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In reviewing these Old Testament characters, we will keep in mind, First, "that history repeats itself." Under similar circumstances, human nature, with like conditions of heart, is likely to act now as ancients did then. Second, conflicts of Israel after the flesh were types of spiritual conflicts now after the Spirit "with principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this world." Third, when in the New Testament, names of such characters, as Achan and Balaam and Jezebel, or Job, Enoch and Elijah and Joshua are used these are to be studied for their spiritual rather than for historical or biographical interest.

So here, in Solomon, that is Solomon at his best, we will remember. For, alas, it is true that some once good and great men who had won special favor and great blessing from God, have afterwards sunk into shame and sensualism or soared into the realms of Satan with pride, and only the memory of God's goodness to them when they were good is given to us for our reading. There is a limitation to Old Testament precedent for our emulation in the life of faith.

Solomon is an example of this. There is no—not even the slightest allusion to any subsequent diversion, decline or default, nor to any withdrawal of God's pleasure or favor. There is, however, a single: "If" in verse 14, that is significant and suggestive. It recognizes the possibility of even his falling. None of us should ever lose sight of that possibility. The "Ifs" are not blotted out from our sign boards, until we have finished the course. They were still in view when Paul was making his race in Phillipians III, and it was not until 2 Timothy IV:6-8 we find them all erased. Meanwhile we read of what he left in writing for us: "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." (Hebrews III:14).

Another good point we may note, is to remember the good some had done, and the good things some have left in writing when they were in union with God that have continued to bless thousands, after they themselves had gone astray. We ourselves know three hymns that are still sung to the blessing of many and the saving of some whose different writers have gone into darkness and oblivion. And at least two of the most popular and productive books that have ever been written and read in our day for Christians, young and old, were written by authors richly endowed of God, but who have long since passed into vital error and virulent sin. Like Solomon here we will treasure the good we have seen in them. And reserve our judgment as to the other. For who knows but that God may have a better way of balancing up than we can even imagine?

One thing that pleased the Lord greatly in Solomon's prayer was its omissions. Because thou hast not asked for thyself "long life" nor "riches," nor the life of thine enemies. It is hard to find "self" there. Have you ever noticed, beloved that in the Model of Prayer, the Lord gave us, there is not one "me" or "my;" but all is "us" and "our." We are not supposed to be praying for ourselves alone, but always for others as well. Probably, that unlike Solomon's here, the omissions from some of our prayers are hollow monuments

of public and personal interests we have been too selfish to have imperturbed for.

But what Solomon did pray for was exactly to God's own mind. Isn't it blessed to have the mind of God, and that on our earthly affairs, and particularly in our way of serving him? "Because thou has asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment." (v. 11). Who, of us, have by natural endowment or by educational acquirement, understanding and judgment to fulfill our Kingdom service and minister our spiritual truths to the souls of sinners and the household of faith? For the wisdom that is required for the winning of souls? But God has left promise that meets our deficiency. Here are some samples: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go."

"The meek will He guide in judgment: the meek will He show His way."

Not unto the wise and prudent, but unto those who, like Solomon here, felt to say: "I am but a little child," it is written, "God shall reveal them unto him." So here, what He says unto Solomon, is but a sample of what He will say unto us. "Behold I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart." Let us, dear reader, accept and appropriate that right now to ourselves for whatever trust or obligation or perplexity confronts us! Solomon got no copyright on it. I have known others to copy the very words of this prayer and get in reality the very same answer. And we may rely that all the wisdom of Solomon left in Biblical record is by inspiration of God, and that is the just property of saints of all ages.

And it is always like God to add something in besides what we have asked for. Hear what He says to Solomon. "I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any like unto thee all thy days." And is not that the way He speaks unto us where He says: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.?"

#### GOD'S MAJORITY

When Saladin beheld the sword of Richard, the lion-hearted, he marvelled that a weapon so ordinary could have wrought such mighty deeds. The brave Englishman bared his arm and said, "It was not the sword that did these things: it was the arm of Richard." It was the arm of God that fought against the Midian host. What mattered it to God whether Gideon's army numbered one hundred thousand or one thousand or one? One with God is a majority. Anyhow, God measures men; never counts them.—W. E. Biederwolf, in *The Man Nobody Missed*.

Somewhere I have read a little story of a child in a woodland camp whose father sent him with a letter to the village, pointing out a trail over which the lad had never gone before. "All right, father, but I don't see how that path will ever reach the town," said the boy. "Do you see the trail as far as the big tree down there?" answered the man. "Oh, yes, I see that far." "Well, when you get there by the tree you'll see the trail a little farther ahead, and so on until you get within sight of the houses of the village." There is in our pilgrimage of faith an element of sheer faith, not seeing.—Sunday School Times, Frederick Robertson (Brighton).

A friend and I were walking along a busy thoroughfare in London when we came to a crossing where several roads met. "I think," said my companion cautiously surveying the swirling traffic, "I think we had better pop down the subway." I thought so too; we certainly stood a better chance of popping up on the other side.

It seemed sensible enough. When it comes to getting from our confused goings on to the Highway of Holiness it most certainly means a going-down first.

The thought of complete submission to God is unwelcome to the proud heart, but it is the first condition of receiving the life of the Spirit. Yet, although this act of unqualified surrender is required of us, we are not to assume that it means the denial of vigorous personality. We are called to be saints, not pious nonentities.

He who is completely surrendered to God need never surrender his soul to ungodly man.

Moses who left his position of power at the Egyptian court and was willing to tend sheep in the back country, could yet return to a tyrant Pharaoh and declare his downfall. And Paul, the proud Pharisee, submitted himself to God regarding himself as less than the least. But though made a prisoner and in chains, he could make a Felix tremble.

The way of surrender is by no means a track for running away from life. He who is most completely submitted to the Father's will is for all time the greatest example of personality and power.

Jesus touched life at all points. He who was once a little Child retained His understanding of childhood. He knew the mind of youth whether of young ruler or young fisherman or young maiden. He understood the affairs of trade and the problems of making a living. His parables deal with the actualities of life, including the daily occupations of His hearers, matters of debit and credit, the judicious handling of money.

In the sphere of the intellect His genius was more than a match for the cleverest brains of His day. His social contacts were with all kinds of people. He could join easily in the homely festivities in the country village, restoring the glow when things have gone flat, just as He could attend a stiff dinner party in town, brush aside the snubs of the supercilious, and become complete master of the situation. He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and faced at last the greatest mystery of all, but He overcame even the sharpness of death.

Though He learned obedience, there is nothing effeminate about the personality of Jesus, and it would be contrary to His teaching and example to assume that an ascetic withdrawal from legitimate contacts with life is in itself conducive to holy living.

For Holiness cannot be merited even by the most rigorous restrictions or self-denial; and although Jesus spoke of plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand "if they should offend," it was not His idea that our lives should be mutilated in order to ensure our sanctification, but rather that by His healing touch they should be made whole.

That we may bring if need arise

No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

One may see, walking through some Eastern bazaar a dark-skinned fakir possessed of only a begging-bowl and as little dress as