

Teacher and Scholar.

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Oct. 11, 1896. } SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE. { 1 Kings, iii. 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ps. cxi. 10.

MEMORY VERSES.—II, 12.

CATECHISM.—Q. 42-44.

HOME READINGS.—M. 1 Kings iii. 1-15. T. 2 Chron. i. 1-13. W. James i. 1-27. Th. Luke xi. 1-13. F. Job xxxiii. 1-18. S. Prov. iii. 13-24. Sab. Eccl. ix. 1-18.

In our last lesson we saw how Solomon was chosen king over Israel, and how he was crowned and acknowledged king by representatives of every class. The reign which was thus begun proved to be in many ways a most successful one, and one blessed to Israel's material prosperity. The measure in which it was successful was due to Solomon's fidelity in the use of the blessings of wisdom which God conferred on him at his own request in order to qualify him for the duties of king. There can be no reasonable doubt but that, if Solomon had not forgotten the things of God in the measure in which he did forget them, the closing years of his reign would have been as lustrous as the opening ones. Let us learn from Solomon's reign the fact that here lasting success for time and for eternity depends upon our choice of the blessings of God and our fidelity to Him. The dream in which God appeared to Solomon with the offer of whatever he might choose, occurred at Gibeon, about six miles north of Jerusalem, whither Solomon had called a great national festival to mark the inauguration of his reign. Let us consider *Solomon's Choice and its Results*.

I. *Solomon's Choice*.—It was, as has been said, after his reign had been inaugurated by a great sacrificial feast, in which the whole nation participated, that God came to Solomon in a dream by night and presented him with leave to choose how God should specially bless him in his reign. We must not think of this as a matter of pure imagination because it came to Solomon in a dream. Through dreams was one of God's ways of communicating with His people in Old Testament days. God's offer to Solomon was a pledge that He was prepared to give whatever was chosen. While we are not all Solomons, yet each one of us is called upon to be a ruler, a ruler of our own spirit. To each of us God comes in the very beginning of our days, and offers to give in response to our free choice whatever is necessary to enable us to attain the rule over ourselves. Well is it for us when we are like Solomon, and recognizing the importance of what we are called upon to do, ask God for the grace which will best fit us for that work. Solomon had had the importance of the position to which he had come impressed upon him that day as he saw the vast crowds of representatives from all the tribes present to hail his king. His thoughts turned to his father and to the charge that father had laid upon him. He remembered the secret of his father's greatness. Therefore with his mind filled with such things we cannot wonder that he reviewed first of all the position to which he had come the great responsibilities which rested upon him, and then asked wisdom that he might be able rightly to discharge these responsibilities. "An understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." This was Solomon's choice, and it shows that the surface at least of Solomon's heart was touched with a desire to rule for the glory of God and the welfare of His people.

II. *The Results of that Choice*.—First of all the thing pleased God. Therefore there must have been a large element of faith in God mingled with this choice. It was a grand thing for Solomon thus to commence his reign with the favor of God resting upon him. It is a grand thing for every boy and girl to commence life as a friend of God, and every one may so commence it, if only they early seek the Lord with their whole hearts. Then in addition to granting the blessing asked, God gave to Solomon additional blessings—namely riches and honor; so that not alone in the matter of wisdom, but in these things also Solomon stands pre-eminent among kings. God always blesses beyond our expectations. This is especially true when we have started aright and sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then we can look with assurance to have all needed earthly blessing added unto us. But we cannot hope for the greater blessing to be added if our hearts are set only upon the less. Then too God promised that if Solomon used these blessings aright, walking in the ways of God as did David, then He would prolong his days. Alas! that Solomon failed to receive the fullest measure of God's blessing, because he chose his own way rather than God's. Let us see to it that our choice is a wise one, and that we do not rest content until we have attained all that God is willing to bestow.

