

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, July 9th, 1876.—Solomon's Choice.—2 Chron. i. 1-17.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 7-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally." James i. 5.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Psa. lxxii. Tuesday, Ex. xl. Wednesday, 2 Cor. v. Thursday, Hebrews viii. Friday, 1 Kings iii. 4-28. Saturday, Job xxviii. Sunday, Matthew vi. 19-34.

ANALYSIS.—I. Solomon's sacrifice at Gibeon. Vs. 1-6. II. His prayer for wisdom. Vs. 7-10. III. God's promise to him. Vs. 11, 12. IV. Reign over Israel. Vs. 13. V. Wealth and commerce. Vs. 14-17.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—After a reign of forty years—seven at Hebron, and thirty-three at Jerusalem—the man "raised up on high," "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," the shepherd, the poet, the soldier, the statesman, the king, "the type and prophecy of Jesus," died in "a good old age, full of days, riches and honor, and Solomon his son reigned in his stead," in royal majesty such as had not been seen before him in Israel. The date of Solomon's accession is fixed with precision to the year 1015 B. C. Jewish tradition, agreeing with the Scripture narrative, makes him at this time eighteen years of age. He reigned forty years (B. C. 1015-975), indulging himself not only in large intellectual labors, but also sadly in sensual pleasure, the end of which was, in his own expressive speech, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—This verse is rather an introduction to the whole book, than to the account of the sacrifice. Strengthened in his kingdom. Both by the stamping out of treason (1 Kings ii.) and by his success in other respects. See the account in 1 Kings ii-x, and in 2 Chronicles i-ix. The presence of God with him does not refer to his spiritual presence consciously and sweetly enjoyed in the heart (John xiv. 21-23), but to the bestowment of worldly greatness. The latter is of little worth compared to the former, and the former is not less for the lowly than for the great.

I. The Sacrifice.—Verse 2.—Spake unto all Israel. Summoned Israel to meet and attend him to the sacrifice and festival at Gibeon.

Verse 3.—All the congregation. The assembly was gathered first at Jerusalem. Gibeon. To the north of Jerusalem six and a half miles. Noted for the event given in Joshua ix. 3-15, and as being a "priest's city." Joshua xxi. 17. There was the tabernacle. Made at Sinai. See last clause of the verse, and Exodus xxv, xxvi, xxvii. "As long as Canaan remained unconquered and the people were still therefore an army, the tabernacle was probably moved from place to place, wherever the host of Israel was for the time encamped, at Gilgal (Josh. iv. 19), in the valley between Ebal and Gerizim (Joshua viii. 30-35), again at the headquarters of Gilgal (Joshua ix. 6; x. 15, 43), and finally, as at the place that the Lord had chosen at Shiloh (Joshua ix. 27, xviii. 1)," where it remained through the period of the Judges, but dishonored with corrupt and heathenish forms of worship. At the time of Eli's death the ark was removed by his sons from the tabernacle to the headquarters of the army, and captured by the Philistines, and never returned to it; the tabernacle seems to have been far a time in Saul's reign at Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 1-6), and afterwards, doubtless in consequence of Saul's massacre of the priest at Nob, removed to Gibeon (1 Sam. xxii. 17-19; 1 Chron. xvi. 39), where we find it in the beginning of David's reign, and where therefore it had remained at least forty years before this visit to it by Solomon and his people. It had been made lawful to sacrifice at Jerusalem on the site designated by Jehovah for the future temple. 1 Chron. xxi. 28-30. The servant of the Lord [Jehovah]. Title of highest honor.

Verse 4.—But the ark of God had David brought up. 2 Sam. vi. On its previous history while in the hands of the Philistines see 1 Sam. v. vi. Pitched a tent. Some infer from vs. 5 that Solomon afterwards deposited it within the new sanctuary as a sacred relic.

Verse 5.—The brazen altar, etc. Ex. xxvii. 1, 2. He put. Margin "was there," so explaining why Solomon chose to sacrifice there.

Verse 6.—Went up. On the "high place," vs. 3. Burnt offerings. "In which the main idea is offering the whole victim to God representing the devotion of the sacrificers, body and soul to God." Solomon here acts as king, and hence for the whole nation. Hence the greatness of the sacrifice.

