, or 61 years before this was written.

Mark 13

³³ Watch and pray: for you know not when the time is.

Revelation 3

³ If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.

When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. At that time, Christ will declare:

Revelation 22

¹¹ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above.

Before the flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in, and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life, and mocked the warnings of impending judgment.

Matthew 24

³⁷ So [says the Saviour,] shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men.

Mark 13

³⁵ Watch you therefore,...

³⁶ Lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.

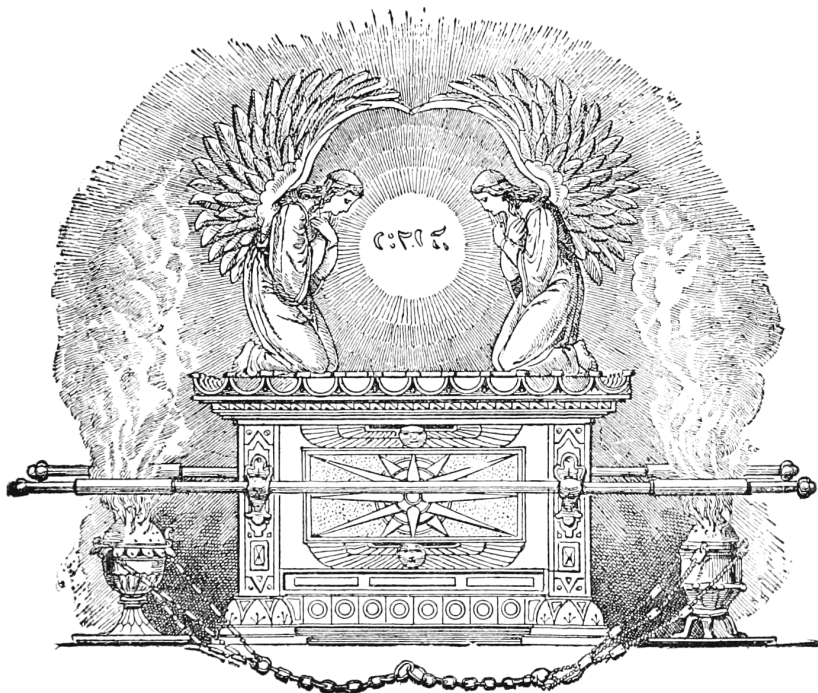
Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world.

- While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain;
- While the pleasure-lover is seeking indulgence;
- While the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments;

—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence,

Daniel 5

²⁷ You are weighed in the balance, and are found wanting.



The Ark of the Covenant
(The Bible and Its Story, 1909)



Solomon beholds the Ark of the Covenant
being brought to the Temple
(Vicentino, Met Museum)

10. The Dedication of the Temple

Review and Herald, November 16, 1905

SEVERAL years had been spent in the building of the temple, and at last it was complete. And now, in order that this beautiful palace might indeed be, as David had declared, a dwelling-place...

1 Chronicles 29

¹ ...not for man, but for the Lord God,

—there remained the solemn ceremony of formally dedicating it to Jehovah and His worship. The time chosen for the dedication was a most favorable one—the seventh month, when the people from every part of the kingdom were accustomed to assemble at Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the tabernacles.

This feast was pre-eminently an occasion of rejoicing. The labors of the harvest being ended, and the toils of the new year not yet begun, the people were free from care, and could give themselves up to the sacred, joyous influences of the hour.

At the time appointed, “a great congregation” (*1 Kings* 8:65) from every part of the realm gathered at Jerusalem, and participated in the removal of the wilderness-tabernacle and all its holy furniture, including the ark of the testament, to the temple.

The hour for the dedicatory service revealed a scene of great splendor. Before the temple were assembled the hosts of Israel, and the richly clad representatives of many foreign nations. Solomon stood facing the great altar of burnt offering. The priests who had carried in the sacred furniture, came out of the holy place, and took the places assigned them in the court of the temple. The singers,—Levites,

2 Chronicles 5

¹² ...arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.

¹³ It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures forever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord;

¹⁴ So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

Solomon, realizing the significance of this cloud, declared:

2 Chronicles 6

¹ The Lord has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness.

² But I have built a house of habitation for You, and a place for your dwelling forever.

An Inspired Blessing

¹³ ...in the midst of the court [of the temple had been erected] a brazen scaffold, [or platform,] five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high.

And after ascending this, Solomon stood and lifted up his hands, and blessed the vast multitude before him.

³ And all the congregation of Israel stood.

⁴ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, [Solomon exclaimed,] who has with His hands fulfilled that which He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying,

⁵ Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel:

⁶ But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.

⁷ Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

⁸ But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well in that it was in your heart:

1 Kings 8

¹⁹ Nevertheless you shall not build the house; but your son that shall come forth out of your loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

²⁰ And the Lord has performed His word that He spoke, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

²¹ And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.

The Dedicatory Prayer

Having pronounced this blessing upon the people, Solomon knelt upon the brazen scaffold, and in the presence and hearing of all the people before him, offered the dedicatory prayer. Lifting his hands toward heaven, the king offered an earnest and solemn petition to God, while the congregation were bowed with their faces to the ground. The king pleaded:

2 Chronicles 6

¹⁴ O Lord God of Israel, there is no god like You in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keeps covenant, and shows mercy unto your servants, that walk before You with all their hearts:

¹⁵ You which have kept with your servant David my father that which You have promised him; and spoke with your mouth, and have fulfilled it with your hand, as it is this day.

¹⁶ Now, therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with your servant David my father that which You have promised him, saying, There shall not fail you a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that your children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as you have walked before me.

¹⁷ Now then, O Lord God of Israel, let your word be verified,

which You have spoken unto your servant David.

¹⁸ But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built!

¹⁹ Have respect therefore to the prayer of your servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which your servant prays before You:

²⁰ That your eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof You have said that You would put your name there; to hearken unto the prayer which your servant prays toward this place.

²¹ Hearken therefore unto the supplications of your servant, and of your people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear from your dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when You hear, forgive.

²² If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before your altar in this house;

²³ Then hear from heaven, and do, and judge your servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

²⁴ And if your people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against You; and shall return and confess your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this house;

²⁵ Then hear from the heavens, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which You gave to them and to their fathers.

²⁶ When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against You; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess your name, and turn from their sin, when You afflict them;

²⁷ Then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin of your servants, and of your people Israel, when You have taught them the good way, wherein they should walk; and send rain upon your land, which You have given unto your people for an inheritance.

²⁸ If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their ene-

mies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be:

²⁹ Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all your people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house:

³⁰ Then hear from heaven your dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart You know (for You only know the hearts of the children of men);

³¹ That they may fear You, to walk in your ways, so long as they live in the land which You gave unto our fathers.

³² Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of your people Israel, but is come from a far country for your great name's sake, and your mighty hand, and your stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house;

³³ Then hear from the heavens, even from your dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calls to You for; that all people of the earth may know your name, and fear You, as does your people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by your name.

³⁴ If your people go out to war against their enemies by the way that You shall send them, and they pray unto You toward this city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for your name;

³⁵ Then hear from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

³⁶ If they sin against You (for there is no man which sins not), and You be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;

³⁷ Yet if they bethink themselves in the land where they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto You in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly;

³⁸ If they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which You gave unto their fathers, and toward the city which You have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for your name:

³⁹ Then hear from the heavens, even from your dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive your people which have sinned against You.

⁴⁰ Now, my God, let, I beseech You, your eyes be open, and let your ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

⁴¹ Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into your resting-place, You, and the ark of your strength: let your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in goodness.

⁴² O Lord God, turn not away the face of your anointed: remember the mercies of David your servant.

A Divine Token of Acceptance

As Solomon ended his prayer, a miraculous fire...

2 Chronicles 7

¹ ...came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices.

The priests could not enter the temple, because...

² ...the glory of the Lord filled the house.

³ When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshiped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

The Closing Ceremonies

⁴ Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord.

⁵ And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

⁶ And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made to praise the Lord, because His mercy endures forever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests

sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

⁷ Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat offerings, and the fat.

The Feast of the Tabernacles

2 Chronicles 7

⁸ Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.

⁹ And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.

¹⁰ And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people.



Solomon's Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple
(Holman Pronouncing Edition of the Holy Bible, 1904)

11. Acceptable Worship

Review and Herald, November 30, 1905

THE prayer offered by Solomon at the dedication of the temple breathed sentiments of loftiest piety blended with deepest humility.

In all that was said during the dedicatory services, Solomon sought to remove from the minds of those present the superstitions in regard to the Creator that had beclouded the minds of the heathen. He told them that the God of heaven is not like the gods of the heathen, who are confined to temples built for them, but that the true God would meet with His people by His Spirit when they should assemble at the house dedicated to His worship.

The Lord visits His people in their homes, or wherever they may be, and cheers them by special revelations of His goodness. And in every place God's children have the privilege of worshipping their Heavenly Father. Centuries later, Paul taught the same truth in these words:

Acts 17

²⁴ God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands;

²⁵ Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He gives to all ["all nations of men", vs. 26] life, and breath, and all things;

²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

And the psalmist declares:

Psalms 33

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.

¹³ The Lord looks from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men;

¹⁴ From the place of His habitation He looks forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm 102

¹⁹ He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary.

Psalm 103

¹⁹ The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens; And His kingdom rules over all.

Psalm 77

¹³ Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

¹⁴ You are the God that does wonders: You have declared your strength among the people.

Although God dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people. He has promised that when they come together to seek Him, to acknowledge their sins, and to pray for one another, He will meet with them by His Spirit.

But those who assemble to worship Him should put away every evil thing. Unless they can worship Him in spirit and truth and in the beauty of holiness, their coming together will be of no avail.

If God's people, when they assemble, will let Him speak to them through His appointed agencies, all will be united in His service.

Psalm 78

¹ Give ear, O my people, [He pleads,] to my law: incline your ear to the words of my mouth.

² I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

³ Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

⁴ We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and the wonderful works that He has done.

⁵ For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

⁶ That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

⁷ That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments:

⁸ And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

Words of Approval and of Warning

After the close of the dedicatory ceremonies,

2 Chronicles 7

¹² The Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.

¹³ If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

¹⁴ If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

¹⁵ Now my eyes shall be open, and my ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

¹⁶ For now have I chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be there forever: and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.

If Israel had remained faithful and true to God, this glorious building would have stood forever, as a perpetual sign of God's especial favor to His chosen people.

Isaiah 56

⁶ The sons of the stranger, [God declared,] that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keeps the Sabbath

from polluting it, and takes hold of my covenant;

⁷ Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.

And the Saviour himself, in referring to this scripture, declared that the temple was to have been known as...

Mark 11 [RV]

¹⁷ ...a house of prayer for all nations.

In the night vision given Solomon, the Lord made very plain the path of duty before the king.

2 Chronicles 7

¹⁷ As for you, [He declared,] if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and shall observe my statutes and my judgments;

¹⁸ Then will I stablish the throne of your kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David your father, saying, There shall not fail you a man to be ruler in Israel.

How full are God's promises! Had Solomon continued to serve the Lord in humility, his reign would have been a powerful influence for good over the surrounding heathen nations,—nations that had been so favorably impressed by his father David's reign, and by the wise words and magnificent works of the earlier years of his own reign.

God, in His mercy, foreseeing the terrible temptations that attend prosperity and worldly honor, tenderly warned Solomon against the sin of apostasy, and foretold the awful results of sin.

2 Chronicles 7

¹⁹ If you turn away, [the Lord plainly declared,] and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;

²⁰ Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land

which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.

²¹ And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passes by it; so that he shall say, Why has the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house?

²² And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them, and served them: therefore has He brought all this evil upon them.

Let Us Kneel Before the Lord Our Maker

The prayer offered by Solomon during the dedication of the temple, was not made while he stood upon his feet. The king knelt in the humble position of a petitioner.

Herein is a lesson for God's people today. Our spiritual strength and our influence are not increased by conformity to a worldly attitude during prayer. In these perilous times, those who profess to be God's commandment-keeping people should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear.

The Scriptures teach men how to approach their Maker,—with humility and awe, through faith in a divine Mediator. Let man come on bended knee, as a subject of grace, a suppliant at the foot-stool of mercy. Thus he is to testify that the whole soul, body, and spirit are in subjection to His Creator.

Both in public and in private worship, it is our duty to bow upon our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. Jesus, our example,

Luke 22

⁴¹ ...kneeled down, and prayed.

And of His disciples it is recorded that they, too,

Acts 9 [Acts 20:36]

⁴⁰ ...kneeled down, and prayed.

Acts 7

⁶⁰ [Stephen] kneeled.

Paul declared:

Ephesians 3

¹⁴ I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In confessing before God the sins of Israel, Ezra knelt:

Ezra 9

⁵ And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God,

Daniel 6

¹⁰ Daniel...kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.

And the invitation of the psalmist is:

Psalms 95

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Deuteronomy 10

¹² What does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul?

Jeremiah 5

²² Do you not fear me? said the Lord: will you not tremble at my presence?

Malachi 4

² Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.

Psalms 33

⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the

world stand in awe of Him.

¹⁸ The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy.

