

## The Sunday-School.

FOURTH QUARTER,  
LESSON X.—Dec. 6.

## SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.

I KINGS 3:4-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Prov. 9:10.

The lesson includes Solomon's accession to the throne and the process of his establishment thereon, especially the revelation of his inner life and desires. (1 Kings 2:12-3:28; 4:26-34, compared with 2 Chron. 1:1-17).

Learn by heart Vs. 12, 13; Jas. 1:5; Luke 11:9-13.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.*—The beginning of Solomon's reign, B. C. 1015, according to Ussher and the margins of our Bibles, or 977, according to the Assyrian inscriptions. (See Hastings' Bible Dictionary, Art., Chronology).

*Place.*—Gibeon, a high hill six miles north of Jerusalem, now called El Jib. Here was the ancient tabernacle constructed by Moses (2 Chron. 1:3).

*Solomon.*—18 or 20 years old.

THE FIRST MOVEMENTS OF THE YOUNG KING.—The first duty of Solomon was to become firmly established in his kingdom.

First. The whole nation gave him their allegiance.

Second. He kept his elder half-brother, who had tried to seize the throne, under surveillance, but when he made an underhand attempt to become king, Solomon had him executed.

Third. Abiathar, the high priest, who had joined in the plot with Adonijah, was degraded from his office, and Zadok, who had stood by David in his troubles, and anointed Solomon to be king, was made high priest.

Fourth. Joab, David's cousin and the head of his army, had taken Adonijah's part against his father, had treacherously murdered his rival generals, Abner and Amasa, and had become insolent in his power. He was executed and Benaiah became general.

Fifth. Shimei, who had deserted David and joined with his enemies, was first confined to Jerusalem on parole, and when he broke his parole, was executed.

Sixth. Solomon made an allegiance with Egypt, the most powerful nation on his borders, by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh.

THE STATE OF THE KINGDOM.—With the accession of Solomon, a new world of thought was opened to the Israelites. The curtain which divided them from the surrounding nations was rent asunder. The kingdom had reached its highest glory and widest extent at the death of David. It was in perfect peace, and thoroughly organized. The fullest development of material prosperity and greatest splendor are associated with the reign of Solomon.

THE GREAT RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLY AT GIBEON.—V. 4. Early in his reign Solomon held a great national gathering of the leaders of the kingdom.

THE PLACE. In Gibeon, a hill five or six miles north of Jerusalem. The great high place, where sacrifices were held before the temple was built.

THE OBJECT of this great assembly was to unify the people under Solomon, to extend the influence of religion over the nation, and to bring all into harmony with himself and his plans.

THE INVITED DELEGATES were nearly the same as those invited by David to the coronation of Solomon.

THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES. *A thousand burnt offerings.* These sacrifices were always accompanied by religious services, and gave a symbolical teaching to the people.

ALL WAYS OF LIFE OPEN BEFORE SOLOMON FOR HIS CHOICE.—Vs. 5.

*The Dream.* The religious services closed, Solomon retired to rest with a mind elevated by religious fervor, and the greatness of the work before him burdening his spirit. Then in answer to Solomon's sacrifices and prayers, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream. The nature of dreams is such as to make it possible God should make impressions on the mind when it is thus abstracted from the rush and whirl of outward impressions.

*And God said, Ask what I shall give thee.* An absolutely unlimited range of choice is here placed before Solomon.

CONSIDERATIONS THAT GUIDED SOLOMON'S CHOICE.—Vs. 6-8. Solomon, before deciding what to choose, carefully considered his circumstances and needs.

FIRST REASON. *The memory of what God had done for his father* was a motive for walking in the same ways.

*Thou hast showed . . . great mercy.* All that had come to David was a gift of mercy. *Walked before thee in truth,* in sincerity of heart. *In righteousness.* His duties to his fellow-men. This was the general course of his life. *This great kindness,* withheld from Saul. *That thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne.* It is a great favor to have God's blessings to us continued to our children.

SECOND REASON. *He did not seek his present position, but it was conferred on him by God. Thou hast made thy servant king.* The fact that God has put a man in any position of trust or duty creates an obligation to fulfil the trust and perform the duty.

THIRD REASON. *His youth and inexperience. And I am but a little child.* He was young and inexperienced compared with his father. *I know not how to go out or come in.* This expression is proverbial for the active conduct of affairs.

FOURTH REASON. *The greatness of the work to be done. Thy servant is in the midst of thy people.* That is, is set over them as a king. They were a turbulent people, often going astray, often contending with each other. *Which thou hast chosen.* It was the nation chosen to represent God before the world and carry out his kingdom. *A great people, that cannot be numbered.* A common expression for a large number.

PRACTICAL. 1. Every one should use his reason in determining his course.

2. Every one is a little child in the presence of God and eternity and the vast issues of life. All need divine guidance and strength.

SOLOMON MAKES THE WISE CHOICE.—V. 9. *Give therefore.* In view of all the above considerations: *An understanding heart.* Wisdom for the administration of his duties.