obeying the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." That is an unqualified recognition of the great doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, proclaimed eighteen centuries ago by Paul on the Acropolis at Athens. And yet we have people in this country who not only endorse, but contribute to these missionary enterprises, for I take it that Rev. Mr. Maxwell believes in Christian missions, even if he has become a politician—publicly declaring that the Chinese, who are considered to be good enough and important enough to be the objects of missionary enterprise, are not fit to become, even temporarily, citizens of Canada. Viewed from the standpoint of Christianity and Christian missions, is there not something terribly illogical in this? If it is the right thing to send the gospel to them in their own country, is it not the right thing to meet them with the gospel and gospel treatment when they come to this country, instead of making them the victims of quasi-penal laws and treating them as marketable commodities, compelling them to pass through the country in bond as articles of trade? A few years ago a Christian Chinese lady, who with her husband had been converted under the labors of a missionary, and who gave largely to mission work in China, paid a visit to this country. She had to pay the head tax of \$50, and when in Montreal had to travel round the city and visit her Christian friends in that city in the custody of a customs officer. Was that not a shameful incident to occur in this Christian country? What can intelligent Chinese think of a country which sends missionaries to China seeking the conversion of the people to Christianity and then actually refuses them Christian treatment when they emigrate to that country?

Has it ever dawned upon the advocates of Chinese exclusion that their policy may possibly be an attempt to frustrate the designs of the God of missions. Christian people have for years been praying for open doors to the heathen world. In the immigration of the Chinese to Canada—a door wide open—the Christian people have the grand opportunity, may be the opportunity of their lives, to give the gospel to these heathen, and send some of them, perhaps many of them, back to their own country to be missionaries to their own people. It is a fact that to-day there are converted Chinamen doing effective mission work in China who received the gospel message in Canada.

The treatment accorded to the Chinese in the United States is unworthy of a Christian nation. We have not treated them so badly though we have treated them ungenerously. Surely it is matter of regret that any considerable section of the people of this country, many of them presumably Christian men and women, should advocate the policy of rigid exclusion with all the harsh treatment which has characterized the operations of the exclusion law of the United States.

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Dr. Denney, in his "Studies in Theology," gives the following incident as an illustration of the "distinctively Christian position": "A Hindu society was formed which had for its objects to appropriate all that was good in Christianity without burdening itself with the rest. Among other things which it appropriated, with the omission of only two words, was the answer given in the Westminster Shorter Catechism to the question, 'What is repentance unto life?' Here is the answer: 'Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of God in Christ doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.' The words which the Hindus left out were *in Christ*. Instead of 'apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,' they read simply, 'apprehension of the mercy of God.' They were acute enough to see," continued Dr. Denney, "that in the words they left out the whole *Christianity* of the definition lay. . . . I entirely agree with their insight. If the mercy of God is separable from Christ, independent of Christ, accessible apart from Christ . . . there is no need and no possibility of a Christian religion at all."

They have their vices; so have Canadians. Is it not possible that if close investigation were made it might be discovered that there are many people of other nationalities in Canada, whom we would never think of excluding from this country, who are in no position to cast the first stone at the Chinese? It is also charged that they are non-assimilative, that they cannot be transformed into Canadian citizens. Why not? Has any honest effort ever been made by Canadians—outside of missionary effort—to impress upon them the dignity and importance of citizenship in a free country, or to awaken in their minds an interest in our civil and political institutions? Will the assailants of the Chinese venture to answer this in the affirmative?

One of the Chinese vices on which special stress is laid by their assailants is that they are opium smokers. Granted, and granted also that it is a vile and wholly demoralizing habit, are there no opium users among Canadians, or people of other nationalities who have come to Canada? But, pray, who is largely responsible for the opium traffic and its dreadful consequences in China? Great Britain, with sorrow let it be said; and as a colony of the empire we can hardly evade some moral responsibility for that traffic. On this point the following paragraphs from an interview that not very long ago took place between His Eminence Li Hung Chang and His Eminence Count Ito, Japanese Minister, will be in order:

H. E. Ito: I discussed the question of the prohibition of opium with Minister Yen, and he heartily agreed with me.

H. E. Li: Great Britain insists on bringing opium into our ports. We have increased the duties; but what more can we do?

H. E. Ito: The duty is much too low. Treble the amount would be none too much.

H. E. Li: We have spoken of it frequently, but Great Britain will not consent.

H. E. Ito: Opium smokers are all indolent; you cannot make good soldiers of them.

H. E. Li: Great Britain has forced opium on us, and we cannot stop it.

Really, now, are we in a position to take very high ground in talking to the Chinese about the opium traffic?