II. Solomon's request. See 1 Kings iii. 5-9.—Verse 7. In that night. After the sacrifice, and when he was full of the thought of his kingdom, his kingdom, and God's covenant promises. Did God appear. "In a dream."

1 Kings iii. 5. And said. Not less truly because in the dream. Ask what I shall give thee. Meeting Solomon thus because he had "preparation of heart."

Verse 8.—Thou hast showed great mercy, etc. Here, as usual, mercies past are a plea for mercies to come, not as making a claim in justice, and so changing mercy to debt, but as revealing God, and so showing what it is his nature and pleasure to do "for his own name's sake." 1 Chron. xxviii. 5.

Verse 9.—Thy promise unto David, etc. As given in 1 Chron. xxviii. 6, 7. Over a people like the dust, etc. Compare the terms of the promise to Abraham. Gen. xxii. 17. The people had been recently numbered by David. 1 Chron. xxi. 5. During the times of David and Solomon the kingdom took rank with the other great Eastern empires, such as Egypt and Assyria. The sense of the greatness of his realm very fully became a solemn sense of responsibility, rather than a hollow pride.

Verse 10.—Give me now wisdom and knowledge, etc. As we have seen, past mercy is, in vs. 8, made a plea for future mercy, reinforced in the first of verse 9 by the plea of God's promise and veracity. Who can judge, etc. Strongly expressing his want of sufficiency, as by himself. Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

III. Jehovah's Answer.—Verse 11.—And God said. See on vs. 7. Because this was in thine heart, etc. Viz., the desire for "wisdom and knowledge," the desire to serve his people more than to advance himself. This is the very essence of patriotism. The wisdom desired was practical rather than speculative. See 1 Kings iii. 16-28. His "proverbs" have been a source of vast blessing to the world. Judge my people over whom I, etc. Bringing to view the fact already recognized by Solomon that he reigned for Jehovah, and hence in reigning was acting the part of a steward, whose first duty, and in this case, first desire, was to be faithful. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

Verse 12.—Wisdom and knowledge is granted. Because this was the honest, earnest desire uppermost in the heart, and pleasing to God. And I will give thee riches and wealth, etc. Here as often, or always, more is given than is asked.

IV. Solomon's Prosperity.—Verse 13.—Then Solomon, etc. The section beginning thus is intended to show that God was as good as his word.

Verse 14.—Compare 1. Kings iv. 26-28. Gathered chariots and horsemen, etc. In Deut. xvii. 16, 17, when Israel's choice of a king is foretold and condemned, the king is expressly commanded to multiply neither horses nor wives. This command, in both its parts, Solomon deliberately broke.

Verse 15.—Silver and gold, etc. In his preparation for building and furnishing the Temple, in presents to himself, in tribute, etc. 1 Kings x. Cedar trees. From Lebanon by way of Joppa. See ch. ii; 1 Chron. xxii.

QUESTIONS.—How long had David reigned at Jerusalem? How long at Hebron? How long was Solomon at his accession? How long was this before Christ? How long did Solomon reign? Making his reign and that of his father how long in all?

Vs. 3 Where was Gibeon? To what was its reputation chiefly due? Where was the tabernacle first erected? It had two central apartments: the holy place, 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, 15 feet high, containing the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread opposite, and the altar of incense between, and the holy of holies, 16 feet each way, a perfect square containing the ark upon the mercy-seat; where would you have looked to find the altar of burnt offerings? See Exodus xl. 29. What were its dimensions? Of what material was it made? Vs. 6. Why did Solomon sacrifice ten hecatombs of beasts?

Vs. 10. What phase of "wisdom and knowledge" was it that Solomon sought? Where did Solomon soon have occasion to display his practical sagacity? 1 Kings iii. 16-28.

Vs. 12 Does God give more or less than the truly humble ask? What should all seek before earthly good? Is earthly good to be despised? Not at all, if subordinate to higher claims. Matthew vi. 33.

—Baptist Teacher.

Sunday, July 16th 1876.—Solomon's Temple.—2 Chron. iii. 1-17.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

Neighbor Willie.

BY MRS. J. G. BURNETT.

Little Willie's a cunning and dear little boy, Always brimming over with frolic and joy.

I do think it's not once in a month that he cries,

And that is the reason he has such bright eyes!

He's a stout little fellow, cheeks rosy and red, And hair like his papa's cut close to his head.

He wears pants, too, although pretty young,

And has, oh, what a little French twist of a tongue!