Proverbs 22

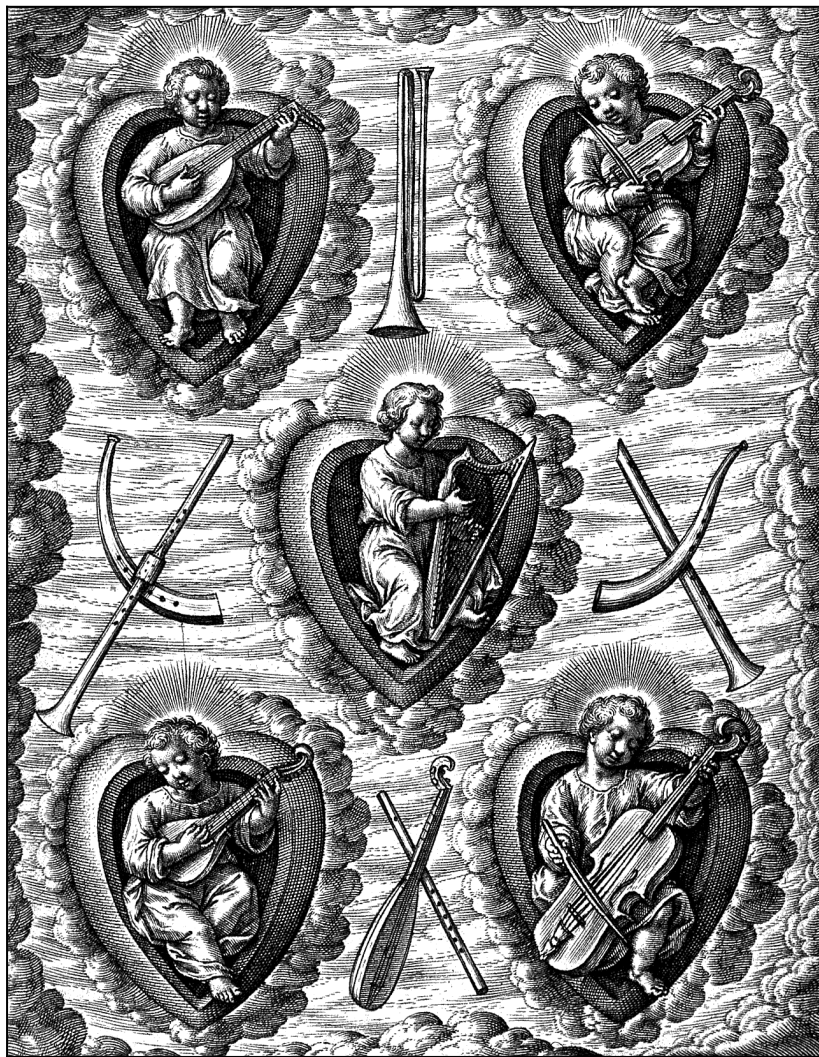
⁴ By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life.

Hebrews 12 [RV]

²⁸ Wherefore...let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe.



Priest offering Incense
(Life of Jesus Christ for the Young, v1, 1880)



Music of Praise from the Heart
(Wellcome Collection)

12. The Glory of Solomon's Early Reign

Review and Herald, December 7, 1905

THE wealth and the wisdom of Solomon, the magnificent buildings and public works constructed during the early years of his reign, the energy and the piety revealed in word and deed, made a deep impression upon all Israel, and brought to him fame and honor from the surrounding nations. By his justice and magnanimity he won the loyalty of Israel, and the admiration of the rulers of many lands.

1 Kings 4

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much...

³¹ He was wiser than all men;...and his fame was in all nations round about.

Solomon took special interest in natural history, but his researches were not confined to any one branch of learning. Through diligent study of all created things, both animate and inanimate, he gained a clearer conception of the Creator. In the forces of nature, in the mineral and the animal world, and in every tree and shrub and flower, he saw a revelation of God's infinite wisdom; and as he sought to learn more and more, his knowledge of God and his love for Him constantly increased.

The Tribute of Kings

2 Chronicles 9

²³ And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.

²⁴ And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

As the people from many lands visited Solomon, he taught them of God as the Creator of all things. These visitors returned to their homes with clearer conceptions of the God of

Israel, and of His compassionate love for the human race. In the works of nature they now beheld an expression of His love and a revelation of His character; and many were led to worship Him as their God.

Never was Israel more greatly honored than during the first part of Solomon's reign. The righteousness and wisdom revealed by the king bore to all nations continual witness of the power of God. For a time the Israelites shone forth as the light of the world, showing, by their nobility of character, the greatness of Jehovah.

The Visit of the Queen of Sheba

One of those deeply interested in Solomon's wisdom, the queen of Sheba, determined to...

1 Kings 10

¹ ...prove him with hard questions.

² And she came to Jerusalem,

—attended by a retinue of servants, with camels bearing...

² ...spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

The queen talked with him of the mysteries of nature, and Solomon taught her of the God of nature, the great Creator, who dwells in the highest heaven and rules over all.

³ And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not.

⁴ When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

⁵ And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.

⁶ It was a true report, [she acknowledged to the king,] which I heard in my own land of your acts, and of your wisdom.

⁷ Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and my

eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: your wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard.

⁸ Happy are your men, happy are these your servants, which stand continually before you, and that hear your wisdom.

Recognizing the source of Solomon's wisdom and prosperity, the queen exclaimed:

⁹ Blessed be the Lord your God, which delighted in you to set you on his throne, to be king for the Lord your God: because your God loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do judgment and justice.

¹⁰ [The queen] gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹³ King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

The Lips of the Wise Disperse Knowledge

The real glory of Solomon's reign was not the surpassing wisdom, the fabulous riches, and the far-reaching power and fame that were his. It was by a wise use of these gifts of heaven, in revealing to the world a knowledge of the King of kings, that Solomon brought glory to the name of the God of Israel.

With the passing of the years and the increase of his fame, Solomon sought to honor God by adding to his mental and spiritual strength, and by imparting to others the blessings he received. He realized that he had come into possession of a kingdom, and of power, wisdom, and glory, through the favor of Jehovah. None understood better than he that these gifts were bestowed in order that he might give to the world a knowledge of God.

It was to give in His own life a revelation of His Father's character, that Christ came in the form of humanity. In His

life no ostentatious display, no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed. Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son. To this revelation Jesus desired the minds of the people to be directed and their homage to be given.

Solomon's divinely given wisdom found expression in songs of praise, and in many inspired proverbs. In these writings are outlined principles of holy living and high endeavor,—principles that should govern every act of life,—principles that are heaven-born and that lead to godliness. The wide dissemination of these truths, and the recognition of God as the one to whom belongs all praise and honor, made Solomon's early reign most glorious.

Proverbs 3

¹³ Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding.

¹⁴ For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies: and all the things you can desire are not to be compared unto her.

¹⁶ Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

¹⁸ She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retains her.

Proverbs 4

⁷ Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding.

Proverbs 9

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Proverbs 8

¹³ The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

O that Solomon had heeded in later years these wonderful

words of wisdom that he was inspired to write! O that he who once declared that...

Proverbs 15

⁷ ...the lips of the wise disperse knowledge,

–and who himself wisely taught the kings of the earth to ascribe to the King of kings the glory they desired to give him, had never with a “froward mouth,” in “pride and arrogance,” taken to himself the glory due to God alone!



The Princes of Israel bow before Solomon
(The Bible and Its Story, 1909)



The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon
(Star of Bethlehem, 1890)

13. The Perils of Prosperity

Review and Herald, December 14, 1905

IN THE midst of Solomon's wonderful prosperity, lurked danger. The sins of his father David's later years, though sincerely repented of and sorely punished, had emboldened the people in transgression of God's commandments.

Through association with surrounding nations, evil influences were gradually permeating the kingdom that had been so remarkably blessed. God was not inquired of. Wealth, with all its temptations, came in Solomon's day to a rapidly increasing number of the people.

2 Chronicles 1

¹⁵ The king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance.

Throughout the ages, riches and honor have been attended with much peril to humility and spirituality. It is when a man is prospered, when all his fellow men speak well of him, that he is in special danger.

Man is human. Spiritual prosperity continues only so long as man depends wholly upon God for wisdom and for perfection of character. And those who feel most their need of dependence upon God are usually those who have the least amount of earthly treasure and human honor on which to depend.

The Commendation of Man

There is danger in the bestowal of rich gifts or of words of commendation upon human agencies. Those who are favored by the Lord need to be on guard constantly, lest pride spring up and obtain the supremacy.

He who has an unusual following, he who has received many words of commendation from the messengers of the

Lord, needs the special prayers of God's faithful watchmen, that he may be shielded from the danger of cherishing thoughts of self-esteem and spiritual pride. Never is such a man to manifest self-importance, or attempt to act as a dictator or a ruler. Let him watch and pray, and keep his eye single to the glory of God.

As his imagination takes hold upon things unseen, and he contemplates the joy of the hope that is set before him,—even the precious boon of life eternal,—the commendation of man will not fill his mind with thoughts of pride. And at times when the enemy makes special efforts to spoil him by flattery and worldly honor, his brethren should faithfully warn him of his dangers; for, if left to himself, he will be prone to make mistakes, and reveal human frailties.

In Solomon's day, as in ours, the very ones who praised and flattered and glorified the man of ability were the ones who failed to recognize and glorify God for the blessings He bestowed upon them through the human instrumentality. They praised the man; God was dishonored; and soon the Lord found the vessel He had ordained and used in His sacred service, becoming unclean.

The sentiments, the spirit, and the likeness of the natural man began to appear, and he who once was doing God's will, became corrupted through human exaltation. Then the feebleness and weakness of man was revealed by the choice of injudicious friends, whose course helped the tempter to ensnare the man. The Lord allowed him to be ensnared, because he would not be counseled; he would walk in his own way.

Strength in Service

The Lord places men in positions of responsibility to carry out not their own will, but God's will. He gives wisdom to those who seek Him, and who depend upon Him as their counselor. So long as men represent the pure principles of His

government, He will continue to bless and maintain them as His instrumentalities to carry out His purposes concerning His people. He cooperates with those who cooperate with Him.

It is to the interest of all who act any part in God's service, to labor with exactitude and fidelity; for with distinctness is to be revealed the line of demarcation separating His people from the inhabitants of the world. He who remains true to principle will never be left by the Lord to become weak and discouraged.

The Lord's word to Solomon is applicable to every man who consents to assume responsibilities in any place in the Lord's work. Strength of character is to be honored by those who claim to keep the commandments and statutes of God. The solemn charges and appeals and promises, so large and full, that were made to Solomon, are made to every man who will stand in his lot and place to do the work that God has appointed him to.

In the Valley of Humiliation

It is not the empty cup that we have trouble in carrying; it is the cup full to the brim that must be carefully balanced. Affliction and adversity may cause much inconvenience, and may bring great depression; but it is prosperity that is dangerous to spiritual life. Unless the human subject is in constant submission to the will of God, unless he is sanctified by the truth, and has the faith that works by love and purifies the soul, prosperity will surely arouse the natural inclination to presumption.

Our prayers need most to be offered for the men in high places. They need the prayers of the whole church, because they are entrusted with prosperity and influence.

In the valley of humiliation, where men depend on God to teach them and to guide their every step, there is comparative

safety. But let every one who has a living connection with God pray for the men in positions of responsibility,—for those who are standing on a lofty pinnacle, and who, because of their exalted position, are supposed to have much wisdom.

Unless such men feel their need of an Arm stronger than the arm of flesh to lean upon, unless they make God their dependence, their view of things will become distorted, and they will fall.



Solomon imports Apes and Peacocks
(Bible Beasts and Birds, 1886)

14. Apostasy

Review and Herald, December 21, 1905

FOR many years Solomon walked uprightly. Heavenly wisdom was given him to rule over God's people with impartiality and mercy. But his life, after a morning of so great promise, was darkened with apostasy.

History records the melancholy fact that:

- he who was called Jedidiah (Beloved of the Lord),
- he who had been specially honored by God with tokens of divine favor so remarkable that his wisdom and uprightness gained for him world-wide fame,
- he who had so often given wise counsel to others,

—turned from the worship of the true God to bow before the idols of the heathen.

Solomon's apostasy was so gradual that almost before he was aware of it, he had wandered far from God. Gradually but surely, he lost sight of the necessity of implicit obedience to the plain precepts of Holy Writ, and conformed more and more closely to the customs of the surrounding nations. Yielding to the temptations connected with his prosperity and his honored position, he forgot God, and the conditions of success.

Departing from the Commandments

Hundreds of years before Solomon came to the throne, the Lord, foreseeing the perils that would beset those chosen as rulers of Israel, gave Moses special instruction for their guidance. Directions were given that he who sat on the throne of Israel should...

Deuteronomy 17

¹⁸ ...write him a copy [of the statutes of Jehovah] in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:

¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

²⁰ That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

In connection with this instruction, the Lord particularly cautioned the one who should be anointed king not to...

Deuteronomy 17

¹⁶ ...multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord has said unto you, You shall henceforth return no more that way.

¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

These plain warnings were familiar to Solomon. And for a time he heeded them. His greatest desire was to live and rule in accordance with the statutes given at Sinai. His manner of conducting the affairs of the kingdom was in striking contrast with the customs of the idolatrous nations of his time,—nations who feared not God, and whose rulers trampled under foot His holy law.

The beginning of Solomon's apostasy may be traced to his violation of the plain commandments of the Lord. God had given the king of Israel wonderful prestige in the surrounding nations. Had Solomon continued to trust the Lord fully, his fame and the greatness of his nation would have constantly increased.

But he began, almost imperceptibly at first, to trust less and less in the guidance and blessing of God, and to put confidence in his own strength. This is seen in his effort to gain power and dignity by allying himself with the nations round

about him.

Heathen Alliances

In seeking to strengthen his relations with the powerful kingdom lying to the southward of Israel, Solomon ventured upon forbidden ground.

1 Kings 3

¹ Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David.

From a human point of view, this marriage, although contrary to the teachings of God's law, seemed to prove a blessing; for Solomon's heathen wife was converted, and united with him in the worship of the true God. Furthermore, Pharaoh rendered signal service to Israel by taking Gezer, slaying...

1 Kings 9

¹⁶ ...the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and [giving] it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

Solomon rebuilt and fortified this city, and thus apparently greatly strengthened his kingdom along the Mediterranean seacoast.

The barrier was further broken by Solomon's marriage with other heathen princesses. He flattered himself that his wisdom and the power of his example would lead his wives from idolatry to the worship of the true God, and also that the alliances thus formed would draw the nations round about into close touch with the people of God. Vain hope!

How fatal was Solomon's mistake in regarding himself strong enough to resist the influence of heathen associates! And how fatal, too, the deception that led Solomon to hope that a disregard of God's law on his part, would lead others to revere and obey its sacred precepts!

Alliances and commercial relations with many heathen nations brought Solomon renown, honor, and the riches of this world. He was enabled to bring gold from Ophir and silver from Tarshish in great abundance. More and more he came to regard luxury, self-indulgence, and the favor of the world as indications of greatness.

