

The Sunday-School.

FOURTH QUARTER,
LESSON IX.—Nov. 29.

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.

I CHRONICLES 28: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.* Prov. 3: 5.

The lesson includes not only I Chron. 28: 1-10, but also I Chron. 22, which is in a similar strain. The whole section, I Chron. 22-29, should be read, and also 2 Sam. 23: 1-7, and 1 Kings, 1. 2: 1-11. The last days of David, and his transfer of the kingdom and his unfinished work to Solomon.

DAVID'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM.—We now return to the history where we left it in Lesson VI. After the defeat and death of Absalom, David returned to Jerusalem and reigned there, continuing his preparations for the building of the temple, and making arrangements for his successor. David had accomplished nearly all of his heart's desire as to his kingdom. He had found it small and left it great. He found it chaos, and left it finely organized. He found religion at a low ebb, and left it earnest, organized for work. But there was one great work on which he had set his heart, which he could not accomplish, the rearing of a temple which should hold up the name of the true God before the nations, and make permanent in his own nation the principles and teachings of the divine religion.

THE CHOICE OF A SUCCESSOR.—David was growing old, and the infirmities of age were rapidly growing upon him. David's early exposures, his wars, and heavy cares and labors had left him a worn-out old man before he was seventy. The question of his successor must have been in every one's thoughts.

His older sons, were men of fierce passions and haughty temperament, and unfitted to carry out the designs which David wished to bequeath to his successor. Hence, under divine selection he had selected Solomon as his heir. But Adonijah, a man of between thirty and forty, had become, by death of Absalom, the heir to the throne, if the succession were determined by strict descent. He had no fitness for the throne, intellectually or otherwise. He had for some time affected regal state in chariots, horses, and running footmen. Taking advantage of David's increasing feebleness (1 Kings 1: 1), he resolved to make himself king. When Adonijah thought his project ripe he invited his adherents, with all the king's sons (except Solomon) to a great banquet. Here, amid the mirth of the festival, the cry was raised, "Long live King Adonijah." Joab, the mighty warrior, and Abiathar, one of the high priests, were among his abettors.

Nathan, the prophet, learning of the proceedings of Adonijah, immediately set to work to defeat the plan. He informed Bathsheba of what was going on, and she went to David and told him, while she was speaking Nathan himself came in and confirmed her report. Measures were immediately taken to proclaim Solomon as king, and the attempt of Adonijah failed.

SOLOMON.—I. His name means *The Peaceful*.

2. He was born about B. C. 1035 or 1034, in Jerusalem, and must have been nineteen or twenty years old when he was called to become king.

3. His father was David, in the maturity of his age; and his mother was Bathsheba. Solomon was their first son after their legal marriage.

4. He was placed under the care and training of the prophet Nathan, a faithful, pure, and wise teacher. He would be brought up in the religion and learning of the Jews.

5. On the other hand, he was brought up in luxury and wealth. The influences of the court were bad, and he had to resist the temptations of a flattered youth.

THE RATIFICATION ASSEMBLY.—V. 1. The kingdom was a constitutional monarchy, and it was necessary that the selection of Solomon should be ratified by the tribes. Hence, *David assembled, at Jerusalem, all the princes of Israel*, which included all the tribes. Those princes included (1) *the princes of the tribes*, called in 1 Chron. 27: 1, R.V., the heads of the fathers' houses. (2) *The captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course*. These each served one month of each year, and had twenty-four thousand men under him, and were probably engaged in building (1 Kings 5: 14-18), cutting timber, quarrying under Jerusalem stones for the temple, caring for the king's gardens, and such like work. (3) *Captains over the thousands, and . . . hundreds*, officers under the first named, as colonels and captains are under generals in the army. (4) *The stewards* (R.V., rulers) *over all the substance and possessions*. Such as storehouses, olive orchards, vineyards, wine cellars, sheep, cattle, camels, and asses, which are named in 1 Chron. 27: 25-31. (6) *The mighty men*, men of wealth and power, of large estates and influence, who were not officials, including the *valiant men*, which the R. V. makes synonymous with "mighty men." All these classes made a representative assembly, and what they agreed upon would be accepted by the tribes.

DAVID'S ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLY.—Vs. 2-7. *The king stood up upon his feet*. He usually spoke sitting on his throne. But he stood up to show the importance of the occasion, and to make sure that all could hear every word. *My brethren, and my people*. David addresses them with tender affection.

