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Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

FROM PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES.

Third Quarter.
Lesson X.—July 5. I Kings 12: 6-17.

THE REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.—Prov. 13: 20.

THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS.—(1) *Title.* The work is named from its contents, which is the history of the "kings" of Israel and Judah from the accession of Solomon to the Babylonish captivity. (2) *Author.* Unknown. Ancient tradition names Jeremiah. Others think the book was compiled by Ezra or Baruch. It is evidently a compilation from the ancient records.

REHOBOAM, or Roboam, was the son of Solomon by Naamah, an Ammonite princess. As he was forty-one at his accession, he must have been born about the time of his father's association with David in the kingdom.

JEROBOAM belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. His father's name was Nebat, His mother's name was Zeruah. When Solomon repaired the fortifications of Jerusalem, Jeroboam was employed in the work.

After this the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, announced to Jeroboam that he should be king over the revolting tribes. And he probably made some premature effort to take the promised kingdom, instead of waiting for the Lord's time. In this he failed, and was banished to Egypt.

Solomon died, B. C. 975, after a reign of forty years. His natural successor was his son Rehoboam, with whose reign we begin the lessons of this Quarter.

1. THE CORONATION ASSEMBLY. (1) THE PLACE, SHECHEM (the place between the shoulder blades), between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim.

(2) THE OBJECT. The first object was that Rehoboam might be confirmed and accepted as king by the rest of Israel as well as by the tribe of Judah (I Kings 12: 1. The second object was to insist on certain conditions, and to obtain an alleviation of the burdens which had become oppressive under Solomon. The Israelitish kingdom was not an absolute, but a limited monarchy, and the people were determined to have their rights.

(3) THEIR GRIEVANCES. The point of grievance with the people was excessive taxation.

One special and most grievous form of this taxation was the levy of forced labor. An example of the way this was done is given in I Kings 5: 13,14.

In such circumstances Rehoboam met the assembled tribes at Shechem. The people presented their requests to the king for an alleviation of their burdens. Instead of giving them an immediate answer, he asked them to come again in three days, while he consulted the leaders of the kingdom.

II. THE WISE COUNCIL OF THE OLDER MEN.—Vers. 6, 7. *Rehoboam consulted with the old men.* The first impulse of Rehoboam was good. But there is no evidence that he went to God, the true source of wisdom.

7. *If thou will be a servant unto this people this day,* etc. He was simply to reign as a true king for the good of his people, and not for his own pleasure or glory. *Good words.* Kind words. A soft answer that turns away wrath (Prov. 15: 1).

III. THE RASH COUNSEL OF THE YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED. 8. *He forsook the counsel of the old men.* Because this advice ran counter to his pride and despotism. *And consulted with the young men.* The very change argues weakness. *That were grown up with him.* They and he thought only of themselves, their own pleasures and honors, and not of their duties nor of the rights of others. Selfishness made them blind, and inexperience made them rash. *Which stood before him.* Whom he had chosen as his counsellors. The surest mark of a fool is that he chooses other fools for advisers.

10. *And the young men . . . spake,* etc. This advice suited him well, because it corresponded with his rough, harsh, selfish, and violent character. But this produced the exact reverse of what he wished and hoped. *My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.* It means that his exactions would be as much greater than those of Solomon as the body is greater than the little finger.

11. *Whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke.* The Romans used to lay a yoke on the shoulders of every person in a conquered country, in token of his submission. The taxation was very heavy. Then everywhere the immense buildings were raised, not by paid workmen, but by conscriptions. Solomon raised a levy of 30,000 men (Israelites). *My father chastised you with whips.* It is probable that the expression is not entirely figurative. It is quite possible that the levies of Amorites, Hittites (chap. 9: 20), etc., had been kept at their toils by the lash. *I will chastise you with scorpions.* Whips which stung and pained like a scorpion's bite. Gesenius understands by "scorpions" here, "whips having leaden balls at the ends of their lashes with hooks projecting from them."

IV. THE FOOLISH DECISION. So *Jeroboam.* Who had been summoned from Egypt for this occasion to meet Rehoboam, and who was conscious all the time that the prophet had announced him as king of the ten tribes.

13, 14. *And the king answered the people roughly.* These rough and hard words were paraded and rendered more offensive by the rough and hard manner.

15. *For the cause was from the Lord.* Human passions, anger, pride, and insolence worked out the accomplishment of the divine designs. Without interfering with man's free will, God guides the course of events and accomplishes his purpose.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE? God always does the best thing possible for each nation and for each individual. If they are disobedient and wicked, he cannot wisely do for them what he would if they were obedient and good. (1) The origin of this separation is declared to have been a divine judgment for the idolatrous worship introduced by the foreign wives of Solomon. (2) Had this offence remained unpunished, so contagious an example would have infected the whole mass of the people, who would have irretrievably sunk into idolatry and vice. (3) This separation proved the most powerful means of preserving in the two remaining tribes whatever degree of attention to the divine laws subsisted among them. It made it the most obvious political interest of the kings of Judah to adhere with strictness to the law of Moses, and to promote its observance among their subjects.

V. THE RESULT.—THE KINGDOM DIVIDED. *The people answered.* (Hebrew, brought back word to; probably after some consultations amongst themselves) *the king, saying, What portion have we in David?* Same expression as 2 Sam. 20: 1. The words, interpreted by this passage and 2 Sam. 19: 43, mean, "Since we have no kindness or fairness from David's seed, what is his house to us? Why render homage to his son? We receive nought from him, why yield aught to him?" *Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.* That is, his tribe is not ours; his interests are not ours. *To your tents.* "Disperse to your homes (see chap. 8: 66; and cf. 2 Sam. 18: 17; 19: 8; 20: 1), and prepare for war."