Seduced into Idolatry

Beautiful and attractive women were brought from Egypt, Phoenicia, Edom, Moab, and from many other places. These women were numbered by hundreds. Their religion was idol-worship, and they had been taught to practice cruel and degrading rites. Infatuated with their beauty, the king neglected his duties to God and to his kingdom. His wives exerted a strong influence over him, and gradually prevailed on him to unite with them in their worship.

Solomon's course brought its sure penalty. His separation from God through communication with idolaters ruined him. As he cast off his allegiance to God, he lost the mastery of himself. His moral efficiency was gone, as power is gone from a paralytic. His fine sensibilities became blunted, his conscience seared. Association with idolaters corrupted his faith. The instruction that God had given to serve as a barrier for his safety,

Deuteronomy 17

¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold,

—was disregarded, and Solomon gave himself up to the worship of false gods. He became the tool of Satan and a slave to impulse.

1 Kings 11

⁴ It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David

his father.

⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

⁶ And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father.

⁷ Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

⁸ And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

On the southern eminence of the Mount of Olives,—opposite Mount Moriah, where stood the beautiful temple of Jehovah,—Solomon erected an imposing pile of buildings to be used as idolatrous shrines. To please his wives, he placed huge idols, unshapely images of wood and stone, amid the groves of myrtle and olive. There, before the altars of the heathen deities, were practiced the most degrading rites of heathenism.

Degradation into Tyranny

He who in his early reign had displayed so much wisdom and kingly sympathy in restoring a helpless babe to its unfortunate mother, fell so low as to consent to the erection of an idol to whom children were offered as living sacrifices. He who in his youth was endowed with discretion and understanding, and who in his strong manhood had been inspired to write,

Proverbs 14

¹² There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,

—in later years departed so far from purity as to countenance the licentious revolting rites connected with the worship of Chemosh and Ashtoreth. He who at the dedication of the temple had said to his people,

1 Kings 8

⁶¹ Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God,

–himself became an offender, in heart and life denying his own words. He mistook license for liberty. He tried, but at what cost, to unite light with darkness, Christ with Belial, purity with impurity, good with evil.

From being one of the greatest kings that ever wielded a scepter, whose wisdom made him renowned throughout the world, Solomon became a profligate,—the tool and slave of others.

- His character, once noble and manly, became enervated and effeminate.
- His faith in the living God was shaken and supplanted by atheistic doubts.
- Unbelief marred his happiness, weakened his principles, and degraded his life;
- Gloomy and soul-harassing thoughts troubled him night and day.
- The justice and magnanimity of his early reign were changed to despotism and tyranny.

Poor, frail human nature! God can do but little for men who lose their sense of dependence upon Him.

15. He That Sows Iniquity Shall Reap Vanity

Review and Herald, December 28, 1905

ONE of the most powerful influences that led to Solomon's apostasy, was the pride of prosperity. As wealth and worldly honor came to him, he at first remained humble, but after a time he began to lose sight of the Source of his unparalleled prosperity. This led to a wrong use of the talents of wealth and of influence. The gifts of heaven were perverted for selfish purposes.

Solomon's profligacy was accompanied by extravagance. For his first wife, Pharaoh's daughter, he built a magnificent palace...

1 Kings 7

⁹ ...of costly stones...within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping.

¹ Solomon was building his own house thirteen years.

The House of the Forest of Lebanon

² He built also [in Jerusalem] the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was a hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

⁴ And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

⁶ He made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits.

1 Kings 10

¹⁶ King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

2 Chronicles 9

¹⁶ And three hundred shields made he of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

²⁰ All the drinking vessels of King Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: none were of silver; it was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon.

God's money, which should have been held in sacred trust for the benefit of the worthy poor, and for national improvements of permanent value, was selfishly absorbed in the king's ambitious projects. The suffering ones in Israel were not given proper food and clothing and shelter. In his proud heart the king cherished the desire to excel all other earthly kings in the magnificence of his court.

Solomon's Throne

1 Kings 7

⁷ He made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.

1 Kings 10

¹⁸ Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

¹⁹ The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

²⁰ And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

Military Equipment

A striking illustration of the blinding influence of sin is seen in Solomon's disregard of the plain command of the Lord that the king of Israel should not...

Deuteronomy 17

¹⁶ ...multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses.

The record declares:

2 Chronicles 1

¹⁶ Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt.

2 Chronicles 9

²⁸ They brought unto Solomon horses...out of all lands.

1 Kings 4

²⁶ And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots...

²⁸ Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

In the matter of military equipment, Solomon chose to follow unsanctified human judgment in the place of following the word of God.

1 Kings 10

²⁹ A chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver,¹⁰ and a horse for a hundred and fifty.¹¹

²⁶ Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

²² The king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram.

A Record of Folly

The pride of prosperity brought separation from God. From the joy of divine communion Solomon turned to find satisfaction in the pleasures of sense. A word-picture portraying this experience is given, in the language of Solomon himself, in the book of *Ecclesiastes*.

Ecclesiastes 1

¹⁶ I communed with my own heart, [he confesses,] saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me...

¹⁰ 600 shekels of silver = +\$4000 in 2019.

¹¹ 150 shekels of silver = +\$1000 in 2019.

¹⁷ And I gave my heart to know...madness and folly.

Ecclesiastes 2

¹ I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove you with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure.

³ I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly...

⁴ I made me great works; I built me houses; I planted me vineyards:

⁵ I made me gardens and orchards;...

⁷ I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

⁸ I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

⁹ So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem...

¹⁰ And whatsoever my eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor...

¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit.

¹³ I saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness.

¹⁵ Then I said in my heart, As it happens to the fool, so it happens even to me...

¹⁷ Therefore I hated life...

¹⁸ Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun.

The National Revenues

The enormous expense of establishing and maintaining a court of unrivaled splendor and Oriental profligacy, was met in part by the annual tribute of kings, and by the rich treasures brought from the East, from Tarshish, and from the land of Ophir, by the king's sea-going vessels sailing from Ezion-geber, and from Eloth,

2 Chronicles 8

¹⁷ ...at the seaside in the land of Edom.

¹⁸ Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to King Solomon.

1 Kings 10

¹¹ And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

2 Chronicles 9

²¹ The king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

¹³ The weight of the gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold;

¹⁴ Besides that which chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.

Even this enormous revenue did not prove sufficient to meet the lavish expenditures of the king and his court. And now pride, ambition, prodigality, and indulgence bore fruit in cruelty and exaction.

The conscientious, considerate spirit that had actuated Solomon in all his dealings with his people during his early reign, was now sadly changed. From the wisest and most merciful of rulers, he degenerated into a tyrant. Once the compassionate, God-fearing guardian of the people, he became oppressive and despotic.

His passion for extravagant display led him to impose great burdens on the people. Tax after tax was levied on them, that means might be forthcoming to support the luxurious court. The people began to murmur and complain. The respect and admiration they once cherished for their king was changed

into disaffection and abhorrence.

National Apostasy

Solomon's alliance with heathen nations was followed by evils which led many of the children of Israel to violate the law of God.

Multitudes became contaminated with the principles and practices of the heathen. Polygamy was introduced into Palestine. The pure religious service instituted by God was replaced by idolatry of the darkest hue. Human sacrifices were offered to idols; and the licentious rites practiced by the heathen were countenanced.

In the rejection of the ways of God for the ways of men, the downfall of Israel began. Thus also it continued, until the Jewish people became a prey to the very nations whose practices they had chosen to follow.

16. The Spirit of Sacrifice

Review and Herald, January 4, 1906

THE beginnings of Solomon's apostasy may be traced to many seemingly slight deviations from right principles. Associations with idolatrous women was by no means the only cause of his downfall. Among the primary causes that led Solomon into extravagance and tyrannical oppression, was his course in developing and cherishing a spirit of covetousness.

The Temple Built from Offerings

In the days of ancient Israel, when at the foot of Sinai Moses told the people of the divine command,

Exodus 25

⁸ Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them,

—the response of the Israelites was accompanied by appropriate gifts.

Exodus 35

²¹ They came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, [and brought offerings].

For the building of the sanctuary, great and expensive preparations were necessary; a large amount of the most precious and costly material was required; yet the Lord accepted only freewill offerings.

Exodus 25

² Of every man that gives it willingly with his heart you shall take my offering.

This was the divine command repeated by Moses to the congregation. Devotion to God and a spirit of sacrifice were the first requisites in preparing a dwelling-place for the Most

High.

A similar call to self-sacrifice was made when David turned over to Solomon the responsibility of erecting the temple. Of the assembled multitude that had brought their liberal gifts, David asked,

1 Chronicles 29

⁵ Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?

This call should ever have been kept in mind by those who had to do with the construction of the temple. Chosen men were especially endowed by God with skill and wisdom for the construction of the wilderness-tabernacle.

Exodus 35

³⁰ Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord has called by name Bezaleel...of the tribe of Judah;

³¹ And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;

³⁴ And He has put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab...of the tribe of Dan.

³⁵ Them has He filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer...and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Exodus 36

¹ Then wrought Bezaleel,...and every wise-hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding.

Heavenly intelligences cooperated with the workmen whom God himself chose.

The Spirit of Covetousness

The descendants of these men inherited to a large degree the skill conferred upon their forefathers. In the tribes of Judah and of Dan there were men who were regarded as especially “cunning” in the finer arts. For a time these men re-

mained humble and unselfish; but gradually, almost imperceptibly, they lost their hold upon God and His truth. They began to ask for higher wages because of their superior skill.

In some instances their request was granted, but more often those asking higher wages found employment in the surrounding nations. In place of the noble spirit of self-sacrifice that had filled the hearts of their illustrious ancestors, they cherished a spirit of covetousness, of grasping for more and more. They served heathen kings with their God-given skill, and dishonored their Maker.

It was to these apostates that Solomon looked for a master workman to superintend the construction of the temple on Mount Moriah. Minute specifications, in writing, regarding every portion of the sacred structure, had been entrusted to the king, and he should have looked to God in faith for consecrated helpers, to whom would have been granted special skill for doing with exactness the work required.

But Solomon lost sight of this opportunity to exercise faith in God. He sent to the king of Tyre for...

2 Chronicles 2

⁷ ...a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with cunning men...in Judah and in Jerusalem.

The Phoenician king responded by sending Hiram,

¹³ ...a cunning man, endued with understanding,...

¹⁴ The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre.

This master workman, Hiram, was a descendant, on his mother's side, of Aholiab, to whom, hundreds of years before, God had given special wisdom for the construction of the tabernacle. Thus at the head of Solomon's company of workmen there was placed an unsanctified man, who demanded

large wages because of his unusual skill.

Huram's efforts were not prompted by a desire to render his highest service to God. He served the god of this world—Mammon. The very fibers of his being had been inwrought with principles of selfishness, which were revealed in his grasping for the highest wages.

And gradually these wrong principles came to be cherished by his associates. As they labored with him day after day, and yielded to the inclination to compare his wages with their own, they began to lose sight of the holy character of their work, and to dwell upon the difference between their wages and his. Gradually they lost their spirit of self-denial, and fostered a spirit of covetousness. The result was a demand for higher wages, which was granted them.

The baleful influences set in operation by the employment of this man of a grasping spirit, permeated all branches of the Lord's service, and extended throughout Solomon's kingdom. The high wages demanded and received gave many an opportunity to indulge in luxury and extravagance.

In the far-reaching effects of these influences, may be traced one of the principal causes of the terrible apostasy of him who once was the wisest of mortals. The king was not alone in his apostasy. Extravagance and corruption were to be seen on every hand. The poor were oppressed by the rich; the spirit of self-sacrifice in God's service was well nigh lost.

The Lesson for Us

Herein lies a most important lesson for God's people today,—a lesson that many are slow to learn. The spirit of covetousness, of seeking for the highest position and the highest wage, is rife in the world. The old-time spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice is too seldom met with. But this is the only spirit that can actuate a true follower of Jesus. Our divine Master has given us an example of how we are to work. And to those

whom He bade,

Matthew 4

¹⁹ Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,

—He offered no stated sum as a reward for their services. They were to share with Him His self-denial and sacrifice.

Those who claim to be followers of the Master Worker, and who engage in His service as colaborers with God, are to bring into their work the exactitude and skill, the tact and wisdom, that the God of perfection required in the building of the earthly tabernacle. And now, as in that time and as in the days of Christ's earthly ministry, devotion to God and a spirit of sacrifice should be regarded as the first requisites of acceptable service. God designs that not one thread of selfishness shall be woven into His work.

Great care should be taken in regard to the spirit pervading the Lord's institutions. These institutions were founded in self-sacrifice, and have been built up by the self-denying gifts of God's people and the unselfish labor of His servants. Everything connected with institutional service should bear the signature of heaven.

A sense of the sacredness of God's institution should be encouraged and cultivated. The workers are to humble their hearts before the Lord, acknowledging His sovereignty. All are to live in accordance with principles of self-denial. As the true, self-sacrificing laborer, with his spiritual lamp trimmed and burning, strives unselfishly to advance the interests of the institution in which he is working, he will have a precious experience, and will be able to say,

Genesis 28

¹⁶ The Lord indeed is in this place.

He will feel that he is highly privileged in being permitted to give to the Lord's institution his ability, his service, and his unwearying vigilance.

The Advent Work

In the early days of the third angel's message those who established our institutions, and those who labored in them, were actuated by high motives of unselfishness. For their arduous labors they received no more than a mere pittance—barely enough for a meager support. But their hearts were baptized with the ministry of love. The reward of whole-souled liberality was apparent in their close fellowship with the Spirit of the Master Worker. They practiced the closest economy, in order that as many other laborers as possible might be planting the standard of truth in new places.

But in time a change came. The spirit of sacrifice was not so manifest. In some of our institutions the wages of a few workers was increased beyond reason. Those who received these wages claimed that they deserved a greater sum than others, because of their superior talents. But who gave them their talents, their ability?

