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Solomon's wealth and wisdom

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International Sunday School Lesson

October 18th, 1896.

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.. AND ..

WISDOM.

—I Kings iv.: 25-34.

GOLDEN TEXT . . .

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TRINITY • SUNDAY • SCHOOL.

[Methodist Episcopal Church, South].

Durham, N. C.

JULIAN S. CARR, Teacher.

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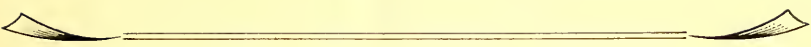
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JULIAN S. CARR, Teacher.

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DURHAM, N. C., Oct. 11th, 1896.

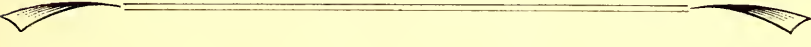
PLEASE NOTICE.

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 good.

JULIAN S. CARR,
Teacher of Class No. 6.

Trinity Sunday School, Durham, N. C.



I KINGS IV.: 25-34.

25. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

26. And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

27. And those officers provided victuals for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

28. Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

29. And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

30. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

32. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

33. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

34. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

THE GOLDEN TEXT.

"Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.—I Sam. ii.: 30.

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 everywhere are talking either of the gold standard, or the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, it seems a little peculiar that we should be studying about a time 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 seem 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 setting 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 judgments 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 abundance. What we would have done if the way had not been so smooth, it is useless to conjecture; but we can not think of his piety as being of the sort that wears well or shows to best advantage on a stormy day.

The Lord appeared unto Solomon the night after his great sacrifice at Gibeon and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Think what a delightful experience it must have been to Solomon. If God should come to us and throw wide open the doors of his rich store houses, of all the treasures of heaven, and bid us take our choice. My! my! what an awful moment it would be. How we would tremble at the tremendous responsibility. How we would hesitate, lest we should fail to choose that which was best for us. If Solomon did not hesitate it was because his heart had been long set upon the one thing which he felt he most needed for his new position. He had come to the throne of his father while a mere youth. That father had walked before the Lord "in truth and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart," and had made a great name in the world. The thought of taking up the work of such a man was enough to overwhelm one of more mature years, and the young son was burdened with a sense of his responsibility and unfitness. "I am but a little child," he said, "I know not how to walk before thy people." And losing sight of all the glories of the world, which he afterwards too highly prized, he begged God just to give him an understanding heart. If God would only make him equal to the duties of his position, he would ask no more.

"And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing." There was a good deal of religious fervour in Solomon's request, but his aspirations did not reach to a high spiritual plane. He was not filled with such longings as would have filled the heart of his father David. It was not the longing of a soul after God as the hart panteth after the water brook. It was the longing of one who has a duty to perform for strength to perform it. It was a wise

request, because it reached the height of duty, but it was not the wisest, for it fell far short of the height of the privilege. It pleased God, not because Solomon had made the wisest request, but because he had made such a wise request, when a youth; with his appreciation of worldly glory, he might have asked for that which is infinitely lower. It is a good thing to desire practical wisdom, right perceptions, clear judgment, an aptitude for acquiring and using knowledge, but it is better to seek "that wisdom which is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning."

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much. His wisdom took many directions. He was wise as a judge, as an architect, as a statesman, in literature and in science. He had largeness of heart, that is, great capacity, "a comprehensive, powerful mind capable of grasping the knowledge of many and difficult subjects—poetry, philosophy, natural history in its various branches. He was master of them all." As the sand that is on the sea shore. The proverbial expression for greatness of every kind.

God's promise to Solomon was conditional. "If thou wilt walk before me as thy father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and will keep my statutes and judgments, then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever as I promised David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me; ye or your children and will not keep my commandments and statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given him," etc., etc., "and Israel shall be a proverb and by-word among all people." A plainer contract on God's part could not have been written, and yet with all of Solomon's wisdom he violated it, with dreadful consequences to Israel.

For King Solomon loved many strange women, of the nations concerning which the Lord had said unto the children of Israel: Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. And he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. It came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God as was the heart of David his father. And the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel which appeared unto him twice.

To give you some conception of the magnitude of King Solomon's household, and the magnificent scale upon which the King conducted his affairs, the Bible records that Solomon's provisions for one day was 30 measures* of fine flour and three score measures of meal, 10 fat oxen

*A measure equals to eight bushels.

*Solomon's household consumed daily about 50 bbls. flour and 500 bush. meal.

and 20 oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, besides harts, roebucks and fallow deer and fatted fowl, and it is estimated that at least 10,000 persons dined every day at King Solomon's tables, and he had 40,000 stalls of horses and 12,000 horsemen.

