

Solomon had made overseer of the levy of workmen from Ephraim and Manassah (verse 28). In some way Solomon learned of Ahijah's designation of him and acted towards him as Saul did to his father David (verse 40).

12. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for Da'vid thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son—The threatening had two gracious and merciful limitations, (1) The blow should not fall until after his death (ver. 34; ch. 21: 29; 2 Kings 22: 20), and (2) The disruption should be but partial. There should be a remnant (Rom. 9: 27; 11: 5). (Hammond). For a similar postponement of the penalty see 1 Kings 21: 29. God's mercy is shewn to children for their parents sake (Ex. 20: 6).

13. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for Da'vid my servant's sake, and for Je-ru'sa-lem's sake, which I have chosen—The house of David was preserved in order that the promise to its founder might

not fail (2 Sam. 7: 13; 1 Chr. 17: 11-13). The reference is to the tribe of Judah, from which the southern kingdom took its name. Benjamin which went with Judah was so small as to be hardly worth accounting of, and Simeon was also absorbed in Judah. One reason for the close union of Benjamin with Judah was that the territorial division between the two tribes was such as to make the temple the common property of both. The city of the Jebusite, which David conquered, and all the ground north of the valley of Hinnon was in the tribe of Benjamin. (Lumby). And now the storm clouds gather around the sunset of Solomon, and his day ends in darkness. "So long as he walked with God he was of importance for the historians; but as soon as he forsook God, and was consequently forsaken of his wisdom, he becomes as insignificant as an empty vessel which has once held sweet perfume, or a piece of carbon through which the electric current has ceased to flow. Never was there a sadder eclipse." (Maclaren).

BIBLE SEARCH LIGHTS.

4-8. How long did Solomon reign? (ch. 11: 42). Was polygamy forbidden in the law? (Deut. 17: 17). What does Jesus say about it? (Mark 10: 6-9). What was said regarding marriages with the heathen? (Deut. 7: 3, 4). What New Testament precept bears upon this question? (2 Cor. 6: 14). How many wives did Solomon have? (vs. 3). Solomon forgot one of his own precepts (Prov. 1: 10). A warning to Christians. (Eph. 5: 11). He tried to serve two masters. (Matt. 6: 24; Josh. 24: 15). By whom were these high places destroyed? (2 Kings 23: 13).

9-13. Do special privileges imply special obligations? (Luke 10: 12-15). Will misuse of privileges lead to their forfeiture? (Matt. 25: 28). What other examples of a sentence suspended in mercy? (ch. 21: 29; 2 Kings 22: 20; 2 Pet. 3: 9).

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

I. SOLOMON'S SIN. Solomon's writings reveal three stages of spiritual experience. His songs, written in the fervor of youthful piety, disclose an ardent devotion to the God of his father; the Proverbs, contain the wisdom of ripper years and base all prosperity on the foundation of godliness; and Ecclesiastes, breathes throughout the spirit of sad regret and unavailing repentance over wasted opportunities and abused blessings.

4. When Solomon was old. Age should have brought wisdom, but Solomon had not moral firmness proportionate to his practical sagacity. Several causes conspired to bring about his downfall. (1) His devotion to

schemes of material grandeur,—buildings, gardens, troops, equipage, &c., secularized his mind. How often we see the same effect on prosperous business men of middle age. (2) He disobeyed God's commands in what he may have thought important matters and in regard to which he may have silenced conscience with plausible reasons. (a) He "multiplied horses to himself" (Deut. 17: 16). He may have said "we live in a different age, horses are necessary now, we must not be tied to a slavishly literal interpretation of Scripture." So men speak in regard to street cars and newspapers on Sunday. (b) He "multiplied wives to himself" (Deut. 17: 17).