With the increase of wages came a steady increase of covetousness, which is idolatry, and a steady decline of spirituality. Gross evils crept in, and God was dishonored. The minds of many who witnessed this grasping after higher and still higher wages, were leavened with doubt and unbelief. Strange principles, like evil leaven, permeated nearly the entire body of believers. Many ceased to deny self, and not a few withheld their tithes and offerings.

God in His providence called for a reform in His sacred work, which should begin at the heart, and work outwardly. Some who blindly continued to place a high estimate upon their services, were removed. Others received the message given to them, turned to God with full purpose of heart, and learned to abhor their covetous spirit. So far as possible, they endeavored to set a right example before the people by voluntarily reducing their wages. They realized that nothing less than complete transformation in mind and heart would save

them from being swept off their feet by some masterly temptation.

The work of God in all its wide extent is one, and the same principles should control, the same spirit be revealed, in all its branches. It must bear the stamp of missionary work. Every department of the cause is related to all parts of the gospel field, and the spirit that controls one department will be felt throughout the entire field.

If a portion of the workers receive large wages, there are others, in different branches of the work, who will call for higher wages, and the spirit of self-sacrifice will gradually be lost sight of. Other institutions and conferences will catch the same spirit, and the Lord's favor will be removed from them; for He can never sanction selfishness. Thus our aggressive work would come to an end. Only by constant sacrifice can it be carried forward.

God will test the faith of every soul. Christ has purchased us at an infinite sacrifice. Although He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might come into possession of eternal riches. All that we possess of ability and intellect has been lent us in trust by the Lord, to use for Him. It is our privilege to be partakers with Christ in His sacrifice.



Covetousness
(Traits of Character, 1898)

17. Give Unto the Lord the Glory Due Unto His Name

Review and Herald, January 11, 1906

2 Corinthians 10

¹⁷ He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

¹⁸ For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

FROM the day when Solomon was entrusted with the work of building the temple, to the time of its completion, his avowed purpose was to build...

1 Kings 8

¹⁷ ...a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

This purpose was fully recognized before assembled Israel during the dedication of the temple. In his prayer he acknowledged that Jehovah had said,

²⁹ My name shall be there.

One of the most touching portions of Solomon's dedicatory prayer is his plea for the strangers that would come...

⁴¹ ...out of a far country for your name's sake;

⁴² For they shall hear of your great name, and of your strong hand, and of your stretched-out arm.

In behalf of every stranger that would...

⁴² ...come and pray toward this house,

Solomon pleaded with the Lord:

⁴³ Hear in heaven your dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calls to You for: that all people of the earth may know your name, to fear You, as do your people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have built, is called by your name.

At the close of the services, Solomon exhorted Israel to be

faithful and true to God, in order that...

1 Kings 8

⁶⁰ ...all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.

The temple of Jehovah was a marvel of richness and glory, unequaled by any work of human art. A greater than Solomon was the designer of this building; the wisdom and glory of God stood there revealed. Those who were unacquainted with the source of Solomon's wisdom naturally admired and praised the human agent; but the king disclaimed any honor for the conception and the erection of so magnificent a structure.

The queen of Sheba, at the close of her visit to Jerusalem, was constrained by what she had seen and learned, not to extol Solomon, but to exclaim:

1 Kings 10

⁹ Blessed be the Lord your God, which delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do judgment and justice.

This is the impression that God designed should be made upon all peoples. And when...

²⁴ ...all the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart,

—the king continued for a time reverently to direct them to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Ruler of the universe, the All-Wise. The name of Jehovah was honored, and His holy temple was regarded with reverence.

Solomon Falls to Flattery

Had Solomon remained humble, had he continued to turn the attention of men from himself to the One who had endowed him with wisdom and riches and honor, what a history

might have been his!

But the unerring pen of inspiration, while it records his virtues, also bears faithful witness to his downfall. Raised to a pinnacle of greatness, and surrounded with the gifts of fortune, Solomon became dizzy, lost his balance, and fell. Constantly extolled by men of the world for his unsurpassed wisdom, he at length was unable to withstand the flattery.

The gift of heaven, the wisdom which was entrusted to him by God, and which should ever have been used to glorify the Giver, filled Solomon with pride. He forgot that man, in humility, must reveal constant reverence for God.

Like the tabernacle, the temple had been built in accordance with specifications divinely given. And it was through the Lord's blessing that the people were enabled to give and prepare the necessary material. All the temple services were divinely instituted.

And yet the honor was diverted from God, and given to Solomon. He finally allowed men to speak of him as the one most worthy of praise for the matchless splendor of the building that had been planned and erected for the honor of...

1 Kings 8

¹⁷ ...the name of the Lord God of Israel.

Thus it was that the temple of Jehovah came to be known throughout the nations as "Solomon's temple." The human agent had taken to himself the glory that belonged to...

Ecclesiastes 5

⁸ ...the One higher than the highest.

Even to this day the temple of which Solomon had declared to the Lord,

2 Chronicles 6

³³ This house which I have built is called by your name,

–is oftenest spoken of, not as the temple of Jehovah, but as “Solomon’s temple.”

Daniel’s Example

The course followed by Daniel, to whom God gave...

Daniel 1

¹⁷ ...knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom,

–is in striking contrast with the course followed by Solomon during the latter years of his reign. In Daniel’s life, the desire to glorify God was the most powerful of all motives. He realized that when standing in the presence of men of influence, a failure to acknowledge God as the source of his wisdom would have made him an unfaithful steward.

And his constant recognition of the God of heaven before kings, princes, and statesmen, detracted not one iota from his influence. King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to...

Daniel 4

³⁷ ...praise and extol and honor the King of heaven.

And to the close of his career Daniel honored God.

Give Glory to Him

Revelation 14

⁶ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

⁷ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him...

In connection with every line of God’s work in the earth today, the Name that is above every other name is to be honored. The gospel ministry, the publishing work, the medical missionary work, the educational work,—all are of heavenly origin. Not one of these lines of service has been originated or

perfected by any human being.

God has given the wisdom that has made possible the rapid development of every department of His cause. Let no man take unto himself the glory that belongs to God alone. Let no line of work, no institution, bear a name that would divert honor from God to any man or any set of men. Let us remember that the beautiful temple which was erected for the honor of...

1 Kings 8

¹⁷ ...the name of the Lord God of Israel,

—came to be known, through the apostasy of the builder, as “Solomon’s temple.” Said the great apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 4

¹ Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

² Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Let every worker understand that as he strives to advance the glory of God in our world, whether he stands before Christians or infidels, peasants or princes, he is to make God first, and last, and best in everything. Man cannot show greater weakness than by allowing men to ascribe to him the honor for gifts that are heaven-bestowed. God must stand the highest. The worldly wisdom of the greatest men is foolishness with Him. The true Christian will exalt the name of the Lord. No ambitious motive will chill his love for God; steadily, perseveringly will he cause honor to redound to his Heavenly Father.

² It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

When we are faithful in making God known, our impulses will be under divine supervision, and we shall make steady growth, spiritually and intellectually. It is Christ’s power alone that can give success to the human agent. God has

given every man talents, that His name may be exalted; not that man may be lauded and praised, honored and glorified, while the Giver is forgotten. Let those around you see that you give God the glory. Let self be crucified; let God appear.

The Example of Jesus

Jesus, our divine Master, ever exalted the name of His Heavenly Father. He taught His disciples to pray,

Matthew 6

⁹ Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be *your name*.

And they were not to forget to acknowledge,

¹³ Yours...is the glory.

So careful was the great Healer to direct attention from himself to the source of His power, that the wondering multitude,

Matthew 15

³¹ ...when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see,

—glorified not Him;

³¹ ...they glorified the God of Israel.

In His wonderful prayer offered just before the crucifixion, He declared:

John 17

⁴ I have glorified You on the earth.

¹ Glorify your Son, [He pleaded,] that your Son also may glorify You.

²⁵ O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent me.

²⁶ And I have declared unto them your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Jeremiah 9

²³ Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

²⁴ But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

Psalms 69

³⁰ I will praise the name of God,...and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

Revelation 4

¹¹ You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.

Psalms 86

¹² I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify your name forevermore.

Psalms 34

³ O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.



Solomon gathers Horses and Chariots,
contrary to God's command in *Deuteronomy* 17:16
(The Child's History of King Solomon, 1868)



Solomon gathers many Wives,
contrary to God's command in *Deuteronomy* 17:17
(The Bible and Its Story, 1909)

18. Outward Display

Review and Herald, January 18, 1906

ONE sad feature of Solomon's experience was his supposition that massive buildings and magnificent furnishings give character to the work of God. He endeavored to pattern after, and to compete with, the world.

He lost sight of the foundation principle underlying the influence that is ever to be exerted by the people of God,—obedience to every precept of Holy Writ. The real power of God's people lies not in numbers, nor in the wealth and worldly prosperity that may be displayed, but in steadfast adherence to His Word. The truth, obeyed, is made the power of God unto salvation.

Solomon's Ambitious Projects

Solomon became ambitious of excelling all other nations in power and grandeur. It was his desire to attain greater political power, that led him to form alliances with idolatrous nations, and to seal these alliances by marriages with heathen princesses.

In conformity with the customs of surrounding nations, he maintained a luxurious court, in many respects surpassing in splendor the courts of the rulers of other kingdoms. Luxury was followed by wanton extravagance. Vast riches were squandered. This led to the levying of a grievous tax upon the poor people.

Ecclesiastes 2

⁴ I made me great works,

Solomon declares. Among these were:

1 Kings 9

¹⁵ ...Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

2 Chronicles 8

⁴ And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath.

⁵ Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars;

⁶ And Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion.

So engrossed was Solomon with thoughts of vanity, that perfection and beauty of character were overlooked in his attempt to surpass other nations in outward display. He sold his honor and his integrity in seeking to glorify himself before the world, and he finally became a despot. The power and the riches obtained at a sacrifice of right principles, proved to him a terrible curse.

The Humility of Jesus

How striking is the contrast between Solomon's ambitious desire to exalt himself, and the life that the Son of God lived upon this earth! The Saviour of mankind was born of humble parentage in a sin-cursed, wicked world. He was brought up in obscurity at Nazareth, a small town of Galilee.

He began His work in poverty and without worldly rank. He sought not the admiration or the applause of the world. He dwelt among the lowly. To all appearance He was merely a humble man, with few friends.

Thus God introduced the gospel in a way altogether different from the way in which many deem it wise to proclaim the same gospel in this age. At the very beginning of the gospel dispensation He taught His church to rely, not on worldly rank and splendor, but on the power of faith and obedience.

Luke 17 [margin]

²⁰ The kingdom of God comes not with outward show.

The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abne-

gation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic.

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

It is not the largeness or the grandeur of an edifice that impresses hearts, but the principles of righteousness, of justice and equity, practiced within.

Our institutions will give character to the work of God just according to the consecrated devotion of the workers,—by revealing the power of the grace of Christ to transform the life. Never are we to rely upon worldly recognition and rank. Never are we, in the establishment of institutions, to try to compete with worldly institutions in size or splendor.

We shall gain the victory, not by erecting massive buildings in rivalry with our enemies, but by cherishing a Christlike spirit of meekness and lowliness. We are to be distinguished from the world because God has placed His seal upon us, because He manifests in us His own character of love. Our Redeemer covers us with His righteousness.

Prosperity Mistaken for God's Favor

As Solomon continued to conform to the customs of the world, his pride greatly increased. And the worldly prosperity that attended his apostasy, was regarded by him as a token of God's favor. So fully had he yielded himself to evil influences, that his spiritual discernment was well-nigh destroyed. He could not see the terrible losses that were sustained by the nation spiritually because he brought into the kingdom an abundance of the gold of Ophir and the silver of Tarshish.

Today there exists the same danger of mistaking prosperity for the favor of heaven. The prosperity that often for a time attends those who turn from a plain "Thus says the Lord" to

follow a way of their own choosing, is not an assurance of divine approval. Men many interpret it thus, but it is no sign that God's prospering hand is with them.

Let all learn a lesson from Solomon's experience. Notwithstanding his violation of a plain "Thus says the Lord," riches and worldly honor poured in upon him, and seemingly he was greatly blessed. This is in harmony with Job's declaration that the wicked spend their days in prosperity:

Job 12

⁶ The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God brings abundantly.

And the psalmist testifies:

Psalm 73 [RV]

² As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped.

³ For I was envious at the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

⁶ Pride is as a chain about their neck; violence covers them as a garment.

⁷ Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

⁸ They scoff, and in wickedness utter oppression: They speak loftily.

Like Solomon, those who esteem their own wisdom above the wisdom of the Lord will surely feel the sad result of their course. For a time they may seemingly be prospered, but their work will not abide.

The Lord will let them pass through bitter experiences, in order that they may have an opportunity to learn that real prosperity comes not by outward display, but only by conformity to His will and purpose.

The Only Right Way

God's way is always the right and prudent way. It always

brings honor to His name. Man's only security against rash, ambitious movements is to keep the heart in harmony with Christ Jesus. Man's wisdom is untrustworthy. Man is fickle, filled with self-esteem, pride, and selfishness.

Let the workers in God's service trust wholly in the Lord. Then they will reveal that they are willing to be led, not by human wisdom, which is as useless to lean upon as is a broken reed, but by the wisdom of the Lord, who has said,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

Fellow Christian, keep your religion pure and untainted. Worldly interests may tempt you to yield your principles, but:

Mark 8

³⁶ What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Worldly greatness is no equivalent for integrity, honesty, a pure heart, and a noble, unwavering purpose to do right. Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like him who possesses the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, untouched by the tinsel and show of the world.



Solomon uses Ships to import Goods from all over the World,
making Jerusalem the Commercial Capital,
instead of the Spiritual Capital of the World.

(Young Folks' Bible, 1889)

19. In the Thoroughfares of Travel

Review and Herald, January 25, 1906

God's Purpose

UPON the Israelites God bestowed great privileges, blessing them richly from His abundant goodness. He looked for them to honor Him by revealing the principles of His kingdom.

In the midst of a fallen, wicked people—a world in which violence and crime, greed, oppression, and the most corrupt practices were indulged without restraint—the Israelites were to represent the character of God. In the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they were to show that:

Psalm 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man.