An example of his wisdom in dealing with the difficult cases which came before him as a judge may be seen in his decision as to the ownership of the child claimed by two persons. An Arabic legend illustrates Solomon's sagacity as a mere stripling of thirteen. Two men came before David who was puzzled how to reconcile their differences. The plaintiff had bought property of the defendant, and while digging out the cellar found a treasure. He demanded that the defendant should take the treasure back, for he had bought the property without it; while the defendant asserted that it did not belong to him, as he had sold the plaintiff the property and all its contents. Solomon suggested as the best way to end the dispute that the plaintiff's son should marry the defendant's daughter and take the treasure as their own. It may interest you to hear what problems the Orientals conceived to test the sagacity of Solomon. According to their accounts, the queen of Sheba sent ambassadors with a letter to Solomon, before she went herself. With them she sent 500 youths dressed like maidens, and the same number of maidens dressed like young men, with instructions that they were to behave accordingly in the presence of Solomon. She also sent a closed casket containing an unperforated pearl, a diamond intricately pierced and a goblet of crystal. The letter thus referred to these things: "As a true prophet, thou wilt no doubt be able to distinguish the youths from the maidens; to divide the contents of the enclosed casket; to perforate the pearl; to thread the diamond, and to fill the goblet with water that hath not dropped from the clouds, nor gushed forth from the earth." When they reached Jerusalem Solomon told them the contents of the letter before they presented it, and made light of their mighty problems. He caused the slaves to wash themselves, and from the manner in which they applied the water detected their sex. He directed a young and fiery horse to be ridden through the camp at the top of his speed, and on its return caused its copious perspiration to be collected in a goblet. The pearl he perforated by a stone occultly known to him. The threading of the diamond puzzled him for a moment, but at length he inserted a small worm which wound its way through, leaving a silken thread behind it. Having done this he dismissed the ambassadors without accepting their presents. This, and the reports her emissaries brought, determined the queen to visit Jerusalem in person. When she came, Solomon, who had heard a piece of scandal about her,—no less than that she had cloven feet—first of all demonstrated his sagacity by the mode in which he tested this report. He caused her to be conducted over a crystal floor, below which was real water, with a quantity of fish swimming about. Sheba, who had never seen a crystal floor, supposed

there was water to be passed through and therefore slightly lifted her robe, enabling the king to satisfy himself that she had a very neat foot, not at all cloven.

So impressed was the Queen of Sheba with the magnificence of Solomon's environments, when she visited him, she said unto him, "Howbeit I believed not the words until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee king, to do judgment and justice."

Wisdom is good. It "excelleth folly as light excelleth darkness." Wisdom is the gift of God, opening to us channels of rich pleasure and important usefulness to our fellow creatures. Solomon would not have us understand that for this world wisdom is no better than folly. He had found the contrary. Folly is always darkness. Wisdom is always light. Worldly wisdom is light for this world, and for this world's work is as much better than folly as walking in the light is better than groping in the dark. But it is not a substitute for piety, adding to its power and usefulness and value. The better we are the more eagerly we should seek wisdom.

Then, as now, science was good. It helped to understand God, when once God was known and loved; but as a substitute for God, as a way of salvation, as a satisfaction to the soul, it was vanity and vexation of spirit, a feeding on husks, a dry and desert land where no water is.

We learn a lesson from Solomon's later career. All his wisdom did not keep him from falling into sin and folly. The wisest men need to learn the lesson of his life. "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

During the terrible reign of the French revolution, when Madame Roland came in sight of the guillotine, as she was being led to execution she exclaimed, "O liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name." So are men mistaken until this day; they pursue riches upon the theory that wealth means happiness. They overlook the fact that wealth brings responsibilities. They forget that the word of God plainly declares that he to whom much is given, of him much shall be required. It will be hard at the last great day, the day of final accounts, to stand before the Judge of the Quick and the Dead, under the most favored circumstances; but, think of it—being called to judgment in the face of the declaration, "of you much shall be required."

Charles Wesley seems to me to have voiced the situation very wisely when he wrote:

“Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live.
And of thy servant Lord prepare
A strict account to give.”