I concede that it is perfectly legitimate for Canada to take steps to exclude the vicious and undesirable class of immigrants no matter from what country they come. But if we are going to exclude the Chinese indiscriminately, let us be consistent and exclude the Japanese also, and the ladrones and anarchists who are drifting into Canada and the United States from the continent of Europe, and who in the latter country constitute the bulk of the vicious and disturbing element in the population. But for Canada, one of whose great needs is a larger population, to interpose a barrier to the immigration of the frugal, industrious and well-behaved class of Chinese, is not only a short-sighted policy, but it is also at variance with the genius of our free, civil and political institutions. If the operation of these institutions and the leavening influence of the vigorous and aggressive type of Christianity which prevails in this country are not equal to the task of assimilating immigrants from foreign countries, then we had better institute an enquiry as to whether there is not something wrong with our civil, political and religious institutions, or with our methods of utilizing them in the work of nation-building. It will not be creditable to the Canadian people, the majority of whom are descended from the most vigorous colonising and governing race on the face of the earth, to have to admit that they are afraid of the Chinese. Practically that is what is at the bottom of the outcry against Chinese immigration.

But there is another and more important phase of the question to be considered. The Christian people of Canada, of the United States and of Great Britain think so well of the Chinese as fellow-beings that they spend respectable sums of money in sending missionaries to China for the purpose of Christianizing them and elevating their moral and social status. That is

has set apart the Sabbath as a day of rest for all, both man and beast; nor can folly exceed that of the toiler who would join with his covetous employer in converting God's day of rest into a working-day. Let all who love the sacred quiet of the Lord's day, as Toronto has enjoyed this inestimable blessing till the present time—all who wish our churches and Sabbath schools to be protected against a deplorable competition—all who clearly see (as they may well see) how inevitably one form of Sabbath observance draws other forms after it, and one triumph over the Christian conscience of a community weakens it for future contests—in defeating the proposal to run Sunday cars in Toronto. And let all the sons of the day of rest, and refuse, on any terms, to barter away this great blessing bestowed upon mankind by the wise and merciful Creator.

HOME MISSIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you kindly permit me to refer briefly to the meeting of the sub-committee on the 12th of October? At this meeting appointments will be made, as far as possible, to vacant Home Mission fields for the winter; and ministers, probationers, students and catechists, desiring work, should at once forward their applications, accompanied by Presbyterian certificates. Forms of application can be had from Rev. W. Warden, Confederation Life Building, Toronto.

Congregations that collect for Home Missions quarterly, will greatly oblige the committee, and reduce the interest paid for borrowed monies, by forwarding their contributions quarterly to the treasurer of the Church.

WM. COCHRANE,
Convener H. M. Committee.

Brantford, Sept. 21, 1896.

THE CHINESE IMMIGRATION QUESTION.

MR. EDITOR,—The question of Chinese immigration has been brought up in the Canadian House of Commons and the view strongly urged that Christian Canada should place an embargo on the Chinese, should exclude them from this country by the process of making it too costly for them to enter. This proposition has been made by some other than a minister of the gospel—Presbyterian, I believe—who acknowledges that fundamental doctrine of a living Christianity, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Rev. Geo. Maxwell, in speaking recently in the House of Commons, painted the Chinese who come to British Columbia in very dark colors. According to him they work and live too cheaply; they are immoral, non-assimilative and altogether very undesirable people who have in this Canada of ours. I am not going to say that I might not modify my opinion respecting the Chinese if I were brought into as close and constant contact with them as Rev. Mr. Maxwell seems to have been. Possibly the Chinese who have their way into the Pacific Coast Province are a very undesirable class of people compared with those who have found their way into the cities of Eastern Canada, and therefore I do not wish to speak too strongly upon the question. But this can be said of the majority of the Chinese who are settled in the cities and towns of Eastern Canada; they are on the whole a well-behaved class of people; they are never arrested before the police courts charged with offences against law and order, which so often place people of Anglo-Saxon and other nationalities under pains and penalties, and they are rarely found figuring as disturbers of the peace. They sell their labor cheaply, that is their undoubted right. They buy also cheaply and frugally and save money. That also is their right. It would be a most laudable thing for many Canadians if they imitated their example in this respect.