The Lord's vineyard, His own chosen possession, was planted in the land of Canaan. And as the tower in the vineyard, God placed in the midst of the land His holy temple. In the temple His glory dwelt in the holy Shekinah above the mercy-seat.

The Geographic Advantage Misused

In the days of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel extended

from Hamath on the northward, to the border of Egypt on the southward, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River. Through this territory ran many natural highways of the world's commerce. Caravans were constantly passing to and from distant lands. Thus there was given Solomon and his people a most wonderful opportunity to reveal the character of the true God so clearly that men of all nations would be taught to reverence and obey the King of kings.

To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world.

But Solomon lost sight of God's high and holy purpose. He failed of improving the magnificent opportunities for enlightening the representatives of all nations who were continually passing through his territory and tarrying for rest at the principal cities. A selfish use was made of the strategic points along the well-traveled highways.

Solomon sought to strengthen his position by building fortified cities at the gateways of commerce. He rebuilt Gezer, near Joppa, and lying along the road between Egypt and Syria; Beth-horon, to the westward of Jerusalem, commanding the passes of the highway leading from the heart of Judea to Gezer and the seacoast; Megiddo, situated on the caravan road from Damascus to Egypt, and from Jerusalem to the northward; and:

2 Chronicles 8

⁴ ...Tadmor in the wilderness,

—along the route of caravans from the East. All these cities were strongly fortified.

The commercial advantages of an outlet at the head of the Red Sea were developed by the construction of...

1 Kings 9

²⁶ ...a navy of ships in Ezion-geber,...on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

Trained sailors from Tyre,

²⁷ ...with the servants of Solomon,

manned these vessels on voyages...

²⁸ ...to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold,

1 Kings 10

¹¹ ...[and] great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

The missionary spirit that God had implanted in the heart of Solomon and in the hearts of many true Israelites, was rapidly supplanted by a spirit of commercialism. The precious opportunities afforded by contact with many nations, were misused for personal aggrandizement.

The revenues of the king and of many of his subjects were greatly increased, but at what a cost! Because of the cupidity and the short-sightedness of those to whom had been entrusted the oracles of God, the countless multitudes that thronged the thoroughfares of travel were allowed to remain in ignorance of the true God.

Our Opportunity

To the church of today God has given the care of His vineyard. The workers of today are called to do the work that Israel failed of doing. The salvation of God must be made known to all the people living on the face of the earth. God's glory is to be revealed, His word established, and Christ's kingdom set up to give deliverance to the world. His followers are now to arise and shine.

Those who, in response to the call of the hour, have entered

the service of the Master Workman, may well study His methods of labor. During His earthly ministry, our Saviour took advantage of the opportunities to be found along the great thoroughfares of travel. It was at Capernaum that Jesus dwelt in the intervals of His journeys to and fro, and it came to be known as...

Matthew 9

¹ ...His own city.

This city was well adapted to be the center of the Saviour's work. Being on the highway from Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt, and to the Mediterranean Sea, it was a great thoroughfare of travel. People from many lands passed through the city, or tarried for rest on their journeyings to and fro. Here Jesus could meet all nations and all ranks, the rich and great as well as the poor and lowly, and His lessons would be carried to other countries and into many households. Investigation of the prophecies would thus be excited, attention would be directed to the Saviour, and His mission would be brought before the world.

In these days of travel, the opportunities for coming in contact with men and women of all classes and of many nationalities, are much greater than in the days of Israel. The thoroughfares of travel have multiplied a thousandfold. God has wonderfully prepared the way. The agency of the printing-press, with its manifold facilities, is at our command. Bibles and publications in many languages setting forth the truth for this time, are at our hand, and can be swiftly carried to every part of the world.

We are to give the last warning of God to men, and what should be our earnestness in studying the Bible, and our zeal in spreading the light!

- Let every soul who has received the divine illumination, seek to impart it.

- Let the workers go from house to house, opening the Bible to the people, circulating the publications, telling others of the light that has blessed their own souls.
- Let literature be distributed judiciously on the trains, in the street, on the great ships that ply the seas, and through the mails.

Christians who are living in the great centers of commerce and travel have special opportunities. The believers in these cities can work for God in the neighborhood of their homes. They are to labor quietly and in humility, carrying with them wherever they go the atmosphere of heaven. If they keep self out of sight, pointing always to Christ, their influence will be felt.

The truth is not to be hidden in the corners of the earth. It must be made known; it must shine in our large cities. Like Christ, the messengers of the Most High today must take their position in the great thoroughfares of travel, where they can meet people from all parts of the world. Like Him, they are to give the true light; they are to sow the gospel seed; they are to rescue truth from its companionship with error, and present it in its original simplicity and clearness, so that men may comprehend it. The third angel's message is a worldwide message. It is to be given to all cities, to all villages; it is to be proclaimed in the highways and the byways.

In the world-renowned health resorts and centers of tourist-traffic, crowded with many thousands of seekers after health and pleasure, there should be stationed ministers and canvassers capable of arresting the attention of the multitudes. Let these workers watch their chance to present the message for this time, and hold meetings as they have opportunity. Let them be quick to seize opportunities to speak to the people. Accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, let them meet the people with the message borne by John the Baptist:

Matthew 3

² Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The word of God is to be presented with clearness and power, that those who have ears to hear, may hear the truth. Thus the gospel of present truth will be placed in the way of those who know it not, and will be accepted by not a few, and carried by them to their own homes in all parts of the earth.

A great work is to be done, and those who know the truth should now make mighty intercession for help. The love of Christ must fill their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. As they consecrate themselves to God, a convincing power will attend their efforts to present the truth to others.

We must no longer sleep on Satan's enchanted ground, but call into requisition all our resources, avail ourselves of every facility with which Providence has furnished us. The last warning is to be proclaimed...

Revelation 10

¹¹ ...before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

And the promise is given,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Isaiah 60

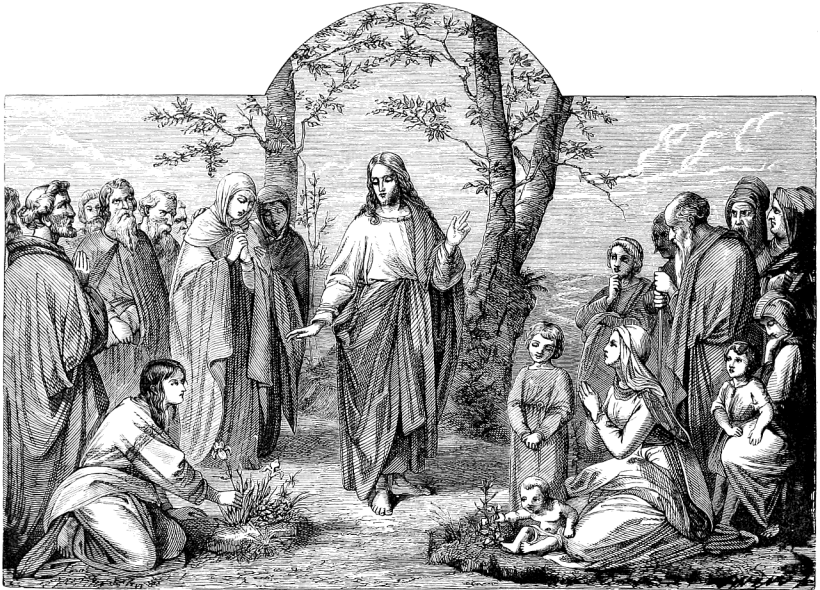
¹ Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you.

³ And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

¹⁵ I will make you an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

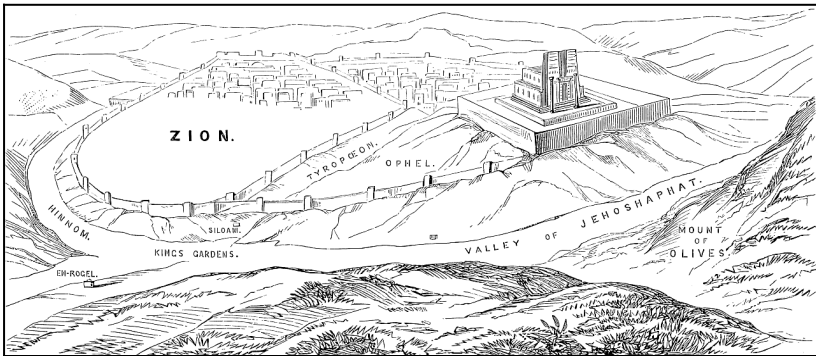
²¹ Your people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.



Parable of the Lilies – *Matthew 6:29*

“Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

(*Life of Jesus Christ for the Young*, v3, 1880)



Plan of Jerusalem in the Time of Solomon.
It's geographical location was at the crossroads
between Africa, Asia, and Europe,
thus making it an ideal missionary center to spread
the knowledge of the truth and love of God.
(Handbook of Bible Geography, 1871)



Jesus and His Disciples stand at the Gate of Jerusalem.
Eventually, Jesus had to turn away from the city,
as it would not fulfil its missionary purpose.
Instead, He sent His disciples into all the world,
to preach the Gospel of Peace.
(Pictorial New Testament, 1881)

20. Be Separate

Review and Herald, February 1, 1906

PLACED at the head of a nation that had been set as a light to the surrounding nations, Solomon might have brought great glory to the Lord of the universe by a life of obedience. He might have encouraged God's people to shun the evils that were practiced in the surrounding nations. He might have used his God-given wisdom and power of influence in organizing and directing a great missionary movement for the enlightenment of those who were ignorant of God and of His truth. Thus multitudes might have been won to an allegiance to the King of kings.

Satan well knew the results that would attend obedience, and during the earlier years of Solomon's reign,—years glorious because of the wisdom, the beneficence, and the uprightness of the king,—he sought to bring in influences that would insidiously undermine Solomon's loyalty to principle, and cause him to separate from God. And that the enemy was successful in this effort, we know from the record:

1 Kings 3

¹ Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David.

In forming an alliance with a heathen nation, and sealing the compact by marriage with an idolatrous princess, Solomon rashly disregarded the wise provisions that God had made for maintaining the purity of His people. The hope that his Egyptian wife might be converted, was but a feeble excuse for the sin. In violation of a direct command to remain separate from other nations, the king united his strength with the arm of flesh.

For a time, God in His compassionate mercy overruled this terrible mistake. Solomon's wife was converted; and the king,

by a wise course, might have done much to check the evil forces that his imprudence had set in operation. But Solomon began to lose sight of the Source of his power and glory. Inclination gained the ascendancy over reason. As his self-confidence increased, he sought to carry out the Lord's purpose in his own way.

He reasoned that political and commercial alliances with the surrounding nations would bring them to a knowledge of the true God; and so he entered into unholy alliance with nation after nation. Often these alliances were sealed by marriage with heathen princesses. The commands of Jehovah were set aside for the customs of the surrounding nations.

During the years of Solomon's apostasy, the spiritual decline of Israel was rapid. How could it have been otherwise, when their king united with satanic agencies? Through these agencies the enemy worked to confuse the minds of the people in regard to true and false worship. They became an easy prey.

It came to be a common practice to intermarry with the heathen. The Israelites rapidly lost their abhorrence of idolatry. Heathen customs were introduced. Idolatrous mothers brought their children up to observe heathen rites. The Hebrew faith was fast becoming a mixture of confused ideas.

Commerce with other nations brought the Israelites into intimate contact with those who had no love for God, and their own love for Him was greatly lessened. Their keen sense of the high and holy character of God was deadened. Refusing to follow in the path of obedience, they transferred their allegiance to Satan.

The enemy rejoiced in his success in effacing the divine image from the minds of the people that God had chosen as His representatives. Through intermarriage with idolaters and constant association with them, Satan brought about that for which he had long been working,—a national apostasy.

Unscriptural Alliances

The Lord desires His servants to preserve their holy and peculiar character.

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁴ Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,

–this is His command;

¹⁴ ...for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?

¹⁵ And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel?

¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

Never was there a time in earth's history when this warning was more appropriate than at the present time. Many professed Christians think, like Solomon, that they may unite with the ungodly, because their influence over those who are in the wrong will be beneficial; but too often they themselves, entrapped and overcome, yield their sacred faith, sacrifice principle, and separate themselves from God. One false step leads to another, till at last they place themselves where they cannot hope to break the chains that bind them.

Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions. Take heed, lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal. Worldly associations tend to place obstructions in the way of your service to God, and many souls are ruined by unhappy unions, either business or matrimonial, with those who can never elevate or ennoble.

Never should God's people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God. But too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed. Because of this, many men and women are without hope and without God in the world. Their noble aspirations are dead; by a chain of circumstances they are held in Satan's net.

Those who are ruled by passion and impulse will have a bitter harvest to reap in this life, and their course may result in the loss of their souls.

Institutional Work

Those who are placed in charge of the Lord's institutions are in need of much of the strength and grace and keeping power of God, that they shall not walk contrary to the sacred principles of the truth. Many, many are very dull of comprehension in regard to their obligation to preserve the truth in its purity, uncontaminated by one vestige of error. Their danger is in holding the truth in light esteem, thus leaving upon minds the impression that it is of little consequence what we believe, if, by carrying out plans of human devising, we can exalt ourselves before the world as holding a superior position, as occupying the highest seat.

God calls for men whose hearts are as true as steel, and who will stand steadfast in integrity, undaunted by circumstances. He calls for men who will remain separate from the enemies of the truth. He calls for men who will not dare to resort to the arm of flesh by entering into partnership with worldlings in order to secure means for advancing His work—even for the building of institutions.

Solomon, by his alliances with unbelievers, secured an abundance of gold and silver, but his prosperity proved his ruin. Men today are no wiser than he, and they are as prone to yield to the influences that caused his downfall.

For thousands of years Satan has been gaining an experience in learning how to deceive; and to those who live in this age he comes with almost overwhelming power. Our only safety is found in obedience to God's Word, which has been given us as a sure guide and counselor. God's people today are to keep themselves distinct and separate from the world, its spirit, and its influences.

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁷ Come out from among them, and be separate.