But you and I hear men say, we are willing to risk being rich; for the privilege of enjoying the benefits, we will risk the responsibilities. Not knowing that they would have to bear burdens and responsibilities now strange to them. Never dreaming of how the yoke would gall the neck until it might be too late. When the city of Rome was once seriously threatened by enemies, and a garrison lay all around it, one of the enemy approached a sentinel on one of the outposts and entered into negotiations with the maid, looking to her passing the enemy by a secret way into Rome. The enemy of Rome wore on his left arm a beautiful gold bracelet, beside a large iron shield, as did every member of his legion. The Tarpeian maid bargained to betray the secret pass to the legion of the enemy, provided every soldier of the legion would give her as they passed into and through the gate what they wore upon their left arm, meaning their beautiful gold bracelets. The bargain was struck, and the legion as they passed the guards, misunderstanding the terms unloosed not only their golden bracelets, but unclasped their heavy iron shields and dumped these upon the maiden, and soon she was a shapeless mangled corpse beneath the heavy weight of a mountain of iron shields. So would legions of we poor mortals find ourselves if we only received a tithe of the things we crave. God in his wisdom always gives us what he deems safest and wisest for us to have. If left to ourselves, hundreds and thousands of times in life we would have it different, and, we too, like the Tarpeian maid, might get what was greatly to our damage and what might cost us an eternity of misery and woe. Take, my dear friends, just as God gives us, and say, “Thy will be done.”

Do you recall that our Lord Jesus Christ mentions with approval but one donation during his ministerial career? Doubtless there were many rich people in attendance upon divine service that Sabbath day, for we know great crowds gathered whithersoever he went, and that day there were doubtless those in attendance who were clothed in purple and fine linen. Heads covered with elegant bonnets, and beautiful gloved hands waving costly feather fans, ribbons and the perfume of the white rose or the night blooming cereus, argued plainly that the audience was a cultured and refined one, may be, but Jesus Christ only mentions the poor widow's mite. Think of it, suppose she had said, “Oh well, I have only a mite, the part of a cent. It will not amount to anything and I am so little accounted in so great an assemblage that I will just remain quiet here in my seat.” Then this beautiful example of Christian charity, with its unbounded and untold influence, would have been lost upon a Christian world: whereas it has lived to teach us that we must not despise the day of small things.

and that it is not a big bank account that counts with the Lord. Does not the Psalmist say, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." If this be so, and it is so, why should God stop to consider us on account of what we possess.

You will recall that when Abraham had as yet no offspring and was well stricken in years God promised him that his seed should be as the sands that covered the sea shore; so here in the 20th verse of this chapter we read "Judah and Israel were as the sand which is by the sea, in multitude," a literal fulfillment of the prediction made to Abraham, more than a thousand years ago, for all these we read about here were the seed of Abraham. And another fulfillment of a promise made to Moses do we find in this lesson. In verse 25 we read, "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his vine and under his fig tree from Dan even to Beersheba." You recall that when Moses came to die, and was buried by God's own hand, God carried him "into the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho," and he showed him Canaan from Dan to Beersheba, and said unto Moses, all this land will I give to the children of Israel. He may be trusted to do and perform in his own good time all that He promises.

Judah and Israel had been rent and torn by war, so much so, that God would not permit David, "a man after his own heart," to build Him a house; but now we find that the whole land from "Dan to Beersheba" was in a state of absolute quiet, so much so that every man rested under his own vine and fig tree. Just the very suggestion of the vine and fig tree denotes rest and quiet. For where the bloody hoof of war stamps, vines and fig trees are unknown. We often hear in the prayer of thanks, acknowledgment of the privilege of living, where we are permitted to worship God under our own vine and fig tree where none dare molest or make afraid. Typical of the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

There are two kinds of riches in this world. Riches that come from selfishness, from corruption, from over-reaching, from miserly hoarding, are always evil and that continually.

There is another kind of abundance which is the natural result of honesty, industry skill, inventions faithfulness, and these naturally are a blessing to all. They help the poor; they spread advantages on every side, no one is the poorer for this wealth. There is vastly less poverty and suffering under such a regime than under any other.

The promise of increasing abundance is one of the motives that help keep men from idleness, and that show all, by a visible object lesson, that industry, faithfulness and morality are favored by God and by nature. These motives are necessary to keep the average man from the curse of idleness and to assist the virtue of those who have the desire to do right. For "Idleness is the mother of all vices." "Idle men are the devil's playmates."

X

"Saboath gave himself up to idleness. Hilliel was grieved, and resolved to cure him of his fault. He took him to the Valley of Hinnom by Jerusalem, where was a standing pool, full of snakes and vermin, and covered with muddy weeds. 'Here,' said Hilliel, 'let us rest.' 'Not here,' said the youth. 'Dost thou not perceive what poisonous vapors it exhales?' 'Thou art right my son; this bog is like the soul of a slothful man.' Hilliel then took the youth to a waste field, producing thorns and thistles. 'This,' said he, 'has good soil to produce all that is good and pleasant, but it is neglected. A little while ago thou didst see the soul, now behold the life of an idle man."

