

B.C. 995.]

## LESSON VII.—SOLOMON'S SIN.

1 Kings 11. 4-13.

[November 16.]



4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *a* that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

*a* Deut. 17. 17; Neh. 13. 26.

5 For Solomon went after *b* Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

*b* Judg. 2. 13.

6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and *a* went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

*a* Fulfilled not after; Numb. 14. 24.

7 Then *c* did Solomon build an high place for *d* Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in *e* the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

*c* Numb. 33. 52.—*d* Num. 21. 29.—*e* 2 Kings 23. 13.

8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 And the LORD was *f* angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, *g* which had appeared unto him twice,

*f* Deut. 7. 3; Psa. 90. 7.—*g* Chap. 3. 5; 9. 2.

10 And *h* had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

*h* Chap. 6. 12; 9. 6.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this *b* is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant, and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, *i* I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

*b* Is with thee.—*i* Chap. 12. 15; 2 Kings. 17. 15, 21.

12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom: but will give one tribe to thy son *j* for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, *m* which I have chosen.

*j* 2 Sam. 7. 15; Psa. 89. 38.—*k* Chap. 12. 20.—*l* Exod. 32. 13; 2 Kings 13. 23.—*m* Deut. 12. 11.

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

The faithful historian of the kings draws in bold lines the sad picture of Solomon's sin as the counterpart to his greatness. In this lesson we see the inevitable results of following the world, as inevitable in our time as Solomon's. The splendour of the court and of the nobility led to neglect of God and love of the world; the worldly association to worldly conformity, for when people of all nations stood round the throne, and princesses of all lands were received into the palace, there followed a relaxation of the earlier standards, and the customs of idolatrous people became those of God-fearing Israel. The intellectual penetration of Solo-

mon, enabling him to see "the soul of good in things evil," and the truth hidden in the errors of idol-worship, led him into a specious laxity of views, by which all religions were but various forms of worship to the one God. So under the guise of liberality arose gross idolatry; in the name of enlightenment appeared superstition. On the southern peak of the Mount of Olives, in full view of Jerusalem, arose a temple to idols, high-places for heathen worship crowned the hills of Israel, and the people, with less knowledge, followed the example of their king. As a result, the morals of the nation were corrupted, and a seed was sown destined to produce a plentiful crop of evils. The glorious hopes of Israel faded away, the twelve tribes were rent asunder by wickedness, and the empire, conquered and consolidated by the genius of David, sank into ruin.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 4.** When Solomon was old. He could not have been more than fifty-five years of age, but luxury and sensuality had worn out his frame prematurely. **His wives.** Polygamy has been the great evil of oriental life in all ages; but so deeply rooted was it in habit that the Old Testament did not absolutely forbid it, though the law of Moses strove to regulate it, and recognized monogamy as the divine order. Solomon married many wives, mostly princesses of surrounding races. His motives may have been to obtain political influence, to exhibit state and splendour which in the East is shown by the number of wives and also to gratify his own sensual lusts. But his harem became his ruin, physically, morally, and politically. **Turned away his heart.** Being worshippers of idols at home, they continued that worship in his court, and led him to participate in it. **His heart was not perfect.** He worshipped Jehovah in the service of his temple, but in front of it arose the shrines of idols across the valley. **As was the heart of David.** David had sinned grievously, but he never forsook God, or worshipped another, and he repented of his sin, while we read of no repentance in Solomon. 1. Great wisdom and great wickedness may be in the same person. 2. Hence let us aim for a Christian culture, not a mere intellectual. 3. See the danger of worldly associations.

**5. Solomon went after.** This expression, according to Canon Rawlinson, always signifies actual idolatry. So Solomon himself participated in the worship of idols. Doubtless he persuaded himself that it was, after all, the worship of the one God under different names, but that idea did not ward off its ruinous effects upon his people. **Ashtoreth.** The companion-worship of Baal, a personification of the feminine principle, worshipped with indecent and licentious rites. **Zidonians.** The Phœnicians, over whom Hiram reigned;