Shall we hear the voice of God and obey, or shall we make halfway work of the matter, and try to serve God and Mammon? There is earnest work before each one of us. Right thoughts, pure and holy purposes, do not come to us naturally. We shall have to strive for them.

In all our institutions, our publishing houses and colleges and sanitariums, pure and holy principles must take root. If our institutions are what God designs they should be, those connected with them will not pattern after worldly institutions. They will stand as peculiar, governed and controlled by the Bible standard. They will not come into harmony with the principles of the world in order to gain patronage. No motives will have sufficient force to move them from the straight line of duty.

Those who are under the control of the Spirit of God will not seek their own pleasure or amusement. If Christ presides in the hearts of the members of His church, they will answer to the call,

¹⁷ Come out from among them, and be separate.

Revelation 18

⁴ Be not partakers of her sins.

God would have us learn the solemn lesson that we are working out our own destiny. The characters we form in this life decide whether or not we are fitted to live through the

eternal ages. No man can with safety attempt to serve both God and Mammon.

God is fully able to keep us in the world, but not of the world. His love is not uncertain and fluctuating. Ever He watches over His children with a care that is measureless and everlasting. But He requires us to give Him our undivided allegiance.

Matthew 6

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You can not serve God and Mammon.

Solomon was endowed with wonderful wisdom; but the world drew him away from God. We need to guard our souls with all diligence, lest the cares and the attractions of the world absorb the time that should be given to eternal things. God warned Solomon of his danger, and today He warns us not to imperil our souls by affinity with the world.

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁷ Come out from among them, [He pleads,] and be separate,...and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty.

21. Godly Sorrow Works Repentance

Review and Herald, February 8, 1906

TWICE during Solomon's reign the Lord had appeared to him with words of approval and of counsel. Soon after he ascended the throne, the king passed through a remarkable experience at Gibeon, where the Lord, after promising him wisdom, riches, and honor, admonished him to remain obedient and humble.

1 Kings 3

¹⁴ Walk in my ways, [He counseled the youthful king,] to keep my statutes and my commandments.

And after the dedication of the temple,

1 Kings 9

² The Lord appeared to Solomon the second time,

—and exhorted him to remain true to his sacred trust:

⁴ Walk before me, [the Lord pleaded,] as David your father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you.

As the reward of obedience, the Lord declared,

⁵ I will establish the throne of your kingdom upon Israel forever, as I promised to David your father, saying, There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel.

Plain are these admonitions, wonderful are these promises of prosperity on condition of obedience; and yet of him who in circumstances, in character, and in life, seemed favored above all others, it is recorded that:

1 Kings 11

⁹ ...his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

¹⁰ And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

Solomon's apostasy was so complete, his heart became so hardened in transgression, that his case seemed well-nigh hopeless. But the Lord in His infinite mercy forsook him not. By terrible judgments and by words of stern rebuke He sought to arouse the king to a realization of the sinfulness of sin. God's protecting care was removed, and adversaries were permitted to harass and weaken him.

1 Kings 11

¹⁴ The Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite.

²³ And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon,...

²⁴ ...captain over a band,...

²⁵ ...[who] abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

²⁶ And Jeroboam, ...Solomon's servant,...

²⁷ ...a mighty man of valor,...

²⁶ ...even he lifted up his hand against the king.

God spoke to Solomon not only by means of these judgments, but also through a prophet, who delivered the startling message:

1 Kings 11

¹¹ Forasmuch as this is done of you, and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely rend the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.

¹² Notwithstanding in your days I will not do it for David your father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of your son.

When Solomon heard this terrible denunciation, he awoke as from a dream. His folly began to dawn upon him in its true light. By his own bitter experience, he had learned the emptiness of a life that seeks in earthly things its highest good. He had erected altars to heathen gods, only to learn how vain is their promise of rest to the soul.

And now, in his later years, Solomon returned to drink at the fountain of life. For him at last the discipline of suffering

accomplished its work.

The Book of Ecclesiastes

The history of the king's wasted years, with their lessons of warning, he by the Spirit of inspiration recorded for after generations. And thus, although the seed of his sowing was reaped by his people in harvests of evil, the life-work of Solomon was not wholly lost.

Chastened, broken in spirit, trusting not in his own power, but in the power of Him that is "higher than the highest," he acknowledged that:

Ecclesiastes 9

³ ...the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart.

Whenever left to their own devices, he confessed,

Ecclesiastes 7

²⁹ ...they have sought out many inventions.

And,

Ecclesiastes 8

¹¹ Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Through his own experience Solomon learned that,

¹² Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him:

¹³ But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he fears not before God.

In meekness and lowliness Solomon...

Ecclesiastes 12

⁹ ...taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

¹⁰ [He] sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

¹¹ The words of the wise, [he declared,] are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

¹² And further, by these, my son, be admonished.

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

¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

A Touching Appeal

The true penitent does not put his past sins from his remembrance. He does not, as soon as he has obtained peace, grow unconcerned in regard to the mistakes he has made. He thinks of how many have been led into evil by his wrong course, and he tries in every possible way to help those whom he has led into false paths.

The clearer the light that he has entered into by returning to the Lord, the stronger his desire to set the feet of others in the right way. He does not gloss over his wayward course, making his wrong a light thing, but lifts the danger-signal, that others may take warning. He walks humbly and carefully, his eyes fixed on his Leader.

Solomon's later writings reveal that he realized the wickedness of his course, and sought to warn those who were in danger of going astray. With sorrow and shame he confessed that in the prime of manhood, when he should have found in God his comfort, his support, his life, he had lost sight of the rich experience of his youth and of the signal blessings bestowed at the time of the dedication of the temple.

How sad the confession recorded in *Ecclesiastes*! For a time, he had turned from the light of heaven and the wisdom of God; he had confounded idolatry with religion. After the king repented, and returned to his allegiance to God, he made a

special appeal to those who were still in the earlier years of life. His yearning desire to save others from the bitter experience through which he had passed, is clearly revealed in this touching appeal:

Ecclesiastes 11

⁷ Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.

⁸ Yea, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that comes is vanity.

⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes: but know, that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

¹⁰ Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh: for youth and the prime of life are vanity,

—they soon pass away.

Ecclesiastes 12

¹ Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, or ever the evil days come, And the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them;

² Or ever the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, be darkened, And the clouds return after the rain:

³ In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

⁴ And the doors shall be shut in the street; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

⁵ Yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors shall be in the way: and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and the caper-berry shall burst: because man goes to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

⁶ Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel

broken at the cistern;

⁷ And the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it.

The Hope of the Penitent

Christ, the gift of the Father to our world, is the hope and efficiency of the penitent. In Him all hopes of eternal life center. He is our advocate in the heavenly courts. He is interceding in our behalf. Without His grace, no progress in spiritual grace can be made. The penitent cannot take one step in sincerity, in truthfulness, in righteousness, without the help of the Lord Jesus. For this help let us most earnestly plead.

Through no power of his own could Solomon have broken from the snare of Satan. By no human means could he have been cleansed from the defilement of sin. Without divine help, he would have sunk lower and still lower. Only by coming to Jesus in humility and contrition, with heartfelt confession of sin; only by making a full surrender; only through the merits of Christ's righteousness, could he hope to be freed from the snare of the enemy, and be cleansed.

2 Corinthians 7

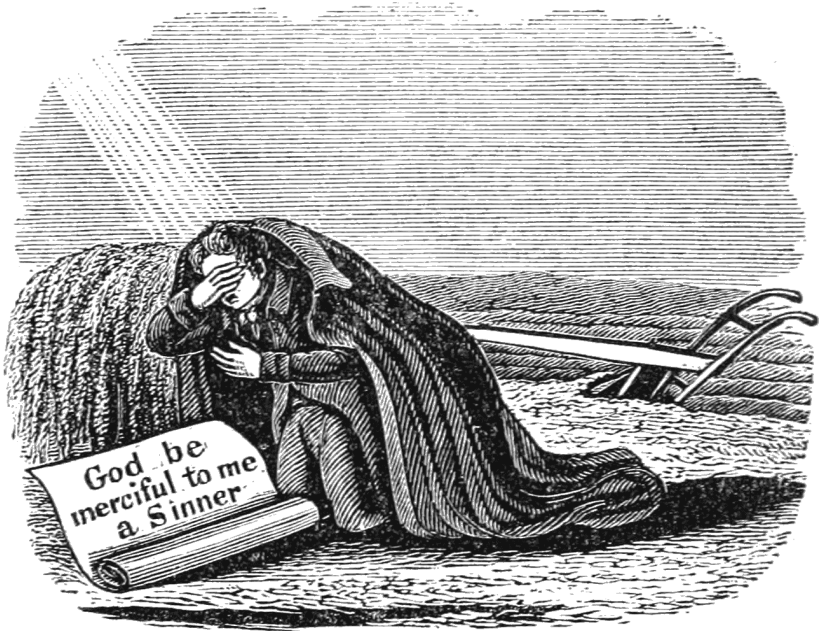
¹⁰ Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of.

True repentance can never be mistaken. It bears fruit that testifies to its own genuineness. Self is subdued; Christ is magnified.

The words and deeds of the truly penitent bear witness that theirs is a repentance that needs not to be repented of. They will offer earnest petitions for fresh grace, for new supplies of strength, for the efficiency and power of the Holy Spirit, promised to all who ask in faith.

The truly penitent soul will reach high attainments of holiness, peace, and joy. But he will never forget that he owes it

all to the Saviour. A sense of deep humiliation and contrition will fill his heart, and he will bow low before God.



The Spirit of God working Repentance in the Soul
(Religious Allegories, 1848)

On bended knees, replete with godly grief,
See, where the mourner kneels to seek relief;
No, "God I thank you," freezes on his tongue,
For works of merit that to him belong:
Deep in his soul conviction's plowshare rings,
And to the surface his corruption brings;
He loathes himself, in lowest dust he lies,
And all-abased, "Unclean, unclean," he cries.
From his full heart pours forth the gushing plea,
"God of the lost, be merciful to me!"
The light of life descends in heavenly rays,
And angels shout, and sing, "Behold, he prays."



Solomon writing Ecclesiastes in his old age
(Dore, Bible Stories and Scenes, 1883)

22. The Power of Influence

Review and Herald, February 15, 1906

Solomon's Unholy Shrines

FOR hundreds of years after the death of Solomon, a strange and melancholy sight could be seen opposite Mount Moriah. Crowning the eminence of the Mount of Olives, and peering above the groves of myrtle and olive trees, were imposing piles of buildings, for the idolatrous worship of gigantic, unseemly images of wood and stone.

Many a devout stranger, seeing these shrines for the first time, was led to inquire,

“How came these buildings and idols on the opposite side of the Jehoshaphat ravine, thus impiously confronting the temple of God?”

The truthful answer must be given:

“The builder was Solomon. He whom God so wonderfully honored, failed to give God the glory, and finally was persuaded by his heathen wives to build these altars for idol worship.”

Little did Solomon think when he built the unholy shrines on the hill before Jerusalem, that these evidences of his apostasy would remain from generation to generation, to testify against him. Notwithstanding his repentance, the evil that he did lived after him, witnessing to the terrible fall of the greatest and wisest of kings.

More than three centuries later, Josiah, the youthful reformer, in his religious zeal demolished these buildings and all the images of Ashtoreth and Chemosh and Moloch. Many of the broken fragments rolled down the channel of the Kedron, but great masses of ruins remained.

Even as late as the days of Christ, the ruins on the “Mount

of Offense,” as the place was called by many of the true-hearted of Israel, might still be seen. Could Solomon, when rearing these idolatrous shrines, have looked into the future, how he would have started back in horror to think of the sad testimony they would bear to the Messiah!

An Irreversible Effect

By a life of loyalty and integrity, Solomon could have done much to preserve God’s people from backsliding. His early piety and his great wisdom, the power and the prosperity that attended his reign, the respect and the honor shown the kingdom of Israel by the surrounding nations,—all these favorable conditions combined to increase greatly the influence wielded by the king.

Had he remained sincere, earnest, and true, had no taint of apostasy marred his life, he might have exerted a most powerful influence for good on the lives of others. But he swerved from his allegiance to God; and the nation, of which he had been the pride, followed his leading. So powerful was his influence, that through his apostasy he became their seducer.

Solomon’s repentance was sincere, but the harm that his example of evil-doing had done the people, could not well be remedied. In the anguish of bitter reflection on the evil influence of his sinful course, he was constrained to declare:

Ecclesiastes 9

¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroys much good.

Ecclesiastes 10

⁵ There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceeds from the ruler:

⁶ Folly is set in great dignity.

¹ Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor: so does a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.

During the king's apostasy, there were faithful men who remained true to their trust, maintaining their allegiance to purity and loyalty. Many, however, were led astray by his example, and the forces of evil that were set in operation as the result of the introduction of idolatry and worldly practices, could not easily be stayed by the penitent king after his return to God. His influence for good was broken. Many hesitated to place full confidence in his leadership.

How sad the thought that the far-reaching influence of Solomon's apostasy could never be fully counteracted! The king confessed his sins, and wrote out, for the benefit of after generations, a record of his folly and repentance; but he could never hope to destroy the baleful influence of his evil deeds. Emboldened by his apostasy, many continued to do evil, and evil only. And in the downward course of many of the rulers that followed him, may be traced the sad influence of the prostitution of his God-given powers.

A Savor of Death or Life

Among the manifold lessons that we may learn from Solomon's life, none are more plainly taught than the power of influence for good or for ill. However contracted may be one's sphere, he exerts an influence. That our influence should be a savor of death unto death, is a fearful thought, yet this is possible. One soul misled—*forfeiting eternal bliss*—who can estimate the loss! And yet one rash act, one thoughtless word, on our part, may exert so deep an influence on the life of another that it will prove the ruin of his soul! One blemish on the character may turn many away from Christ.

God calls for strong, brave Christians, whose influence is always exerted for the right. His cause needs men and women whose every word and act draws those around them to Christ, binding them to Him by the persuasive force of loving service. Men and women who commune with God, who, because they cooperate with the heavenly angels, are surrounded by a holy

influence, are needed at this time.

It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of our influence. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. If we realize our helplessness, and our need of divine power, we shall not trust to ourselves.