That wealth is best which is most generally diffused throughout the community. The wealth that builds railroads and houses, libraries, churches, schools, factories, gives great advantages of work, of cheap travel and books, of healthier living and comforts to all. It is this kind of wealth, the wealth of the community, not enormous private fortunes, which is the promise of the gospel. The mere accumulation of wealth upon wealth, with its burdens of care and temptation, does not add to the blessings of a competency. Agur's prayer (Prov. xxx.: 8-9) "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," expresses the best that possessions can do for us. Poverty is not a blessing in itself, nor is immense wealth. (Prov. xv: 16-17: 17: 1) "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." "Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith." "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife." "No more desire riches," says Erasmus, "than a feeble beast desires a heavy burden." "I feel like a galley slave, and worn out with care," wrote one of the most successful of modern millionaires. "Happy would that society be, in which all men are aiming, not at riches, but merely at a modest competency, dreading the one extreme as much as the other." It is said of Agassiz that he excused himself from engaging in a profitable lecturing tour on the ground that he had not the time to make money. A certain amount of wealth is necessary for the largest giving, the greatest help to others, many useful enterprises, the largest culture. Hence it is the tendency of piety and the wisdom of God to increase, not always, nor ever intensely, the wealth of individuals, but always the general wealth of the community.

When large wealth congests in the hands of a few in any community, it is bad for that community. It is not only bad, it is a calamity. (Mr Depew, said in a speech in New York, that fifty men could combine and lock up all the money in the United States, so great would be their combined wealth.) Wadsworth truthfully and beautifully says:

*Aquith
Quality
to Sp*

"Ill fares the land, to hastenig ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

As Henry Ward Beecher once said: "Snow on a level is much more valuable than great drifts alternating with bare ground." We are never to seek riches, but wisdom. Riches sought as the chief end are always a curse. Riches as the gift of those who first seek the kingdom of God are a blessing. But there are riches of mind, of heart, of usefulness, of love, that are infinitely more blessed than riches in silver and gold.

Wealth can safely increase in a community only as fast as religion and morality prevail; then, it is a great opportunity; a means of advancing God's kingdom. Riches, like fire, are "a good servant, but a bad master."

There is great danger in riches: so great, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Riches tend to luxury, selfishness and idleness; because of the tendency to trust in riches, and not to feel the need of a Saviour; because riches are apt to engender pride that will not stoop to the humble service of God; because rich men are apt to be allied in business that is questionable in character, or socially, with many who are not Christians, and it requires courage and faith not to yield to unchristian customs; because, in some cases on account of the large sums of money they can control, they are led to enter into combinations to crush the weak, or to stifle competition, or in other ways defy the law of good morals, simply because wealth gives them the power, and not because it is right, or that God approves.

Riches can never satisfy the soul. Wealth without wisdom is like a child playing with the fire.

Solomon tried all that the world could give under the most favorable circumstances, yet found all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. Byron with rank, and wealth, and all manner of pleasure, failed of content and happiness. Alexander conquered the world, but it did not satisfy the soul; and if he could have conquered all the worlds that stud the heavens he would still have wept for more. For God has not created a single human soul so small and poor that all the material universe can fill it. All literature is full of expressions of the failure of worldly things to satisfy the soul.

Seeking satisfaction in this world is like trying to quench the thirst by drinking the salt waters of the sea. The more we drink the more thirsty we become.

There is a Russian story of one who entered a diamond mine in search of great riches. He filled his pockets with great gems, and then threw them away to make room for larger ones. At length he became very thirsty, but there was no water. He heard the flow of rivers, but they were rivers of gems; and he hastened forward at the sound of a water-fall, but it was a cascade of jewels. He was

very rich in precious stones, but he was dying of thirst, and his riches were worse than useless.

We are reminded of the luckless king of Persia, who, when the Moslems overran his empire, and made him prisoner, was left to starve in his own treasury. All around that Persian monarch were heaped diamonds, and emeralds, and topazes, and pearls of inestimable value. Wherever he turned he saw nothing except gold, and silver, and precious stones; but with the wealth of Ormuz and the East about him, the wretched man perished of hunger and thirst. Such are they who seek wealth without wisdom. But the riches that flow from wisdom are rather like those which Siddartha scattered among the people, building libraries, and hospitals, and schools, and giving work to many. The power of doing good, of enjoying and helping others to enjoy, is the test of true riches.

Yet true riches are the fruit of the gospel; a type of the prosperity of the kingdom of heaven. The golden age, the millennial days, the New Jerusalem, are all represented as abounding in prosperity and every worldly good. For all, not a few, and as an illustration and proof of higher and nobler riches is the

ILLUSTRATED GOLDEN TEXT.

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

Tommy was in a hard place. Errand boy in a large shop, it would be hard to find one more willing and faithful. He had been in the shop a week, and in that time had been sent on all sorts of errands. Yet, never till this morning had there been an errand he was unwilling to perform.

