



LESSON,—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1908.

Solomon Chooses Wisdom.

I. Kings iii., 4-15. Memory verses 11, 12.
Read I. Kings ii., 12; iv., 34.

Golden Text.

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

Home Readings.

Monday, November 30.—I. Ki. ii., 12-27.
Tuesday, December 1.—I. Ki. ii., 28-46.
Wednesday, December 2.—I. Ki. iii., 1-15.
Thursday, December 3.—I. Ki. iii., 16-28.
Friday, December 4.—I. Ki. iv., 21-34.
Saturday, December 5.—I. Chr. i., 1-17.
Sunday, December 6.—Prov. i., 20-33.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Some of you will remember the story of the fisherman who one day caught a flounder. The flounder rewarded the fisherman for letting him go free again by promising to give him anything he should ask for. The fisherman kept asking for more and more things until the flounder got so exasperated at his selfishness, and greed that he took away again everything he had given him. There are other fairy stories about people who were given the chance to wish for any three things that they wanted. In all of them we see what stupid things people often wish for, and even when the wishes seemed sensible at first they turned out to be undesirable in the end. Once there was a little boy I knew who kept wishing for a drum. His mother thought he would make so much noise with it that she tried to get him to want something else instead. But as he still wished for a drum more than anything else, she bought him one, and he had had it but a very little while when he broke it open to see what was inside. So, like the fairy story wishes, his went for nothing after all. Did you know there was a story in the Bible about a boy who was given the chance to wish for something and he got what he wished for? But there was something very different in his wish from the other wishes we have spoken of. He thought not of how many things he didn't have that he might want, but rather of how many things he had already, and so he asked for something that would help him do good to other people. We have the story of his wish in our lesson of to-day. His name was Solomon, King David's son, and although he was still only a young man, he was made king after his father David died.

FOR THE SENIORS.

There is something peculiarly fine about the character of Solomon as revealed in this lesson, and it speaks well for the influence of his father David. Whatever failure David made in the training of his other children, he seems to have been careful where Solomon was concerned, so that Solomon could think of his father as one who walked before God 'in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart.' Moreover, he was made conscious of the responsibility laid upon him, and it is while his father's influence was fresh upon him that this wise choice was made. Later, under other and evil influences (I. Kings xi., 1-8), he went far away from God and the conditional promise in to-day's lesson (verse 14) had to be revoked. When he died at the age of sixty a worn and disappointed man, unable to satisfy himself with any of the luxuries which he so bountifully procured, he was less fit with all his experience to rule over God's people than was the boy of twenty who pleaded his ignorance as he asked for the gift of God's wisdom. The failure of his life came through self indulgence and self dependence. Had he continued in the way of thoughtfulness for others (verse 9) and humble dependence on God (verse 7), the glory of his reign might well have been doubled or

trebled. The young king at the beginning of his reign, however, makes a very pleasing study. The ground he takes of God's goodness to his parents, his present opportunity as the gift of God, his acknowledgment of inexperience and ignorance, and the power of his influence, could be taken by all of us with Christian parentage to boast of. We may not have the position of power which Solomon occupied, but all of us have far more power of influencing others for good or evil than we realize. As the apostle declares (Romans xiv., 7) 'none of us liveth to himself' and it sometimes takes a shock of horror to make a man realize that his careless habit has led another to ruin. We all have great responsibilities not only affecting our own lives, but also those of others, and all can heartily pray Solomon's prayer. In the new dispensation of God's grace we have far less excuse for a failure to keep our charge than had Solomon in the Old Testament times. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we may daily and hourly come to our Father the source of all wisdom and never fear to weary him. (James i., 5.)

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

'Wise unto salvation'; think what significance there is in these familiar words. Wisdom that shines as a star in the forehead, wisdom that wraps the form with dignity like a rich mantle, wisdom that burns in eloquence upon the lips, these all men can not have. If these are the true successes of a human life, then most human lives must be failures. But wisdom that enters as salvation into the heart, all men may have. Hear how St. James describes it, 'The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.' These are not easy things indeed, but they are things not impossible for any man.—Phillips Brooks, New Starts.

We who are at the threshold of life are making our choice of what our lives shall be, whether lives self-centered, or God-centered. What is my choice?

