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THE KING OF PEACE INAUGURATED

- 1 KINGS 1:32-40,50-53. - NOVEMBER 22. -

Golden Text: – "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind."

– 1 Chron. 28:9.

SOLOMON'S name signifies peaceful. Nathan, the Prophet, who was his tutor, called him Jedidiah, which signifies, "beloved of Jehovah." Apparently he inherited certain natural traits which were much to his advantage, and under special divine blessing gave him properly the title, "the wise man." A writer says of him:

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"His parental inheritance was remarkably strong in several directions. His father David was in the maturity of his age; his mother was the grand-daughter of the Prince Ahithophel, whose advice 'was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God.' He thus inherited from his mother sagacity, quickness of judgment, judicial insight and perhaps some sensual weakness; from his father, thoughtfulness, literary taste, the skill of ruling and an interest in religion. His bodily form and countenance must have borne the graceful characteristics of all David's children; and, if we may follow the description given in the Canticles, he was fair, with bushy locks, dark as the raven's wing, yet not without a golden glow, tall and imposing."

He was about twenty years of age when his reign began. His father, King David, was about seventy years old and quite feeble, and it was manifest to all that a successor to the throne must soon be found. David's eldest son, Amnon, was murdered by Absalom, who was next in years, and the latter was slain in the battle of his rebellion. The next in age, "the heir apparent," was Adonijah, who evidently understood that his father, the king, premeditated

that Solomon should be his successor, and this purpose he sought to thwart by himself seizing the kingdom on the pretext that his father was now too old to administer its affairs.

When Adonijah thought his project ready, he invited his adherents with all of the king's sons – except Solomon, who seemed to have shared his jealousy – to a great banquet in the "royal garden." Here, amid the mirth of the festival, a preconcerted cry was raised, "Long live King Adonijah"! Joab, King David's able general, now advanced in years, and Abiathar, the High Priest, were among his abettors. Thus the second conspiracy was hatched in David's family.

"THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD"

"God is not in all their thoughts," writes the Prophet. This was true of Absalom's conspiracy, and again of Adonijah's. They did not consider that the kingdom of Israel was the special institution of the Lord, different from other kingdoms, so that, as the Scriptures declare, it was God's Kingdom. Thus we read, "Solomon sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord in the room of his father David." Had the conspirators realized that they were really attempting an interference with the Divine arrangements, surely neither attempt would have been made. God's people of today should be on the alert to discern in all of life's affairs, the will of the Lord. We surely should know that the Lord's wisdom and power are with the interests of Spiritual Israel in all of their affairs, in such a manner and to such a degree that human conspiracies and oppositions can work only harm to those who foment them. Though the Lord may permit these to go to great lengths and to have apparent success, as in the case of the conspiracy of the high priests and Scribes and Judas against our Lord, or in the case of Absalom and his coadjutors against King David; but the assurance given to all who have the faith to receive it is that "all things must work together for good to them who love

God, who are the called ones according to his purpose," and that it must always be true in the case of all the Lord's people; as Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou couldst have no power at all except it were permitted thee of my Father." The Father will permit nothing which would interfere with his glorious plans. He assures us of this, saying, "The word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void; it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it, and accomplish that which I please."

SOLOMON CHOSEN, ANOINTED, PROCLAIMED

In due time, Divine providence drew the attention of King David to Adonijah's conspiracy – in proper time for him to take the necessary steps to accomplish the Divine will. Our lesson tells of how David called another priest, Nathan the Prophet, and Benaiah, another general, and sent them with his son Solomon to the valley just outside the city gate and near the very place where Jesus later rode on the ass. Solomon was directed to ride on King David's own white mule, an act which would of itself proclaim him David's appointed successor. With this special envoy went the two companies of the king's special body-guard, the Cherethites and the Pelethites. Presently, the anointing performed, the trumpet was blown announcing Solomon king, and the people unanimously confirmed this with great shouts and rejoicing. Thus was Solomon brought in state to the palace, where he reigned jointly with his father David for some six months until the death of the latter.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM AND MODERATION

The king was a very young man for the heavy responsibilities devolving upon him, and the moderation displayed shows him to have been not merely well-balanced but well-trained. Solomon was born when his father was in his 53rd year, and at a time, doubtless, when he had learned from experience that he had been too indulgent to the remainder of his

family. David had not brought them up with sufficient strictness. He had not realized sufficiently the need of training them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Great affairs of state had claimed his attention and the children had been left too much to the care of others not so reverential as the king. Himself religious from his youth, he seems to have supposed that his children would possess similar qualities of heart and mind. Evidently he had not sufficiently realized the demoralizing influence of wealth and earthly honors; that these do not make for godliness but, to the contrary, cultivate pride, worldliness, godlessness.

It was doubtless due to David's increasing reverence for the Lord, and his realization of the mistakes made in the training of his other children, and his desire that his successor to the throne should honor the Lord and carry forward the interests of religion – these things doubtless led the king to put his son Solomon under the special care of the Prophet Nathan, with the view to his preparation to serve the Lord and his kingdom righteously, and to build the temple of the Lord which David had purposed to build but was not allowed. The Prophet Nathan knew of the temple project and of God's promise that it should be built [R4286 : page 358] by David's heir, and that Solomon was the chosen of the Lord and of the king. We can imagine the Prophet's faithfulness in the training of Prince Solomon for the duties of the position he was intended to fill.