One thing had become evident to Tommy. The men drank far more than was good for them. And now, he found himself with money in his hand, sent to order the very beer that was working such ruin. From force of habit, he seized his hat and started, when the bidding came. He was out of the door before he fairly realized what he had been sent to get.

Tommy was a member of the Loyal Legion, pledged to never use liquor himself, nor help others to use it. In fact, his pledge obligated him to prevent in all honorable ways the use of it by others. How could he go for and put it into the hands of these tempted men?

The other side of this dilemma lay in the fact that he was a poor boy, and that this position was the first he had found after months of painful and anxious search. Along with the voice of conscience that showed him the wrong in going for the beer, was the voice of self interest. This reminded him, that by refusing to go at the bidding of the men, he would have to take curses and cuffs and lose his place. Conscience whispered that a pledge was a solemn promise, no matter whether the keeping of it was easy or hard. The other whispered of

the coming trouble. Fairly bewildered, poor Tommy said to himself: "Oh, dear, what shall I do"?

On the night before he had learned his daily Bible verse. It came to him now to strengthen and help. This was the text: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses." Tommy lifted his heart in a plea for help. The answer was swift. He turned and went into the shop and gave back the money to the man who had sent him.

What a Babel arose! When Tommy could get a chance he said, quietly but firmly:

"I shall be glad to do any other errand sir, but being a Loyal Legioner, of course I couldn't do that."

Curses filled the air for a minute; then a man spoke up and said: "I like the lad's pluck. Let him alone."

Just then the boss came in. He was a drinking man, and Tommy had not looked for support from him; for had he not said that Tommy was to run their errands?

He looked at the trembling lad for a moment, then said: "If that is your stamp my boy, I guess you'll do for up stairs. You may take off your apron and report up there."

Up stairs was a more pleasant room with better men, and the wages was a dollar a week more. As Tommy marched above he repeated to himself a text he had only learned the week before: "Them that honor me, I will honor." "It pays to do right," he said, "and I guess I will stick to it as long as I live."

Israel dwelt safely. Christ's promise to the seventy was: "Nothing shall by any means hurt you." It is God's promise still to those who in these days go out as witnesses in the power of the spirit, as the seventy did, carrying neither purse nor scrip.

A missionary sat in his study when a mob surrounded the house and threatened to burn the premises if he did not come out to them. They meant to murder him. Calmly he rose and went and stood in the doorway. The crowd parted in absolute silence and let him pass out unharmed. The Holy Spirit in him was greater than the evil spirit in the world. God's promise of protection was proved.

Every man under his vine and under his fig tree. The inward peace of God, without which we cannot have the outward peace with men, is God's gift.

The precepts of peace are: "As much as it lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "Study to be quiet, and do your own business." "Be subject to one another and be clothed with humility." "Overcome evil with good," and you will find that even in tribulation you have the peace of God, and like Him, have only "thoughts of peace" toward those who are at war with you. Some years ago there was a school in Rochester for boys of the Friends Society and one for another denomination in the same town. I will call these Town Boys and the

others Friend Boys. Whenever any of the Town boys saw any of the Friend boys they shouted after them "Quaker! Quaker!" and other names. This was mortifying to the Friend boys, but they passed on and reviled not again. Things continued in this state until one day the Friend boys were taken out for a walk in the country, and when about to ascend a high hill, they observed some of the Town boys near where they had to pass and they said: "Now we shall catch it." They did and smartly. As soon as the Town boys espied them they shouted: "Quaker! Quaker!" so long as they could be heard. When the Friend boys reached the top of the hill, seeing their enemies below them, they deemed it time to retaliate, and sent down a few missiles into the enemies' camp. This unexpected salute startled the Town boys, who exclaimed: "Why, these Quaker boys are pelting us with stones." In their haste they vowed revenge. Immediately a volley of the same ammunition came pouring down upon them. To their great surprise they found that they had been attacked not with stones at all, but with apples, which the Friend boys had brought in their picnic baskets for another purpose. Now, as all boys love apples, they gathered up these peaceable missiles and began to eat. One of the boys observed how remarkable it was that the boys who had received nothing but ill-usage without a word of complaint, had now given them a quantity of apples; this to them was marvelous treatment. They began to see the evil of their conduct and to accuse each other of beginning the attack. None were willing to be regarded as ring leaders, but all agreed that a very different treatment was due such kind boys and they determined to practice it.

Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses. The promise to the righteous man is: "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Writing concerning money, Paul says: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work." Lack of real prosperity springs from lack of faith. A gentleman sitting with guests one day at his dinner table said to his wife: "Let us try an experiment." Then he called to his dog, "Peter, come here." Slowly the animal obeyed. Then the master to his wife's astonishment took the platter containing the leg of roast mutton and put it on the floor in front of Peter. The dog looked first at the meat and then at his master. Then he walked around the platter and looked up into the faces of the guests. What did it mean? Scraps and leavings were all he had a right to expect.

Finally he gave one longing look at the meat, dropped his tail between his legs and disconsolately sneaked out of the room and missed the generous slice that surely would have been given him had he dared to believe his master. "There," said Mr. Harris, "Peter is just as inconsistent as most Christians." Yea, verily when our Father drops down before us some exceeding great and precious promise (II Peter i.: 4) such as: "I wish above all things that thou mayest

prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospers." We read it, look at each other, discuss it a little and doubt and go on disconsolately and are satisfied with the crumbs when we might feast on the "all things" of the king's table.

In a letter received from a Chicago clergyman we see how ministerial prosperity can come to one who believes God. He writes: "For two years and six months I have lived in Canaan, sweet Canaan. No language on earth can describe the great difference in my life. When my carnal life was purged away I lost its fruits unto death, and then Christ came in with His fruits unto life. About sixty of my best people, including all of my class leaders but one, and my choirister and leading soprano in the choir, and the lady that plays my pipe organ, and almost every member of my official board have stepped fully into Jesus in the past year and eight months. The Holy Spirit is working gloriously. He has solved for us the financial problem, the entertainment problem, and 'how to reach the masses' problem. Glory to Jesus!" "They lacked nothing."

A minister wrote: "In September, 1885, I felt called of God to preach the gospel. I felt He would have me go 'without purse or scrip,' and trust him. I obeyed, and started out with three-half-pence. From that day to this, eleven years, He has supplied the needs of myself and wife during wanderings over sea and land.

"One night my wife wished for two things. We reckoned up their cost. It amounted to 5 pounds. We asked the Lord to send the money. At noon, the next day, the letter-carrier handed us a letter containing 5 pounds. There was nothing to show from whom or from whence it came. We thanked God for the supply of the need. Months after we found that an old English lady had it mailed to us anonymously. That is the only time in eleven years we have needed exactly that sum, and the only time that exactly that amount came.

"The day came some time after when we put the last coal in the stove and ate the last bit of food in the house. As I was at work a letter was brought me from one with whom we were not acquainted, but who had heard some one speak of us. There was a draft enclosed for a sum of money sufficient to cover every need and carry us to Ireland, where we met the brother who sent us the money, and a little band of God's children.

"During my first visit to the United States I felt led to go to Ohio. I did not know how to get there, but the Lord knew. Not having the money, I asked him for it. My wife, who had remained at home, sent me \$5. Other sums were added to it until I had \$14.05. The morning I left, there came to me from three sources \$4.75, making in all \$18.80. It cost me just that sum to reach my destination.

"When I felt led to return to London I needed at least \$75. The Lord led so clearly about it I said I would get ready and ask him to

supply the money. On my way to the postoffice I met a friend, who said: 'Does the Lord lead you to return to London?' 'Why do you ask?' 'Because, he so strongly impresses me to pay your fare.'

"For five years we kept an account of all the money the Lord sent us, and found the average per week amounted to what we had received when I was in business.

"There have been many tests of faith, but for eleven years, and without salary, God has supplied every need as promised."

"God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much." Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom. His name is counsellor. When Jesus went He sent the Holy Spirit to teach us all things. And you who have trusted His wisdom in the work and in the home can say: "Who teacheth like Him."

A widowed mother found her children budding into manhood and womanhood surrounded by every form of worldliness. She saw her utter inability to keep them from drifting with the tide. She asked for wisdom, and recognized Him as within to work in her, to will and to do of His good pleasure, concerning her children. They came from school one day asserting there was to be a meeting at the home that evening to organize a "Euchre Club." The mother neither scolded, rebuked or refused to allow it. She met the guests cordially and sat with them and listened while they talked over all the plans for the organization. Once when they appealed to her to know about meeting at the different houses, she said: "I hardly know how you would manage were you to meet here. You know we have always kept our home clean." "Oh, they answered, we would not play cards; we would play something else here." "I thought so," she said sweetly. Week after week they met, had a good time and talked about the club, while the mother sat in the midst quietly praying to God for them. The organization was never completed, and not a pack of cards was bought nor a game played. Soon after a daughter came home with a ticket for the theatre. "I am going Friday, mother," she said; "It is Gracie's birthday, and her father has given her a box, and I am to be with her." A look of pain swept over her mother's face for an instant, but she did not argue nor remonstrate, and so run the risk of her child telling her she had forgotten, when she was young, and had no sympathy with youthful hearts. She slipped away to her closet, and down on her knees committed the child to God, and believed Him. Friday, the daughter ran to her with the ticket in her hand and said: "I am going to give it to Susie; I would not be bothered going to a theatre." This was the end. The children were saved to Christ and the church.