THE DIVINE APPROVAL. THE CHOICE FOLLOWED BY A DOUBLE BLESSING.—Vs. 10-15. The choice was made in a dream, but it expressed Solomon's real desire. *And the speech pleased the Lord.* Why? (1) It was right and unselfish. (2) It rendered it possible

for God to give him large measures of the best things. The more he can give us, the better he is pleased. *Because thou hast . . . not asked for thyself.* The selfish man cannot receive the gifts God gave to Solomon.

*First Blessing. The Wisdom he asked for.* *Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart.* An instance of his wisdom is given in the verses following the lesson. Others in Lesson XII, on the visit of the Queen of Sheba. His wisdom in proverbs and natural history is mentioned in 1 Kings 4:29-34. His building of the temple, together with his gardens and palaces, his water works and city improvements, governmental plans and commerce. He doubtless studied and toiled like other men for his acquisitions. It was through these things that God gave him wisdom. *So that there was none like thee before thee, etc.* This has been literally fulfilled in history.

*Second Blessing. The Worldly Fruits of Wisdom.* *I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked.* Here we see a striking illustration of the law of the divine government, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." *Both riches and honor.* See the next lesson. *And if thou wilt walk in my ways . . . I will lengthen thy days.* The promise here is only conditional. As the condition was not observed the right to the promise was forfeited. He died at the age of sixty.

*And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream.* But the results were real, because what was done in the dream expressed what Solomon really was and chose. *And he came to Jerusalem,* his home, and the other sanctuary where the ark was placed.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. Solomon showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. He became wise, because he had set his heart upon it. The gift does not, cannot, come to us without study and work, and by God's blessing and help upon the ordinary means.

2. Solomon asked nothing merely for himself, but everything for the best doing of the work put into his hands. The higher good brought with it all the lesser blessings, and doubled their value.

3. We all need continually divine wisdom in order to discern between evil and good. We are often perplexed as to the right course. It is a blessed thing that God is willing to give us wisdom.

4. The case here is good for proof and for illustration of the principle that when men "covet earnestly" and supremely the best gifts, God loves not only to give these best things, but to throw in the lesser things as unasked gratuities.

5. There is a deep lesson for all in the order of God's gifts to Solomon. Wisdom and righteousness first, then worldly blessings. "Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness," then it is safe to give all other things, and not till then.



## A Noted Horseman's Experience.

Mr. Antoine Wendling, owner of Deveras 2114, and proprietor of the Clifton House, Brockville, says no liniment compares with Nerviline for general use around the stable. For strains, sprains, swellings, internal pains, and especially for affections of the whirl bone, Nerviline is unequalled. Mr. Wendling believes Nerviline is indispensable as a horse liniment; it has strength, penetrating power and works thoroughly. Every horse and stock owner should use Nerviline. Sold in large 25c. bottles.

Before you enter, and as you enter the church, breathe a silent prayer of invocation for the influence of the Holy Spirit.

# Ayer's

We know what all good doctors think of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. Ask your own doctor and find out. He will tell

## Cherry Pectoral

you how it quiets the tickling throat, heals the inflamed lungs, and controls the hardest of coughs.

"Ayer's Cherry Pectoral is well known in our family. We think it is the best medicine in the world for coughs and colds."  
KATIE FERRISSON, Fetaluma, Cal.  
25c. 50c. \$1.00.  
All druggists.

for  
**Hard Coughs**

One of Ayer's Pills at bedtime will hasten recovery. Gently laxative.

As you take your place, bow your head reverently in prayer for yourself and for all others who enter the sanctuary for the service about to begin.

*A Tonic for the Debilitated.*—Parmelee's Vegetable Pills by acting mildly but thoroughly on the secretions of the body are a valuable tonic, stimulating the lagging organs to healthy action and restoring them to full vigor. They can be taken in graduated doses, and so used that they can be discontinued at any time without return of the ailments which they were used to allay.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

If any one offers you a cheap imitation of or substitute for Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry, refuse it. Many of these cheaply prepared Diarrhea remedies are highly dangerous and should be avoided.

As the minister enters the pulpit, offer an earnest, silent prayer in his behalf.

*To Prevent is Better than to Repent.*—A little medicine in the shape of the wonderful pellets which are known as Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, administered at the proper time and with the directions adhered to often prevent a serious attack of sickness and save money which would go to the doctor. In all irregularities of the digestive organs they are an invaluable corrective and in cleansing the body they clear the skin of imperfections.

Go to church in a reverent spirit. On the way remember whither you go. Avoid lightness of manner and conversation on worldly topics.

*Cheapest of all Medicines.*—Considering the curative qualities of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil it is the cheapest medicine now offered to the public. The dose required in any ailment is small, and a bottle contains many doses. If it were valued at the benefit it confers, it would not be purchased for many times the price asked for it, but increased consumption has simplified and cheapened its manufacture.

In all the service take an active part; as hearer and worshipper.