17. *As for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah.* By "the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah," we must understand, not the tribe of Judah itself, but the Israelites proper, or members of the other tribes who happened to be settled within the limits of the tribe of Judah.

PRACTICAL.

1. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and that by the operation of so-called natural laws.

2. Neither wisdom nor grace runs in the blood.

3. The mother has the marring or the making of her child in her hands.

4. It is wise to take counsel of the experienced. It is wiser still to make good use of their advice.

5. The source of the best advice to the Lord of wisdom himself, who gives liberally to all who ask him.

6. When you receive conflicting counsels from men, apply to both the test of God's Word (Ps. 19: 8; 119: 104 sq.)

7. The readiest way for young men to be ruined is to follow the advice of their gay companions, and reject the counsel of the more wise and experienced (ver. 14).

8. God has offered each of us a better kingdom than he did to Rehoboam. We too have wise and foolish counsellors, drawing us to the good choice or tempting us to the evil.

9. They that lose the kingdom of heaven throw it away, as Rehoboam did his, by their own wilfulness and folly.

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It would lessen, on the part of the rich, the temptations of vanity.

It would lessen, on the part of the poor, the temptations of envy, uncharitableness, and discontent.

It would relieve our means of a serious pressure and leave more opportunities of doing good.

At the same time, we do not believe it is required of us to wear sack-cloth and long faces on the Sabbath. Nature herself, seems to wear brighter garments on the blessed day of the week, and it is meet that we should dress well and tastefully, even cheerfully, and enjoy the golden day of the week with grateful hearts and comely attire.—*Exchange.*

A Little Hero.

There was a tender-hearted, loving child in a New England home, to whom life was all gladness and joy. He loved as he was loved, and he was worthy of all the love which was given to him. One day, as he was starting out for a ride with his parents, he asked them where they were going; and they told him that they were going to take him up to the new cemetery, a beautiful city of the dead by the river's bank, beyond the town. His bright face grew shadowed, and his little lips quivered, so that his father asked, "Why, Willie, don't you want to go there?" Quietly the trustful answer came back, "Yes, if you think it best, papa." And they rode on silently, in through the broad gate-way; on, along the tree shaded and turf-bordered avenues. The child seemed strangely quiet, clinging in love to his mother's side, and looking up from time to time with a face that seemed never so beautiful in its restful confidence. As they finally passed out again from the gateway they had entered, the dear child drew a breath of relief, and looking up in new surprise asked: "Why, am I going back with you again?" "Of course you are. Why should you doubt it?" Why, I thought that when they took little children to the cemetery, they left them there," said that hero-child. And then it was found that with a child's imperfect knowledge that dear boy had supposed he was being taken, at the call of God, and by the parents whom he loved and trusted, to be buried in the place which he had heard of only as a place of burial. And all by himself he had had the struggle with himself, and had proved the victor. Like Isaac of old, he was a hero in a terrible battle which was never fought. "Yes, yes," you say; "but that was a child's foolish fancy, a mere fear of his imagining." Ay, and the most desperate of all struggles are our struggles with dangers that are unreal. The secret conflict for which we must make preparation are conflicts which do not occur; and the battles which we anticipate with direst dread are battles which are never fought. In all the course of life,

"Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings."

—*S. S. Times.*

What is this Disease that is Coming Upon Us?

Like a thief at night it steals in upon us unawares. Many persons have pains about the chest and sides, and sometimes in the back. They feel dull and sleepy; the mouth has a bad taste, especially in the morning. A sort of sticky slime collects about the teeth. The appetite is poor. There is a feeling like a heavy load on the stomach; sometimes a faint all gone sensation at the pit of the stomach which food does not satisfy. The eyes are sunken, the hands and feet become cold and feel clammy. After a while a cough sets in at first dry, but after a few months it is attended with a greenish coloured expectoration. The afflicted one feels tired all the while, and sleep does not seem to afford any rest. After a time he becomes nervous, irritable, and gloomy, and has evil forebodings. There is a giddiness, a sort of whirling sensation in the head when rising up suddenly. The bowels become costive; the skin is dry and hot at times; the blood becomes thick and stagnant; the whites of the eyes become tinged with yellow, the urine is scanty and high-coloured, depositing a sediment after standing. There is frequently a spitting up of the food, sometimes with a sour taste, and sometimes with a sweetish taste; this is frequently attended with palpitation of the heart; the vision be-impaired with spots before the eyes; there is a feeling of great prostration and weakness. All of these symptoms are in turn present. It is thought that nearly one-third of our population has this disease in some of its varied forms. It has been found that medical men have mistaken the nature of this disease. Some have treated it for a liver complaint, others for kidney disease, etc., etc., but none of the various kinds of treatment have been attended with success, because the remedy should be such as to act harmoniously upon each one of these organs, and upon the stomach as well; for in Dyspepsia (for this is really what the disease is) all of these organs partake of this disease and require a remedy that will act upon all at the same time. Seigel's urative Syrup acts like a charm in this class of complaints, giving almost immediate relief. The following letters from chemists of standing in the community where they live show in what estimation the article is held.

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TAKE NOTICE, that there will be sold by Public Auction, at Chubb's Corner (so called), corner Prince William and Princess Streets, in the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John, in the Province of New Brunswick, on SATURDAY, the fourth day [illegible] the hour of twelve of the [illegible] OT OF LAND, situate in [illegible] John, aforesaid, on the [illegible] Street, and known and [illegible] on a map or plan of the [illegible] number one thousand three [illegible] DUPLEX, having a front of [illegible] said Street, and extending back [illegible] preserving the same width "one hundred feet, with the buildings, erections and improvements thereon."

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