HIS PLAN AND HOPE.—*As for me, I had in mine heart*. For the honor of God, and for the good of the nation, to preserve them from the evils of idolatry, to inspire them with faith and love toward God, it was wise to *build an house of rest where could abide in a worthy home the ark of the covenant of the Lord*, the centre of the religious life of the nation. *And for the footstool of our Lord*. Heaven is his throne of glory; the earth, and the most magnificent temples that can be built upon it, are but his footstool. *He made ready for the building*. David had gathered immense sums of gold and silver, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, besides iron and brass beyond counting, and cedar from Mt. Lebanon, and marble building stones. (See Chron. 22: 14-16).

HIS DISAPPOINTMENT.—*But God said . . . Thou shalt not build an house for my name*. God denied David's wish only to have it accomplished in a larger, more perfect way. See Lesson II of this quarter. *Because thou hast . . . shed blood*. The shedding of blood,

even in war, was held to render a man unclean, and so to disqualify him for a time from association with the worshippers of God (Num. 31: 19). The odor of his work clung to his garments. The temple was to be a house of peace. All its associations should inculcate peace.

THE DIVINE WAY OF ANSWERING DAVID'S DESIRE.—*The Lord . . . chose me . . . to be king over Israel for ever*. God did not forget him, as might seem to the people from his refusal to let him build the temple. But God had given him a perpetual kingdom.

SOLOMON APPOINTED TO BE DAVID'S SUCCESSOR.—*He hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne*. His own title having been made secure, he shows that the same title, by the same authority, descends to Solomon. God's choice of Solomon was shown through the prophet Nathan, through the character of Solomon, and his fitness to be king. *He shall build my house*. Carrying out David's plans and hopes. *I have chosen him to be my son*.

According to the Oriental use of the word "son," the phrase, "he shall be my son," signified that he would be distinguished by those qualities which were held to be characteristic of Israel's God.

THE ONE CONDITION.—*If he be constant to do my commandments*. Only through this condition could the kingdom be established forever. The whole history of the Jews is a commentary on this verse. If we be constant to our duty, then, and not otherwise, we may expect the continuance of God's favor.

AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE.—V. 8.—A good king would do very much to make the kingdom what it ought to be, but he could not succeed unless the people joined with him. David therefore besought the people to do their part. *In the sight (the eyes) of all Israel*, who were *the congregation of the Lord*, Jehovah their God. These rulers were surrounded by "a great cloud of witnesses," who would watch their course. *And in the audience (the ears) of our God* (who would hear their promises) *keep (obey) and seek for (do your best to learn) all the commandments of the Lord*. The rulers should be most careful to set a good example before the people. No nation can win the highest success unless its people are righteous.

AN APPEAL TO SOLOMON.—Vs. 9, 10. David now turns from the princes of Israel to Solomon, and urges him to the only course by which his life can be a success.

1. *Know thou the God of thy father*. It was through God that David had accomplished his great work. What God had done for the father he would do for the son on the same conditions.

2. *Serve him with a perfect heart*. An undivided allegiance, seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

3. *A willing mind*. Freely choosing the right way, delighting in God.

4. A motive for obedience: *For the Lord searcheth all hearts*. He will know whether the obedience is sincere and true.

5. Another motive: *If thou seek him, strive to know his will and to obey him, he will be found*. No one ever seeks him in vain.

6. A third motive: *If thou forsake him*. God cannot give to the evil and the disobedient the blessings that belong to righteousness.

7. A fourth motive: *The Lord hath chosen thee*. He has given you a great and blessed work to do, which can be

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THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF DAVID.—I Chron. 29: 26-30. David died at the age of seventy. He was buried at Jerusalem, in the tombs of the kings cut in the rocks under Mt. Zion.

REVIEW OF DAVID'S CHARACTER.—David was a brave, loving man, with strong passions, a warm heart, and a ready, generous hand; a devoted friend, bright, joyous, poetic, deeply religious and devotional, strong in faith, unselfish. He fell into some of the vices of the age; he committed a great crime; he was too easy in his family government; but his repentance and public confession prove him to be at heart a true and godly man. He was a great general, a great statesman, a great poet, a great organizer, a great man. The portrait in 1 Chron. 29: 28 is a true picture of David's life as a whole.

It is hard to realize how great a change David made in his kingdom. He organized the government; he extended its boundaries; he developed the resources of the nation; he promoted the arts; he opened up commerce; he distributed the Levites, the religious teachers, over the land; he organized courts of justice; he unified the people.

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