We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our Heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand.

When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.

23. Steadfast Unto the End

Review and Herald, February 22, 1906

No Safety in Human Strength

THE life of Solomon is full of warning, not only to the youth, but to those of mature years and to the aged, those who are descending the hill of life and facing the western sun.

We see and hear of unsteadiness in youth,—the young wavering between right and wrong, and the current of evil passions proving too strong for them. But we do not look for unsteadiness and unfaithfulness in those of mature years; we expect the character to be established, the principles to be firmly rooted. In many cases this is so, but there are exceptions, as with Solomon.

1 Corinthians 10

¹² Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

When Solomon should have been in character as a sturdy oak, he fell from his steadfastness under the power of temptation. When his strength should have been the firmest, he was found the weakest of men.

From such examples as this we should learn that watchfulness and prayer are the only safety for either young or old. A man is not one whit the safer because he occupies an exalted position, and has been given great privileges. Those who for many years have enjoyed a genuine Christian experience, are, nevertheless, still exposed to Satan's attacks, and are liable to fall into grievous sins.

In the battle with inward corruptions and outward temptations, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. His failure reveals to us that, whatever a man's intellectual qualities may be, and however faithfully he may have served the Lord in past years, he can never with safety venture to

trust in his own wisdom and integrity.

Whenever man accomplishes anything in spiritual or temporal lines, he should bear in mind that he does it only through the grace and cooperation of his Maker. When left to himself, man reveals his natural temperament; selfishness appears; human wisdom occupies the throne of the heart.

But those who make God their efficiency, realize their own weakness, and the Lord supplies them with His wisdom. As day by day they depend upon God, carrying out His will with humility and whole-heartedness and strictest integrity, they increase in knowledge and ability. By willing obedience they show reverence and honor to God, and are honored by Him.

Satan's Way: Self-Exaltation

From the beginning there has been opposition between the forces of good and evil. God declares,

Genesis 3

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Man vainly attempted to exalt himself by following his own way, in harmony with Satan's temptation, and in opposition to the will of God. He thus gained a knowledge of evil, but he gained it at the cost of his loyalty; and his disobedience opened the flood-gates of woe upon our world.

Ever since, men have been trying to exalt themselves by the same means. When will they learn that the only way to true exaltation is the path of obedience? Men's plans may seem to them to be exceedingly wise, but there is safety for those only who walk in accordance with a "Thus says the Lord."

The originator of evil, Satan comes with stealthy tread, presenting plausible theories to the people of God, telling them that if they do this or that, even though it may be question-

able, they will gain great advantage, and the end will justify the means. He tries to persuade them that the eating of the forbidden fruit will be to them a source of great good. When men listen to him, the spiritual insight is dimmed, and the power of distinguishing between good and evil is lost.

God's Ways the Only Safe Course

Nothing has been so difficult for the people of God to learn as loyalty to the pure, elevated, unselfish principles of heaven. And as a result, sin and suffering make up a large part of their history. The words spoken to Daniel by the angel are positive:

Daniel 12

¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand.

Satan, as a strong man armed, is continually on the watch, seeking to bring in questionable methods, and thereby mar the work of God. He would be well pleased to eclipse the brightness of God's principles by the selfishness of the principles on which he works. If he possibly can, he will tarnish the pure gold of character. If he can place the false where the true should be, his object is gained.

Shall we give heed to the warning of Solomon's apostasy, and shun the first approach to those sins that overcame him who was called the wisest of men? In these days of peril, nothing but obedience will keep man from apostasy.

God has bestowed on man great light and many blessings. But unless this light and these blessings are received, they are no security against disobedience and apostasy. When those whom God has exalted to positions of high trust turn from Him to human wisdom, their light becomes darkness, and how great is that darkness! Their entrusted capabilities are a snare to them. They become an offense to God. There can be no mockery of God without the sure result.

Till the conflict is ended, there always will be a departing from God. Satan will so shape circumstances that unless we are kept by divine power, they will almost imperceptibly weaken the fortifications of the soul. We need to inquire at every step,

“Is this the way of the Lord?”

As long as life shall last, there is need of guarding the affections and the passions with a firm purpose. Not one moment can we be secure only as we are relying upon God, the life hid with Christ in God. The safeguards of our purity must be watchfulness and prayer. We must do nothing to lower the standard of our religious principles.

Do Not Despair

Notwithstanding the warnings that God has given in His Word and through His messengers, many have closed their eyes to danger, and have gone on in their own way, infatuated, deluded by Satan, until they fall under his temptations. Then they abandon themselves to despair.

This was the history of Solomon. But even for him there was help. He truly repented of his course of sin, and found hope. Let none venture into sin as he did, in the hope that they, too, may recover themselves. Sin can be indulged only at the peril of infinite loss.

All who enter the city of God, enter there through the strait gate,—through agonizing effort. But none who have fallen need give themselves up to despair. Aged men, once honored of God, may have defiled their souls, sacrificing virtue on the altar of lust; but there is still hope for them if they repent, forsake sin, and turn to God. He who has so graciously declared,

Revelation 2

¹⁰ Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life,

—has also inspired the invitation,

Isaiah 55

⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

God hates sin, but He loves the penitent, and declares,

Hosea 14

⁴ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.

Jeremiah 9

²³ Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

²⁴ But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight.

Psalms 24

³ Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?

⁴ He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Psalms 15

¹ Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill?

² He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.

Matthew 5

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁸ My beloved brethren, [the apostle Paul wrote,] be steadfast, unmovable.

God desires us to...

Hebrews 3

¹⁴ ...hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the

end.

Jude

²⁴ Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

Appendix

The Apostasy of Solomon

The Health Reformer, 1878

1. The Mount of Offense

The Health Reformer, April 1, 1878

IN THE DAYS of Christ there were still to be seen opposite the Kidron, on the southern eminence of the Mount of Olives, huge stones, and relics of heathen temples and altars. This debris was in sight of the temple of God, and seemed to defiantly confront it. King Solomon had built those heathen sanctuaries during the time of his departure from God, and though they had subsequently been destroyed, their remnants were still remaining as memorials of his apostasy. During Josiah's reign, unsightly blocks of wood and stone were to be seen peering through the myrtle and olive groves.

Josiah had read to priests and people the book of the law found in the side of the ark in the house of God. His sensitive conscience was deeply stirred as he saw how far the people had departed from the requirements of the covenant they had made with God. He saw that they were indulging appetite to a fearful extent, and perverting their senses by the use of wine. Men in sacred offices were frequently incapacitated for the duties of their positions, because of their indulgence in wine.

Appetite and passion were fast gaining the ascendancy over the reason and judgment of the people, till they could not discern that the retribution of God would follow upon their corrupt course. Josiah, the youthful reformer, in the fear of God demolished the profane sanctuaries and hideous idols built for heathen worship, and the altars reared for sacrifices to heathen deities. Yet there were still to be seen in Christ's time the memorials of the sad apostasy of the king of Israel and his people.

Solomon, at the age of eighteen years, commenced his reign upon the throne of his father, David. He felt his need of strength from God. He asked for it humbly, and it was given to him. When he, at this early age, assumed the reins of gov-

ernment, he was cautious and distrustful of himself. He placed great confidence in the men who had wisely sustained his father, and deferred to their counsel. He did not feel competent to fill so responsible a position without the aid of wiser and more experienced heads.

God perceived the desire of Solomon to walk with integrity before Him, and to deal justly with His people, and, in a dream, asked what He should give him. And Solomon, after recounting the goodness of God to him, and to his father David, answered the Lord, saying,

1 Kings 3

⁷ I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

⁸ And your servant is in the midst of your people which You have chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

⁹ Give therefore your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this your so great a people?

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's answer, because, instead of asking any personal favor for himself, he asked for power to guide His people aright. God said unto Solomon,

¹² Behold, I have done according to your words: lo, I have given you a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like you before you, neither after you shall any arise like unto you.

¹³ And I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto you all your days.

¹⁴ And if you will walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as your father David did walk, then I will lengthen your days.

Solomon's youth was illustrious, because he was connected with Heaven, and made God his dependence and his strength. God had called him Jedidiah, which, interpreted, means *The Beloved of God*. He had been the pride and hope of his father,

and well beloved in the sight of his mother. He had been surrounded by every worldly advantage that could improve his education and increase his wisdom.

But, on the other hand, the corruption of court life was calculated to lead him to love amusement and the gratification of his appetite. He never felt the want of means by which to gratify his desires, and never had need to exercise self-denial.

Notwithstanding all these objectionable surroundings, the character of Solomon was preserved in purity during his youth. God's angel could talk with him in the night season; and the divine promise to give him understanding and judgment, and to fully qualify him for his responsible work, was faithfully kept.

In the history of Solomon we have the assurance that God will do great things for those who love Him, who are obedient to His commandments, and trust in Him as their surety and strength.

Many of our youth suffer shipwreck in the dangerous voyage of life, because they are self-confident and presumptuous. They follow their inclinations, and are allured by amusements, and indulgence of appetite, till habits are formed which become shackles, impossible for them to break, and which drag them down to ruin. Their once bright hopes and prospects are wrecked, and they are held in the veriest bondage to Satan.

If the youth of our day would, like young King Solomon, feel their need of heavenly wisdom, and seek to develop and strengthen their higher faculties, and consecrate them to the service of God, their lives would show great and noble results, and bring pure and holy happiness to themselves and many others.

Those who do not make God their trust, but indulge their animal passions and appetites, are gradually overcome entirely by their evil propensities: their moral powers become

enfeebled; they are unable to discriminate between right and wrong; and Satan takes advantage of this to lead them into carrying forward his work. Thus God is robbed of the service due him, and society is deprived of the benefits which would follow the proper use of the endowments which God has bestowed upon them to use for His glory. This debasement of the higher qualities of the mind to the slavery of appetite and passion is a bondage more to be dreaded than prisons and fetters.

God made man in His own image for high and noble purposes, such as are the delight of angels. If he connects with Heaven, the wisdom of Heaven will be given him, as in the case of Solomon in the years of his youth and purity. Continual dependence upon God, and obedience to Him, will prevent man from imitating the example of Solomon in his mature years, when evil associates and unsanctified connections led him into apostasy and ruin.

If the youth are connected with Heaven they will be able to discern evil from good, and to penetrate the specious appearance with which vice hides its hideousness. They will carefully consider every step they take, realizing that it can never be retraced, and that when they are once led astray by the deceitful devices of sin, they are weakened in principle, and are in double danger of again becoming the victims of temptation.

The thought of our responsibility to God should be the strongest safeguard to finite minds. It is a solemn thought that our individual being is inseparably bound to the infinite God. Christ, our Saviour, has, by the sacrifice of His own life, brought to man, who was feeble in moral power, divine strength, that, through His name and merits, man might become, even in this life, little less than the angels of God. Whatever course we may choose to pursue, so long as we possess our reason we can never cease to be responsible to God for our words and deeds.

It is the basest ingratitude to accept the favors and blessings of God with the indifference of dumb brutes, without making any acknowledgment of His goodness, or meeting the claims He has upon us. Our faculties are given us to be used in the work of God; and if we answer this purpose of our existence, still more important work will be intrusted to us; we shall be co-laborers with the Creator of the universe, ambassadors for Christ. We shall be elevated above the taint of selfishness and moral defilement; and the thought that we are living for a grand and noble purpose, fulfilling the design of our being, will make us earnest, cheerful, and strong under all discouragements and difficulties.

The mental and moral powers of Solomon in his early life were unequaled by those of any king that ever sat upon an earthly throne. His wise rule was the praise of all nations; and his purity and goodness enshrined him in the hearts of all his people. The fear of the Lord, and a right connection with Him, does not disqualify men for dealing with people of different minds and temperaments, but, on the other hand, does much toward qualifying them for the most important posts of responsibility in this life.

God was glorified through Solomon, and He loved him, and favored His servant with the highest prosperity. His dominion extended from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt. He built a magnificent temple for God. He hearkened to the word of the Lord, and was so closely connected with Him that the Lord gave him all the directions for building His temple.

Solomon, under all his honors, walked wisely and firmly in the counsels of God for a considerable time; but he was overcome at length by temptations that came through his prosperity. He had lived luxuriously from his youth. His appetite had been gratified with the most delicate and expensive dainties. The effects of this luxurious living, and the free use of wine, finally clouded his intellect, and caused him to depart from

God. He entered into rash and sinful marriage relations with idolatrous women.

This was contrary to the special directions of God, who had forbidden the Hebrews to intermarry with the heathen nations around them, lest their wives, having been reared in idolatry, should draw the hearts of the people away from the living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and they themselves should become worshippers of idols.¹² If they should thus separate from God, their wisdom and power would be no higher than those of the heathen nations around them. God was ever leading His people upward and onward if they would submit to His guidance.

Solomon was ruined by intemperate habits; had it not been for them, his later years would have been as illustrious as his earlier ones. In following his own inclinations he separated himself from God. He commenced to follow his own judgment, step by step, seeking less and less the wisdom of God, which would have kept him pure. At length God was forgotten, and his only care was for pleasure and self-gratification.

After his unsanctified alliance with many idolatrous women, Solomon, in his desire to please them, was led away from God, and into idolatry, in proof of which the ruins we have mentioned still remained in the days of Christ.

In the decline of life, this great king plunged into sinful indulgences, and the grossest excesses. The wonderful intelligence and ability which had once been devoted to God, and to His glory, were now employed in devising means by which he could best gratify his carnal desires for pleasure and his own glory.

God did not, however, utterly forsake him who had once been His faithful servant. His moral powers, which had become benumbed through dissipation and lasciviousness, were

¹² *Deuteronomy* 7:1-6.

mercifully aroused; and in proof of his reformation, we have the relation of his experience given in his inspired writings.



Solomon adoring the Idols
(Burgkmair, Met Museum)



Solomon's Wives turned him to Idolatry

(Anon, 1 Kings 11)

These wives, however, were just an outward manifestation of his lusts.

The idolatrous gods were more in harmony with his lusts,
and so, worship of them came naturally.