"Largeness of heart." Paul, writing to Corinth, says: "Our heart is enlarged; be ye also enlarged." An enlarged heart means passionate love, and this is proved by obedience. Without love, wealth and wisdom and understanding are nothing. Great light without great love is dangerous. Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. Let us enlarge the

place of our tent, and ask God to enlarge our coast; that, filled with His passionate love for lost souls we may be used for His glory.

"His fame was in all nations round about." Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome: "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Christ's promise: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth," may be fulfilled to one who never steps his foot upon a foreign country. Holy life has a far reaching power. Many years ago, when Moody was in England, the papers told how he was offered \$8,000 by a photographer if he would sit for his picture, but refused the money. The American papers reported the incident. A wife read the account to her unconverted husband. "There," he said, "that is the kind of a Christian I would be." "Why don't you begin?" she asked. "Wife, you don't know what you are talking about. It would cost me every dollar I have to be a Christian. I should pay back every cent I have obtained dishonestly." "Oh no," she answered, "you would not need to do that." "Bah," he said, that is the kind of religion you have. I would be ashamed to be such a Christian. If ever Moody comes any where near here, I am going to hear him." Years afterwards the evangelist was holding meetings in an adjacent town, and the man who had so admired his uprightness went to hear him. He came home a miserably convicted sinner who had not yielded, but one Sunday morning he astonished the congregation in the church, of which his wife was a member, by striding up the middle aisle, jumping over the rail into the altar, declaring his decision to become a Christian, and announcing that he had defrauded many of the people and would make good to them every cent if they would come to him. It cost him many thousands of dollars, but he was true. He was greatly used for the salvation of others.

Those who have only the worldly wealth and wisdom use them for SELF. The more money they obtain the more selfish they become, and the greater harm it does them; this is likewise true of their wisdom. The Bible says that some are to do evil. A little boy had been amusing himself putting his hand into a hole in some wood-work, where, to his surprise and delight, he felt a piece of money which his father had put there to teach him a lesson. It was a large coin, and when he closed his hand upon it and attempted to withdraw it, he was unable to do so. His father saw him, and asked him why he could not get his hand out of the hole. He said: "Oh, father, I have some money in it and cannot get it out." His father told him to open his hand, let the money fall, and then to draw out his hand. He followed the father's directions and withdrew his hand with ease. While he held on to the money it held him prisoner. Often money selfishly kept, make slaves of those who have it. Like the boy, they cling to it, for they think only of self, and as a result they are made unhappy prisoners of selfishness. Such are the worldly wise and worldly wealthy.

Those who are heavenly wise and heavenly wealthy use their money for the Saviour. Whether one's money be little or much, if it be used for Him, He is able to bless it, that it will accomplish much good and enrich with divine blessing the generous heart that gave it. At the same time he multiplies the wealth of the giver.

Jamie was the brightest boy in his class. He was a Christian and was all the better liked for that. Willie was also a bright boy, and was considered a real good fellow, too. They used to run neck and neck for the prizes. One examination day the school were all surprised to hear Willie answer question after question while Jamie remained silent; and Willie took the prize. When they were going home Jamie seemed glad for Willie, and the other boys could not understand it. One of them said: "Why Jamie, you could have answered some of those questions; I know you could." "Of course I could," he said, with a light laugh. "Then, why didn't you?" He would not answer for a while, but, being pressed, he turned around with a strange look in his eyes, said to his questioner: "Look here, how could I help it? There's poor Willie; his mother died last week, and if it hadn't been examination day he would not have been at school. Do you think I was going to be so mean as to take a prize from a poor fellow who had just lost his mother?" Was it not noble? Was it not Christ-like? Jamie was willing to "make himself of no reputation" if only Willie could be comforted a bit. That was heavenly wealth and wisdom, not kept for self but given to the Saviour.

Worldly wealth and wisdom are used for one's own pleasure, while heavenly wealth and wisdom are used to serve others. Worldly wealth and wisdom, when used only to give the owner pleasure, are found to fail to give real peace and satisfaction and soon vanish like the dew. But when they are employed to serve others, they store up treasures in heaven, and are admired and copied by others. Some Christian girls in Japan were discussing how they could glorify Christ by their lives. One said, it seems to me, like this: "One spring, my mother got some flower seeds, little ugly black things, and planted them; they grew and blossomed beautifully. One day, a neighbor coming in and seeing these flowers, said: 'Oh, how beautiful! I must have some to! Won't you please give me some seed?' Now, if this neighbor had seen the flower seeds, she would not have asked for them; 'twas only when she saw how beautiful was the blossom that she wanted the seed." And so it is with Christianity. Our friends may not want to hear about being Christians. But when they see the truth of Christ blossoming out in our lives into kindly words and acts, they will say: "How beautiful are these lives! We must have that which makes them so beautiful!" Heavenly wealth and wisdom always blossom out into kindly service for others.