Opportunity with ability makes responsibility.—Bishop Hunt.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

I saw the other day a story of a boy who had such a remarkable dream that, when I read it, it reminded me at once of this dream of Solomon. He thought that the richest man in town came to him, and said: 'I am tired of my house and grounds; come, take care of them, and I will give them to you.' Then came an honored judge, and said: 'I want you to take my place. I am weary of going to court day after day; I will give you my seat on the bench if you will do my work.' Then a doctor proposed that he take his extensive practice, and let him rest, and so on, and on, and on. At last up shambled old Tommie, and said: 'I'm wanted to fill a drunkard's grave. I have come to see if you will take my place in these saloons, and on the streets as a loafer.' And the boy woke up in horror. But, after all, the dreams were not so unlike, for in this dream and in Solomon's, God was saying, as he does to every boy and girl, 'Ask what I shall give thee.'—Louis Albert Banks, in the 'Sunday School Times.'

'Choosing is a Test of Character.' It is not what we get, but what we choose, not money or poverty, but the love of money; not success in gaining pleasure, but what we seek first, that tests us as to what we really are. What we have and what we do often depends on many things outside of ourselves. What we choose is the work of our hearts and wills.

Bible References.

Job. xxviii., 20-28; xxxii., 8; Psa. lxxxx., 12; Matt. vi., 33; Prov. iii., 13-15; xxviii., 16; Jer. ix., 23, 2; I. Cor. i., 30; Col. iii., 16; Matt. vii., 7-12; Dan. xii., 3.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, December 6.—Topic — Commending our Society. VI. By consistent living. Jas. iii., 10-18. (Consecration meeting.)

C. E. Topic.

Monday, November 30.—Planning the betrayal. Matt. xxvi., 14-16.

Tuesday, December 1.—The remorse of Judas. Matt. xxvii., 3, 4.

Wednesday, December 2.—Death of Judas. Matt. xxvii., 5.

Thursday, December 3.—Christ's prayer for Peter. Luke xxii., 31, 32.

Friday, December 4.—Peter the coward. Matt. xxvi., 73-75.

Saturday, December 5.—Peter the brave. Acts iv., 18-21.

Sunday, December 6.—Topic—Judas and Peter, a contrast. Luke xxii., 47, 48, 54-62. (Consecration meeting.)

Our Opportunities.

The value of personal work was under discussion at a convention of Sunday School teachers in a pretty rose-enviored country church among the hills, when one of the women from a distance said to the friend by her side:

'I've a great mind to say a word, only, you know, I came to read my paper, and don't wish to appear assertive.'

'But if the Lord has put a thought into your heart, is it not your duty to express it?' The woman rose and was helped to say:

'The white rose petals come flying in through the open windows like happy thoughts, and when in a discussion like this, we throw out the little incidents and experiences that come to our minds, they may carry a blessing, as the scattered rose petals bring fragrance to us all;' and going on she related in a few words an experience of her own, where one encouraging little talk at the close of a suggestive lesson brought three sweet young sisters into the fold of the church.

As she was speaking a woman at some distance turned her eyes toward her, with a look that she interpreted as:

'I am one who needs help,' and as she was leaving the church, soon after, a regretful glance from the same violet eyes made her say: 'I wish I could have spoken with her; I think she is in some perplexity, and now the opportunity is gone forever.'

That the conclusion was hastily drawn, she found just two weeks later, when making one of a driving party to a picturesque little woodland lake, she met this woman, who had come with a party from an opposite direction. The recognition was as mutual as the thought that the meeting was Providential, and strolling away together under the pines, the new made friend said:

'I have been in Sunday School since I was very young, and was converted when only a little girl, but my teacher never had any personal talk with her pupils, and it came about that as I was at all the church services, I was, after a while, looked upon as a member. I am now a Sunday School teacher, but I cannot do personal work, and if I am a Christian it is a very unhappy one. When you spoke of the rose petals being happy thoughts, I felt that I could tell you my experience and that you would understand me.'

'My dear woman,' said Mrs. Taylor, gently, 'your rose petals are all falling into the wind to be trampled under foot instead of carrying fragrance. The Lord needs His witnesses. We cannot lead others where we have not been ourselves.'

'My thought is this,' she replied; 'I am a bush with thorns and green leaves. There is always a hope that I may bloom and carry fragrance, but thus far I have been a disappointment.'

'You must be so no longer. You see for yourself that you must be pruned of your pride, timidity, and all of the little useless branches that have been growing up, making a barrier between you and your Saviour.'

'Yes, I see it now, and this very evening at the midweek meeting, which I always attend, but where my voice has never been heard, I will make my confession and endeavor to put myself where the Lord can use me.'

'That position is only gained by obedience,' said Mrs. Taylor, 'and I think there is a difference between work and service. My carefully prepared paper required hours of work, but made no particular impression, while the thought that bubbled up in my heart just met your need. I was able to serve by taking advantage of my opportunity. You have helped me to learn a lesson, and can feel that your first personal work was with me; that will make it easier for you to speak to the next person, and experience will teach you that in work for Christ, nothing tells like personal work.'—N. Y. 'Observer.'