

## CRITICAL NOTES.

No one who desires to gain an intelligent idea of Solomon's life and times should fail to read every verse of the first eleven chapters of this book, as well as the parallel passages in Second Chronicles. Be sure, therefore, to read the preceding chapter before commencing the study of this lesson.

**Verse 5. Gibeon.** This was the chief city of the Ilivites, situated about six miles northwest of Jerusalem. The deceit practiced by the Gibeonites upon Joshua is well known to every Bible student (Josh. 9. 4, ff.). When the land was divided among the tribes Gibeon fell to the Benjaminites. It is very probable that Gibeon had a sanctuary from very ancient times. According to the parallel account in 2 Chron. 1. 1-6, we find that the tabernacle and the brazen altar were at Gibeon, though the ark was at Jerusalem. Zadok, a great friend of the young king, might have influenced him to have these solemn services at the sanctuary where he officiated as high priest. **The Lord appeared to Solomon.** The sacrifice of a thousand burnt offerings must have produced a great impression upon the people, for it at once illustrated the religious character as well as the magnificence of the new king. This act showed his faith in God and dependence upon him, and must have been especially pleasing to the priests. **In a dream.** God often revealed his will by means of visions and dreams (Gen. 20. 8; 31. 10, f.; 41. 25. Compare also Num. 12. 6; 1 Sam. 28. 6, 15; Matt. 1. 20, and Acts 16. 9). Though it was customary at one time for the Almighty to communicate with men through dreams, no one has the right nowadays for expecting any divine revelation in this manner. And yet as great a man as Franklin believed that he was supernaturally warned in dreams. **Ask what I shall give thee.** Men generally ask for what they most desire, but God gives those things which will do the most good. Our Father in heaven still says to every one of his children, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Blessed is he who will ask for God's guidance, and who will accept it when it comes, no matter in what form.

**6. Thou hast showed unto thy servant David great kindness.** Solomon recognized the hand of God in the affairs of David. He begins his prayer in grateful acknowledgment of having had a pious father. **According as he walked before thee in truth.** God cannot bless those who disregard the truth. David was not a perfect man, nevertheless the mainspring of all his thoughts and actions was toward the right and good. Let no one judge David in the light of the last half of the nineteenth century, but rather by the standard of morality in his day. Had David been a better man God could have given him greater blessings. **Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne.** To have an heir to inherit one's

possessions and to perpetuate the family name was, in the East, deemed a great blessing and a marked token of God's favor. David had been sorely afflicted in his children. Ammon, having dishonored his sister, was killed by her brother. Absalom in his turn was killed by Joab. Adonijah at the very last proclaimed himself king contrary to David's will. How terribly fulfilled was the sentence pronounced by Nathan: "The sword shall never depart," etc. (See 2 Sam. 12. 10, ff.)

**7. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king.** He has no doubt as to his divine appointment. God still "raiseth up one and putteth down another." He has a plan and a place for everyone; blessed is he who is conscious of following God's plan. **I am but a little child.** The Hebrew word rendered "child" in this place does not help us in fixing the age of Solomon, since it is used of tender infants, of youths as well as of adults, and even old people. He was probably between eighteen and twenty-two, though Josephus says fourteen. In chapter 11. 4, we read that Solomon was old, but in verse 42 of the same chapter that he ruled forty years. Thus the chronological references to Solomon are few and indefinite. **To go out or come in.** This is a current phrase for attending to one's duties in everyday life. (See Num. 27. 17; Josh. 14. 11; 1 Sam. 18. 13, and often.)

**8. A great people that cannot be numbered.** This cannot be taken literally. It simply means that he ruled over a very large number of subjects. He doubtless had in mind the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 13. 16 and 15. 5). For the population of Israel and Judah, when the census was taken by Daniel through Joab, see 2 Sam. 29. 4, and 1 Chron. 21. 5, 6. Such an exaggerated way of speaking was common to all people.

**9. An understanding heart.** Literally, "a heart of hearing," a heart which listens to wisdom and knowledge (2 Chron. 1. 10). The Septuagint paraphrases thus: "A heart to hear and judge thy people in righteousness." **To judge thy people.** He did not desire wisdom for his own glorification, but in order to administer the duties of a king in such a way that the nation under God's blessing could prosper. In early times the king was also a judge, the supreme court of the state (1 Sam. 8. 5, 20. See also the verses immediately following this lesson). **Discern between good and evil.** No man can do this successfully without the aid of God's Holy Spirit, and no one needs such aid more than he who rules over others and has to decide controversies between those under him. How many good men with poor judgment have been made the mere tools of the crafty and cunning flatterer! **Great people.** The word rendered "great" in this place is usually translated, as in the margin of the