Sometimes to our house on an errand he's sent,

And back we must go to find out what is meant.

He'll jabber away just as fast as can be, But Dutch, French, or English, its all Greek to me.

My two little fellows, named Bertie and Bud!

Their breakfast once over, like young deer will scud

In search of this Willie; for seas you might stem,

Yet fail, if you tried, to part Willie and them.

One morning for breakfast they scarcely could wait;

For Willie was swinging away on his gate, And shouting out lustily over the way,

"I say, id ou dorn a ad dum pe a tay?" "My dog a stump-tail?" calls Bertie in fun,

Why no, that can't be for I haven't got one."

"No, no!" answers Willie, and laughing away,

"I say, id ou dorn a ad dum pe a tay?" "A stone coming this way? Well, it just better not."

That's not what you say? Well, who can tell what

You mean by such gibberish lingo as that? A 'dorn,' and a dumptie, a 'tay' and a 'at'!"

At this Master Willie grew "mad" as could be,

And Bertie came running and laughing to me;

"O mamma," he says, "do come and find out

What Willie is trying to tell me about." So I went to the gate, and said with a smile,

"Come over here, Willie, and play for awhile.

Can't you come, and why not?" But all he would say

Was, "I say, id ou dorn a ad dum pe a tay?"

"Well, Willie," said I, "you speak pretty plain,

But a little too fast; now, we'll try it again."

So over he went with it, much in this way.

"I say—id—ou—dorn—a—ad—dum—pe—a—tay?"

Well, I looked at Bertie, and Bertie at me As we puzzled and pondered on what it could be.

While Willie's looks said—he's as sharp as a knife—

"Such dunces I never did see in my life?"

I've not time at present to tell you about The way that we managed to make it all out.

But we had some visitors spending the day.

And his mamma had said that when they went away,

He could come and see Bertie and "Buddy" once more,

But mustn't go plaguing their mama before.

So what the dear baby was trying to say Was, "Are you going to have company to-day?"

—Christian Weekly.

"I like to see everything Happy."

"Take care, my dear! Mind you don't fall in! What are you reaching after?"

The words came from a lady passing along a country lane, and were addressed to a little girl who was leaning over a pond by the roadside, reaching after something with a long twig which she had apparently picked up in the hedge. The child drew back as the lady spoke, and turning to her, said simply—

"Oh, if you please, ma'am, here is a poor bee got into the water, and can't get out again, and I'm afraid he will be drowned. I was trying to push that

leaf to him, for him to crawl upon; but my stick isn't long enough, and I can't reach it."

"Let me try," said the lady, smiling.

"I dare say I can manage it. Poor little bee," she said, as she took the twig from the child's hand, "you shall not be drowned if we can help you; we should not like to be drowned ourselves!"

And with a little effort she succeeded in guiding the leaf to the drowning insect.

They watched it with deep interest as it struggled to gain a footing on the dry leaf; and when at length it succeeded and began to wipe the water from its wings, it would have been hard to say which was the more pleased, the lady or the child!

"There, I think it will do now," said the lady. "The warm sunshine will soon dry its wings, and it will fly away as gaily as ever."

"But I have known children," she said, as they went along the lane together—for they were both going in the same direction—"both boys and girls, who would have taken more pleasure in seeing that poor little creature drowned than in helping it out of the water. I know one boy in particular who, I fear, would even have thrown stones into the water to sink the poor thing. I am glad that no such boys or girls caught sight of it before you."

"So am I," said the child. "I like to see everything happy."

"I like to see everything happy!"

What a beautiful sentiment! How like God it is to have such a feeling! Look at the myriad creatures that God has made, and with which He has peopled the world! So different in size and shape, in habits and movements—some flying through the air, others burrowing in the earth; some walking over the land, others swimming through the waters. Think how wonderfully He has provided for the innumerable wants of all these creatures, and in various ways fitted them for enjoyment, and how evident it becomes that God loves to see everything happy!

Learn the lesson, dear children—the lesson of kindness, not only to one another, but to all God's creatures.—Children's Friend.

Be Honest.

A few days after a large fire, a gentleman who had kept a hat-store which had been burned was accosted in the street by a boy, who said, "Mr. H.—, I have a whole armful of hats that belong to you. I carried them home the day of the fire, so that no one should steal them. If you will tell me where to bring them, I will go right home and get them!"

