

# **The Moody Bible Institute—Extension Department**

## **THROUGH THE BIBLE WITH A PRACTICAL PURPOSE**

Mountain Peak Men in I and II Samuel and I and II Kings.

### **Solomon, the Wise.**

By A. C. DIXON.

Key texts: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commands, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest." 1 Kings 2:2, 3.

"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father." 1 Kings 11:6.

The first text gives Solomon at his best and the second Solomon at his worst. David was forbidden to build the temple because he was a man of war. Solomon, whose name means "peaceful," was chosen for that purpose, and yet the degeneration of the times during Solomon's prosperous reign of peace was as bad if not worse than during David's time of war. The debasing influence of luxurious peace may be more harmful than the devastations of war. Adonijah, the son of David, proclaimed himself king, and David displaced him by enthroning Solomon. The best way to get rid of the false is to enthrone the true.

Solomon's career we will consider from four points of view:

#### **I. DAVID'S IDEAL FOR HIS SON,** which includes five things:

1. "Be thou strong."
2. "Show thyself a man."
3. "Keep the charge of the Lord thy God."
4. "Walk in His ways."
5. "Keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies."

True prosperity is made up of these five things—strength, manliness, faithfulness, fellowship with God and obedience.

#### **II. SOLOMON'S SUCCESS.**

He was strong in six things:

1. In Wealth (4 and 5),
2. In Wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-28).

God appeared to him in a dream and asked him what he preferred. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule as a king.

3. In Knowledge.

"He spake three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" (4:32, 33).

4. In Power.

He established a navy as well as an army (9:26-28).

5. In Religion.

The temple that he built was glorious in costliness of materials and in its artistic designs. Solomon was the first to introduce art into the religion of Israel.

6. In Fame.

His reputation went to the ends of the earth (4:34).

**III. SOLOMON'S FAILURE.** Though strong in wealth, wisdom, knowledge, power, religion and fame, he became a wreck in personal character. While he sought to be a wise king, he forgot to be a wise man. He wished to be great rather than



good. He was strong in many things, but not in the ability to resist temptation. It is more important that we should have good character than high position.

1. Solomon lacked conscientiousness.

He promised Bathsheba that he would grant her request concerning Abishag and then broke his promise (2:13-25).

2. He loved God, while he adopted pagan methods, sacrificing in high places (3:3).

3. He disobeyed God.

a. In forming alliances with the surrounding nations (3:1).

b. In marrying a pagan woman (3:1).

c. In uniting Judaism and Paganism. He was the Constantine of his day. He built God's temple and also pagan temples for his wives.

d. In taking a multitude of wives.

This was contrary to the law of God, which we find in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Polygamy grew up in the line of Cain and not of Abel, and all polygamists suffer the consequences of their sin.

e. In becoming selfishly luxurious.

He was self-centered and pandered to the flesh. He spent seven years building the temple and thir-

teen years in building his own house.

IV. THE RESULT. It is given by Solomon himself in Ecclesiastes 1:2-18 and 2:1-26. The conclusion of it all was "All is vanity and striving after wind."

A fresco in the Campo Santo at Pisa represents Solomon at the Day of Judgment standing between the sheep and the goats, not certain to which side he belongs. I love to think of him as writing Proverbs in the strength of his manhood; then after he had fallen into sin and had repented, he writes Ecclesiastes, which is an inspired record of the best that we can learn "under the sun" without a revelation from God; and after he has been completely restored to a high spiritual plane of living, he writes "The Song." This book is either the work of a sensualist or a deeply spiritual man, and I believe that Solomon wrote it from a spiritual and not a sensual point of view.

In Greenwich, England, the guide shows the traveler the "Queen's tree." It was planted by young Queen Elizabeth, but is now dead, because a sprig of ivy planted at the root has spread itself all over the trunk and every limb up to the top-most branch and has destroyed its life. It is the ivy sprig of sin and selfishness that we need to guard against, if we would preserve our character and have true prosperity.