Respecting Adonijah it is written, "His father had not displeased him at any time." (I Kings 1:6.) Evidently he was a spoiled child, and one that probably felt glad that his father had never put him under the tutelage of so religious an instructor as the Prophet Nathan. He no doubt considered that Solomon was specially hampered and hindered from certain pleasures and "sowing of wild oats" and in general had too much restriction. Solomon, however, seems to have been greatly pleased by this experience, which illustrates well the fact that the twig that needs

to be bent should be dealt with early. Fain would we impress this lesson upon all parents and guardians – that their wards need supervision and loving religious control, and that it is a mistake to allow the early years of life to be wasted through inattention and lack of training and then expect good results. [R4287 : page 358]

WE ARE IN TRAINING FOR A THRONE

Our Father is the Great King and he has promised that the Christ shall sit upon his throne, and we have been invited to become parts of the Christ, the Anointed, the Messiah. Shall we wonder that we need training for this important position; shall we be surprised if disciplines are imposed and requirements made of us more than are imposed upon those not intended for this high position! Surely the arrangements of our Father, the Great King, are wise and righteous altogether. Therefore, those who are in full sympathy and accord with him will be anxious to learn the lessons and to make the preparations necessary for the Kingdom honors. These must not wonder if they are excluded from the companionship and feastings of the Absalom and Adonijah types. They may be disesteemed by their ambitious brethren and may be evil spoken of, from the Head down to the last member of the Body, but if they have the Divine favor, theirs shall be not only the anointing but also the acceptance to the throne. "Have patience, brethren, the hour of your deliverance draweth nigh"; "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

OUR GOLDEN TEXT

"Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind." There is a golden sentiment expressed in these words. Outward service is not sufficient in our dealing with the Lord. "He seeketh such to worship, as worship him in spirit and in truth." Solomon's excellent start in his high

office and the favor of God which then came upon him had been preceded by years of study. Under the Prophet's direction and under his father's suggestions he was enabled to enter into the spirit of his father's plan respecting the erection of the great temple at Jerusalem which would put religion, the true religion and worship of God, in the most prominent position before the nation of Israel. He got, sympathetically, the spirit of his father which discerned that the whole nation of Israel would be specially blessed in putting God and his worship in advance of every other thing and interest. He was informed respecting the stores of material and wealth gathered by his father for the temple purposes and consecrated to that service. In these things Solomon found abundant opportunity for the exercise of his intelligence and his ambitions along proper and helpful lines, which drew him nearer to the Lord and taught him how better to serve the Lord and his people Israel as his father's successor.

So we see, as we seek the Lord with all our hearts as "dear children," and with willing minds, that he makes known to us his great plans and purposes respecting the future. He makes known to us his purpose to have a temple, and preparations already made therefor, and how and when it will be built and its object: the blessing of all the families of the earth. At each step of the way, as we the more fully enter into sympathy with God's great plan of the ages, it serves to develop us the more and to prepare us for the share in that Temple and Kingdom.

SOLOMON'S WISE MODERATION

Our lesson closes with the account of Solomon's magnanimity toward his brother Adonijah. It seems to have been the custom of that day amongst other kingdoms that as soon as the king was installed in office, others who might become his rivals and opponents were put to death. Adonijah, probably judged Solomon by himself, and concluded that his life would be

in danger, and laid hold upon the altar in the tabernacle court as a place of safety until he would get a message from the king assuring him that he would suffer no harm for the rebellion he had almost inaugurated. Solomon's words to him, as well as his conduct, were wise and kind – "If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth, but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die"; and when he presented himself before Solomon the latter said to him, "Go to thine house." In other words, no punishment of any kind was to be inflicted for the past, and as for the future, he was on his good behavior. Generosity is always a good sign wherever it is displayed, and in the children of the heavenly Kingdom it is an indispensable quality; as our Master said, "Be ye like unto your Father in heaven, for he is kind to the unthankful and causes his sun to shine upon the just and unjust, and sendeth rain upon the good and upon the evil."

God purposes that ultimately all the wicked will he destroy, and he extends his present kindness and mercy to his enemies and the enemies of righteousness by reason of the fact that ignorance and weakness have such a hold upon the human family that they are not so responsible as they would be under full light and ability. It is only when we get this broad view which God's Word emphasizes that we can exercise loving benevolence toward all men, yea, against our enemies also, realizing that they like ourselves are encompassed with weakness, frailties and ignorance, by which their responsibility every way is largely controlled and which God has arranged to cover and ultimately remove through the merit of our Redeemer. As he generously overlooks these inherited blemishes, so we shall – all who have his spirit and are guided by his Word.

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"LET US DRAW NIGH WITH A TRUE HEART"

Betake thyself to prayer, dear child;
A time like this demands
An oft communion with thy Lord,
A closer grasp of hands.

Spend seasons sweet and precious, child,
Confiding all thy ways;
Herein lies strength and succor full
To meet these evil days.

Joseph Greig.