The gentleman appointed a place, and the boy ran away towards his home. Soon he appeared with his hats, and sure enough, he had all that his two arms could hold. When he had laid them down, the gentleman began to try first one and then another on his head. When he found one that fitted him, he said, "There my little man, that is yours."

He was a poor boy, and a nice new hat that was "just the fit" was a greater treat to him than to many boys. When the little fellow fully realized that the hat was his own, he began to caper about, and cried, "See! see! I have got a new hat, and I didn't steal it either. I know another boy that has got an armful of hats, and I don't think he means to bring them back at all."

The boy that wears that hat can hold his head up straight and look every one in the face, because he is an honest boy. But that other boy—there must be a hard spot somewhere in his heart, that must feel very heavy when he thinks of those hats. Man may not know, but God sees, and when he looks down on that heart, he sees THIEF written there. Which boy will you be like?—Evangelist.

The greatest Toothache ever known.

If any of you should have a toothache, my poor children, and it's very likely that you will, just look into the brook, or any other mirror, with your tear-dimmed eyes, and notice how small is the little white tormentor that is causing so much pain. Then, by way of comfort, I want you to reflect how much worse it would be if this tiny white thing were an elephant's great tusk, with toothache all through it.

Perhaps you will say that elephants can't have toothache? Then listen to the sad story of Chunee, the elephant of Exeter Change.

At Exeter Change, in the great city of London, there was, many years ago, a menagerie on the second story of a building. Here the elephant, Chunee by name—a very quiet, well trained beast—was confined in a cage, under which the floor had been strengthened to support his weight. Chunee never came out, but seemed very happy, for all that. Suddenly he became raving mad, and screamed and trumpeted, and endeavored vigorously to tear away the bars of the cage.

Now, if he had succeeded in getting out upon the floor, Mr. Chunee would have immediately dropped through into an apothecary shop below. If he had fallen into the scales, his exact weight might be ascertained, after a fashion; but, in other respects, a mad elephant in a drug-store would have been far worse than a bull in a china-shop. If he had been sane, he might have had a nice time, eating the liquorice and tough-lozenges and sugar-coated pills and candy: but as he wasn't sane, the accident was not to be desired.

Well, Chunee grew more and more wild and dangerous, until, at last, the "Beefeaters," who are the keepers of the Tower of London, were called upon to destroy the poor beast. They discharged many balls from their old-fashioned muskets into his body, but loss of blood seemed to increase his fury, and not lessen his strength. There were no rifle-teams in those days, to reach his brain with a single shot, so a piece of artillery was actually brought up, and poor Chunee, obeying his keeper's voice, even in his rage, kneeled down, and was shot to death with a cannon-ball.

Then the surgeons discovered that the elephant had been suffering from the greatest toothache ever known. His tusk, preserved in the warehouse of the East India Company shows this.

Now just think of what an awful thing six feet of toothache must have been, and pity poor Chunee!—St. Nicholas.

The Silly young Rabbit.

There was a young rabbit Who had a bad habit— Sometimes he would do what his mother forbade,

And one frosty day, His mother did say, "My child, you must stay in the burrow close hid;

For I hear the dread sounds Of huntsmen and hounds, Who are searching around for rabbits like you."

Should they see but your head, They would soon shoot you dead, And the dogs would be off with you quicker than boo!"

But poor foolish being, When no one was seeing, Looking out from his burrow to take a short play,

He hopped o'er the ground With many a bound, And looked around proudly, as if he would say,

Do I fear a man? Now catch me who can! So this young rabbit ran to a fine apple-tree,

Where, gnawing the bark, He thought not to hark The coming of hunters, so careless was he; Now, as rabbits are good,

When roasted or stewed, A man came along, hunting rabbits for dinner;

He saw little Bun, Then raised his big gun— And there he lay dead, the foolish young sinner.

An Editor is described as a man who is liable to crying babies, grammatical blunders, tooth-ache, typographical errors, and lapse of memory, and has 25,000 people watching to catch him tripping—a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief; poorly paid, poorly estimated, yet envied by many and despised perhaps, by some of the great men he has made.

Condemn no man for not thinking as you think. Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself. Let every one use his own judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to Heaven. Abhor all approach, in any kind of degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason or persuade a man into the truth, never attempt to force him into it.