Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom

Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom

By Julian S. Carr

GOLDEN TEXT

"Then that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed"

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Please Notice

I Do not claim originality for this lecture as a whole. In preparing my lesson, I incorporate bodily any suggestion that I find in any of the various "Helps" I use.

My class is composed of some forty persons, averaging, I guess 50 years of age. Some of them it may be, were members of the Church before I was born, and in the enjoyment of a ripe Christian experience. Hence it taxes my abilities to teach such a class, to such extent, that although I give much time to the preparation of my lesson, I copy freely any idea, expression, paragraph or illustration, which in my judgment will make the lesson better, and calculated to do well.

JULIAN S. CARR

The Golden Text

It Would not be worth while to spend much time on a study of Solomon's wealth and glory, except for some lessons his experience teaches us about the use and abuse of riches, and the greatest lesson of all, that the chief good of man cannot be found in them. Riches and real pleasure are not hand maidens, nor do they long consort together, unless the riches are dedicated to God and pleasure is found in Jesus Christ.

When men every where are talking either of the gold standard, or the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to i, it seems a little peculiar that we should be studying about a tiine in the history of the world when silver and gold were as plenteous as the stones on the highway. Yet, then as now, men were so engrossed with the pleasures and cares of this perishing world, that many trampled like swine the “pearl of great price” under their unhallowed feet.

The first thing Solomon did after his coronation as king was to hold a great

national festival at Gibeon, a celebrated mountain or hill, six miles north of Jerusalem. Here Solomon made the first display of the extravagant plan upon which he proposed to conduct his operations, for here it was he offered 1,000 burnt offerings. The tabernacle which had been constructed by Moses, some 500 years before in the wilderness, was at Gibeon, which gave to the place a peculiar sanctity. It was known as the principal " High Place" in the land of Israel. Solomon displayed great pomp in his visit to Gibeon, the object of which was to impress the people of the greatness and grandeur of his kingdom. The number of sacrifices offered by him at this time seems almost incredible, and yet we must accept the record as true, for it is God's word, and besides we have in secular history similar accounts of the vast number of animals offered in sacrifice to heathen gods. Heroditus says that Cræsus King of Lydia offered up 3000 of every kind of sacrificial beasts to the god of the Delphic Oracle. Xerxes offered 1000 oxen at one time to the Trojan Minerva.

How sad it is, despite Solomon's great wealth and wisdom, and in spite of the great favor God visited upon him, that the end was like the settiug of a grand luminous sun, when the day is dying behind a lowering murky.cloud hanging in the western sky. The text is :

“And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which appeared unto him twice,

“And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

“Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, forasmuch as this is done of thee and thou has not kept my covenant and statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and will give it to thy servant.”

The text shows that God did so, leaving one tribe for David's sake. “Because they have forsaken me said the Lord God, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which was right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgrnents as David did. And unto his

son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen to put my name there.

"And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was 40 years, and Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead."

Solomon started well. We can not make him out a remarkable saint in any period of his life, but it is clear that in the beginning he loved the Lord, and that he walked according to the law in a way that reminded one of his father. Not that he was at any time a deeply spiritual man; not that amid his luxurious surroundings he betrayed a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. On the other hand, he did not manifest an intense longing for God as David his father did during the greater portion of his life, and felt more deeply in his darkest hours. There was not a speck in the bright sky when the young king came to the throne, all was quiet and secure and there was