2. His Idolatry and Dissipation

The Health Reformer, May 1, 1878

SOLOMON'S career of lasciviousness and unholy ambition was mercifully arrested by God, and he was effectually aroused from the iniquitous state into which he had fallen. He gave proofs of his reformation in the relation of his experience contained in his inspired writings.

The case of Solomon should convey to all a lesson of human weakness, and the constant need of divine aid. Solomon possessed great intelligence, and learning, riches, and honor; yet all this was insufficient to insure his integrity to God, to himself, and to his nation. After a youth and early manhood of unsurpassed promise, there followed a blotted history of deterioration and iniquity. It might well be said of him,

Isaiah 14

¹² How are you fallen...O Lucifer, son of the morning!

All the sins and excesses of Solomon can be traced to his great mistake in ceasing to rely upon God for wisdom, and to walk in humility before Him. Therefore he went not on from strength to strength, rising higher and higher in the perfection of an elevated character, but soon became the prey of temptation and carnal desires.

In the careless life which he entered upon, the blessings which God bestowed upon him were not improved to his glory, but were used to promote himself to an unexampled pinnacle of earthly grandeur. He surrendered the reins of self-control, laying them upon the neck of degrading passions.

- His conscience was violated,
- His manhood perverted, and
- His moral powers debased.

Gifted with wondrous genius and fortune, he nevertheless

lost his God and his happiness, and degenerated into the most miserable of men.

God had expressly forbidden his chosen people to marry with the idolatrous nations around them. God singled out Israel to make them the depository of the true faith, and he placed a high barrier between them and the rest of the world. Their safety depended upon keeping pure, and preserving their unity with each other and with God. Solomon, in contracting a marriage to please his fancy instead of seeking by his marriage to glorify God, separated himself from God, ruined himself, and nearly ruined his nation.

Solomon was extolled for his wisdom to the uttermost parts of the earth. He forgot that he was indebted to God for all his admirable qualifications, and came to look upon himself as being supreme in wisdom. He accordingly led out in enterprises without consulting the will of God; he established political alliances with pagan governments, and cultivated commercial intercourse with them.

But the advantages accruing therefrom were dearly purchased by the sacrifice of principle and the divine favor. Silver was brought from Tarshish, and gold from Ophir, to enrich the nation; but the fine gold of righteousness, the purity and strength of the nation, became corrupted by idolatry. Polygamy spread widely abroad, and domestic and social life were poisoned under the reign of this apostate king, who had been exalted so highly in point of privilege, and in the favor of God.

The original character of Solomon, as manifested during the earlier years of his reign, was bold, honorable, and judicious. Unparalleled success would have been his, had he continued to seek it in God. But there was everything about him to flatter his pride, and to indulge his appetite and passions. He was fond of wine, and his naturally clear intellect was often clouded by its effects. He was absolute monarch of Israel,

holding in his power the lives and property of his people over all his wide-spread domain. As his mental powers became enervated and degraded by his dissipation and lascivious habits, he grew hasty, fitful, and tyrannical. His fine sensibilities were blunted, and his conscience seared.

He who had prayed at the dedication of the temple that the hearts of his people might be undividedly given unto the Lord, had become a weak, fallen man. It was through his connection with idolaters that he became thus profligate and a despot. He maintained his unreasonable extravagance by heavy taxation, and lived in a state of unrivaled luxury and magnificence.

His giant mind degenerated, and he could be molded like wax by the unscrupulous persons who studied his caprices and played upon his weaknesses. He endeavored to unite heathenism with the faith of the Hebrews, mistaking his own unscrupulous license for liberality and merciful toleration.

But his attempt to unite darkness and light, in serving God and Baal, was like mingling ink and pure water. The water does not impart its crystal clearness to the ink, but, on the contrary, the ink gives its dark color to the water, making a murky compound. Purity cannot unite with impurity without being stained by the contact. This was the result developed by Solomon in his attempted union of God and Belial. He came finally to disregard all religions.

The lesson for us to learn from the history of this perverted life is the necessity of continual dependence upon the counsels of God; to carefully watch the tendency of our course, and to reform every habit calculated to draw us from God. It teaches us that great caution, watchfulness, and prayer are needed to keep undefiled the simplicity and purity of our faith. If we would rise to the highest moral excellence, and attain to the perfection of religious character, what discrimination should be used in the formation of friendships, and the

choice of a companion for life.

Many, like the king of Israel, follow their own carnal desires, and enter into unsanctified marriages. Many who started out in life with as fair and promising a morning, in their limited sphere, as Solomon had in his exalted station, through one false and irrevocable step in the marriage relation, lose their souls, and draw others down to ruin with them. As Solomon's wives turned his heart away from God to idolatry, so do frivolous companions, who have no depth of principle, turn away the hearts of those who were once noble and true, to vanity, corrupting pleasures, and downright vice.

Moral worth has a charm that wealth and outward attractions do not possess. The woman having the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, in the sight of God has an endowment of great value,¹³ before which the silver of Tarshish, and the gold of Ophir, are worthless. Solomon's bride, in all her glory, cannot compare with one of these household treasures.

Few realize that, in their lives, they constantly exert an influence which will be perpetuated for good or evil. Hundreds of years had elapsed since Solomon caused those idolatrous shrines to be erected on the mount; and, although Josiah had demolished them as places for worship, their debris, containing portions of architecture, were still remaining in the days of Christ. The prominence upon which those shrines had stood was called, by the true-hearted of Israel, the Mount of Offense.

Solomon, in his pride and enthusiasm, did not realize that in those pagan altars he was erecting a monument of his debased character, to endure for many generations, and to be commented on by thousands. In like manner, every act of life is great for good or evil; and it is only by acting upon principle in the tests of daily life, that we acquire power to stand firm

¹³ 1 Peter 3:4.

and faithful in the most dangerous and most difficult positions.

The marks of Solomon's apostasy lived ages after him. In the days of Christ, the worshipers in the temple could look, just opposite them, upon the Mount of Offense, and be reminded that the builder of their rich and glorious temple, the most renowned of all kings, had separated himself from God, and reared altars to heathen idols; that the mightiest ruler on earth had failed in ruling his own spirit. Solomon went down to death a repentant man; but his repentance and tears could not efface from the Mount of Offense the signs of his miserable departure from God. Ruined walls and broken pillars bore silent witness for a thousand years to the apostasy of the greatest king that ever sat upon an earthly throne.

The lesson of Solomon should be a warning to the youth, and to those of mature age who are tempted to deviate from principle in order to follow inclination. The great danger is in feeling that our own strength is sufficient, and not relying upon the strength of God. The youth who have been religiously educated are not safe from temptation; and unless the principles taught them are woven into the words and actions of their daily lives, and they fully comprehend the danger of contamination through evil associations, they are liable to make shipwreck of their lives.

Bewitching temptations to follow the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are to be met on every side. The exercise of firm principle, and strict control of the appetites and passions, in the name of Jesus the Conqueror, will alone carry us safely through life.



Solomon's Wives lead him into Idolatry
(La Sainte Bible, 1789)

3. The Lesson of His Life

The Health Reformer, June 1, 1878

THE book of *Ecclesiastes* was written by Solomon in his old age, after he had fully proven that all the pleasures earth is able to give are empty and unsatisfying. He there shows how impossible it is for the vanities of the world to meet the longings of the soul. His conclusion is that it is wisdom to enjoy with gratitude the good gifts of God, and to do right;¹⁴ for all our works will be brought into judgment.¹⁵

Solomon's autobiography is a mournful one. He gives us the history of his search for happiness. He engaged in intellectual pursuits; he gratified his love for pleasure; he carried out his schemes of commercial enterprise. He was surrounded by the fascinating splendor of court life. All that the carnal heart could desire was at his command; yet he sums up his experience in this sad record:

Ecclesiastes 1

¹⁴ I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

¹⁵ That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

¹⁶ I communed with my own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

¹⁷ And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

¹⁸ For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow.

Ecclesiastes 2

¹ I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove you with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure; and, behold, this also is vanity.

¹⁴ *Ecclesiastes* 3:12.

¹⁵ *Ecclesiastes* 12:14.

² I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What does it?

³ I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

⁴ I made me great works; I built me houses; I planted me vineyards:

⁹ So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me.

¹⁰ And whatsoever my eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor.

¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

The errors and follies of the present time are an exaggerated repetition of those of past ages. One generation after another give themselves up to the vain pursuit of peace and happiness in the world, a pursuit which ends in disappointment, and too often in despair. The way of true happiness remains the same in all ages. Patient continuance in well-doing will lead to honor, happiness, and eternal life.¹⁶

Solomon sat upon a throne of ivory, the steps of which were of solid gold, flanked by six golden lions. His eyes rested upon highly cultivated and beautiful gardens just before him. Those grounds were visions of loveliness, arranged to resemble, as far as possible, the garden of Eden.

- Choice trees and shrubs, and flowers of every variety, had been brought from foreign lands to beautify them.
- Birds of every variety of brilliant plumage flitted from tree to tree, making the air vocal with sweet songs.
- Youthful attendants, gorgeously dressed and decorated, waited to obey his slightest wish.

¹⁶ *Romans 2:7.*

- Scenes of revelry, music, sports, and games were arranged for his diversion at an extravagant expenditure of money.

But all this did not bring happiness to the king. He sat upon his magnificent throne, his frowning countenance dark with despair. Dissipation had left its impress upon his once fair and intellectual face. He was sadly changed from the youthful Solomon. His brow was furrowed with care and unhappiness, and he bore in every feature the unmistakable marks of sensual indulgence. His lips were prepared to break forth into reproaches at the slightest deviation from his wishes.

His shattered nerves and wasted frame showed the result of violating Nature's laws. He confessed to a wasted life, an unsuccessful chase after happiness. His is the mournful wail,

Ecclesiastes 2

¹⁷ ...all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Ecclesiastes 10

¹⁶ Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes eat in the morning.

¹⁷ Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles, and your princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

¹⁸ By much slothfulness the building decays; and through idleness of the hands the house drops through.

¹⁹ A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes merry; but money answers all things.

It was customary for the Hebrews to eat but twice a day, their heartiest meal coming not far from the middle of the day. But the luxurious habits of the heathen had been engrafted into the nation, and the king and his princes were accustomed to extend their festivities far into the night. On the other hand, if the earlier part of the day was devoted to feasting and wine-drinking, the officers and rulers of the kingdom were totally unfitted for their grave duties.

Solomon was conscious of the evil growing out of the indulgence of perverted appetite, yet seemed powerless to work the required reformation. He was aware that physical strength, calm nerves, and sound morals can only be secured through temperance. He knew that gluttony leads to drunkenness, and that intemperance in any degree disqualifies a man for any office of trust. Gluttonous feasts, and food taken into the stomach at untimely seasons, leave an influence upon every fiber of the system; and the mind also is seriously affected by what we eat and drink.

The life of Solomon teaches a lesson of warning not only to the youth, but also to those of mature age. We are apt to look upon men of experience as safe from the allurements of sinful pleasure. But still we often see those whose early life has been exemplary being led away by the fascinations of sin, and sacrificing their God-given manhood for self-gratification. For a time they vacillate between the promptings of principle, and their inclination to pursue a forbidden course; but the current of evil finally proves too strong for their good resolutions, as in the case of the once wise and righteous king, Solomon.

But Solomon addressed himself especially to the young in this urgent appeal:

Ecclesiastes 12

¹ Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them.

He concludes thus:

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Dear reader, as you stand in imagination on the slopes of Moriah, and look across the Kidron valley upon those ruined

pagan shrines, take the lesson of the repentant king home to your heart, and be wise. Make God your trust. Turn your face resolutely against temptation. Vice is a costly indulgence. Its effects are fearful upon the constitutions of those whom it does not speedily destroy. A dizzy head, loss of strength, loss of memory, derangements of the brain, heart, and lungs, follow quickly upon such transgression of the rules of health and morality.

Genius and crime make a sad combination, which we too frequently see in those who have given up God in pursuit of the world. Many of our youth who are highly gifted go astray. Falling under temptation, they become the slaves of appetite and passion. Virtue and integrity are destroyed in them; vice becomes a tyrant, driving its victims from one excess to another, until reason, self-respect, family affection, and eternal interests, plead in vain for reform. It is not easy to regain the reins of self-government, when they are once surrendered to the baser passions.

Parents may learn a lesson from the history of Solomon. Their course of action in training their children for the duties of life, will remain as a living testimony of them when they are in their graves. There is no surer way to ruin children, both in body and soul, than to surround them with luxuries, provide them with plenty of money, allow them to frequent billiard tables, theaters, festivities, and other demoralizing scenes of amusement, to drink wine, and spend their time in delicate idleness. Reared in this way they do not feel the necessity of being able to support themselves, are devoid of energy in useful employment, avoiding systematic labor, having no respect for parents, or attachment for home.

What will be the future of society and the State, if such men are chosen to offices of responsibility and trust? With no proper balance of conscience or principle, they will become the leaders and instigators of iniquity in high places, or the

tools of other unprincipled and more daring men. The interests of community will not be held sacred by them; and they will sacrifice everything to their ruling desire.

Parents, let us rear our children in such a manner that our memory will not be to them as a Mount of Offense, as they look back upon a misspent life, the result of their injudicious training at our hands.

Let them rather look back upon a happy parental home, where vice of any sort was not tolerated, and where the law of kindness and right ruled, and the fear of the Lord was taught to be the beginning of wisdom.

Abraham pitched his tent, and by its side erected his altar. The tent was afterward removed, but the altar was enduring. Those memorable stones remained as a monument of his righteousness and devotion, and commemorated in the minds of his children, and children's children, the integrity of their father Abraham.

- There he had prayed, and made his vows to God.
- There angels had visited him with messages of mercy.

Sacred spot indeed, where the weary pilgrim might send up his cry to Heaven for purity and holiness of heart. Mark the contrast between those memorials, and the ruins upon the Mount of Offense, which testified, for many generations, to the apostasy of Solomon.

Christian parents, shall the testimony of your lives, in the persons of your children, speak honorably of you when your voice is silent in the grave, or shall your mistakes and sins be perpetuated in your children, as a warning to others, and a blot upon your memory?