The wealth and wisdom of the world lead to sin; while those that are from heaven guide to holiness.

There was a young woman in Foochow, China, whose husband died of leprosy. She was 24 years of age, and as she thought she had nothing to live for, she decided to make a sacrifice of herself. As soon as her intention became known she received invitations to grand banquets, all of which she accepted and enjoyed, as if nothing unusual was to occur. After a special feast of this character she ascended a stage constructed for the purpose, where the village elders came to make their obeisance, each three times, as if she were already a canonized saint. Upon a signal being given, she strangled herself in the sight of all the people. This was considered an act of so much virtue that it is said the emperor is to grant a tablet in her honor. This great crime did not make her any better, and it did no one else any good. The wisdom of the world has never been able to find God and His holiness. It always leads men into sin, as it led this poor woman in China.

You may say: "I have no wisdom, and I have no wealth." That may be true as far as the world's wealth and wisdom is concerned. But, however young and poor you may be, you may have the heavenly wealth and wisdom, for you may be His children; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." He owns all, and you may inherit it. Christ is made heavenly wisdom and wealth unto all who receive Him. Does wealth give comfort and strength in the dying hour?

Let me tell you in conclusion of two persons, both of whom I knew well; one was wealthy, the other wise. The one was accounted at one time during his life as the wealthiest man in the State in which he lived. He was known, respected and more or less esteemed and talked about all over the State, and in adjoining States. He owned slaves by the hundreds and up into the thousands. He owned broad acres by the ten thousands in more States than one. He was so circumstanced that his heart hardly knew a wish that his means could not gratify. He was chosen by his fellow-men to occupy many positions of honor and trust. He had the entree to the very best society; his acquaintance was sought by the most honorable of men. He had large investments in railroads, factories, stocks and bonds. His home was situated in a magnificent park, where grew all manner of beautiful trees and rare shrubs. In person he was of commanding appearance and of fine physique—surrounded by a cultured and refined family—to all appearances he was happy, if wealth and position could buy happiness.

The other, an humble, worthy, but poor member of Trinity church, with the comforts probably of life; but few, if any, of its luxuries, fulfilling literally the scriptures: "The poor ye have always with you;" but deep down in her pure consecrated Christian heart she had hid the pearl of great price; she was wise unto salvation; she was poor in worldly goods, but thanks be unto God, she was rich in things that

perish not with their using. She was wise to lay up for herself treasures in heaven, where moth does not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. She was poor, as the world reckons poverty, but rich toward God—the child of a king—an heir of God, and a joint heir with His son Jesus Christ. Always in her place in the sanctuary when her physical health would admit of it.

It is evening—the sun is setting—the family in tears are gathered around the dying bed of the rich man—the faithful family physician, worn out by anxious weary vigils, is there. For the last time he takes the temperature of the rich but dying patient; the flickering faint pulse indicates that the once strong man has come to the very waters of the river of death. He tells the grief-stricken family that the silver cord is about to be loosed and the golden bowl broken; they request him to break the news to the dying man. When told that he was dying, and that soon the struggle will be over, and the end come; in the desperation of death the dying millionaire struggles and cries: “What, me die – me – me – . No I cannot die. I must not die.” Calling to his bedside an only son, he said: “My son, will you let your old father die? Your father, my son?” And, throwing his arms around the neck of his manly boy, he cried: “Oh my son, save your father; save me.”

Sickness and old age overtook our dear aged sister. Tired and worn out, her weary frame was laid upon her lowly couch. Her only daughter watched and waited faithfully by the bedside of her widowed mother; she herself a widow; her faithful pastor came and knelt and prayed in the humble home. Friends were kind and numerous. Poor though that home and its inmates, everything was done that willing hands and loving hearts could do or suggest. Day by day all plainly recognized that the dear sister had come down to the brink of the river of death. To-day she stepped into the chilly waters, to-morrow and next day she was further from the shore, gradually the cable was slipping, slowly but surely the end approached; there was no quaking, there was no fear, and on this beautiful Sabbath morning as the heavenly choir swells the anthem: “All hail the power of Jesus name,” blessed be God, sister Sarah J. Roberts belongs to that choir.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”



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