



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Issue # 202

Devotional I AM THAT I AM

We sing the hymn, *Holy God, We Praise Thy Name*, and we want to praise God. We want to praise His name. In Chapter 3 of Exodus, we have the account of Moses, when Moses asked God what His name was. He did not specifically ask God, "What is your name?" but he said, "Who shall I say that thou art?" "What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" (3:13) I do not think it

was because Moses did not know God's name.

I had to ask myself, as I thought about these verses, what did Moses mean? What did God's answer to Moses mean when He answered him? This is the account of when Moses was in the Wilderness. He saw the bush burning and went close to see what was happening. God spoke to him. God commis-

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sioned him to go back to Egypt and lead His people out of Egypt. God said in verses 12–14, “And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you;

and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this

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is my memorial unto all generations.”

As we read and study the Word, we find various names for God in the Bible. However, when Moses asked God, “What should I tell these people that your name is?” God said, “I AM THAT I AM.” We have many names for God. Sometimes we hear the word, *El-Shaddai* which means almighty God. Another name that we have in the Bible is *El-Elyon* in the Hebrew, which means God most high. There is also *Elohim* which means, “God the everlasting,” but God did not use those names when Moses asked Him. God gave Him this name, “I AM THAT I AM.” It was a name that God had never given to people before. It seems as though Moses was the first one to have ever heard this as God’s name.

In Exodus 6:2 we read, “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, [*El-Shaddai*] but by my name JEHOVAH,” (which is the name that God gave Moses in chapter 3, “I AM THAT I AM.” “JEHOVAH. . .” “but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” Thus, it seems as though Moses was the first person to learn that this was

God’s name. JEHOVAH is what we call it today. I wonder why God (when Moses asked Him what His name was) would give a new name to him.

As we study the Scriptures, we could say that this is God’s name — JEHOVAH. The other names, *El-Shaddai*, *Elohim*, describe God. When the Hebrew’s started out . . . “God,” and thought about God’s name, they used the name JEHOVAH. It was a name that was sacred. And it was a name that they never pronounced, because it was too sacred to pronounce. Instead the Jews said *Adonai* [Lord] when they got to the word JEHOVAH. JEHOVAH is God’s name. It was a holy name. When the scribes wrote the Scriptures, when they came to the word ‘JEHOVAH,’ they would go and take a bath. Then, they would come back, get a new pen, and dip it in ink, and they would write the name and throw the pen away. I do not know how many baths they would have taken some days as they copied the Scriptures, but it was a holy name. It was a sacred name. It was God’s name.

What does the word JEHOVAH mean? What does the name JEHOVAH mean? God did not tell Moses, what that name meant, and Moses did not ask God what it meant. If we go

back to Genesis 1, when God created the world, did you ever notice chapter 1 of Genesis when it talks about God? Here we have God's name *Elohim*. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (verse 1) "And God said, Let there be light." (verse 3) Then, we go over to chapter 2 and we begin to get into the account when the Lord, God, created man. There, we have a new name in verse 4. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens," — JEHOVAH Elohim. This really gives a definition of that name.

I understand from His words to Moses in Exodus 3, that the name implies that God is unchanging, eternal, everlasting, self-existent, and He is a great God. God says, "I AM THAT I AM." In chapter 1 of Genesis, as we noticed, it says, God — Elohim. This talks of God again as a great, holy, and an all-powerful God, and the Creator of the universe. Then, in chapter 2, we have the new name added, JEHOVAH.

JEHOVAH is always used in the Bible to speak about God, when it refers to His personal relationship with His creation. Elohim refers to God as the Creator, and a great one, and the

who is above His creation, but JEHOVAH refers to God as God's name a personal name — as one who is intimately related to His creation. It is interesting in chapter 2, when we come to the creation of man and woman, the Scriptures says, "the LORD God." Notice in the Old Testament that LORD is spelled with capital letters.

In our Spanish Bible, it always says, "Jehová" because this is a literal translation of the Hebrew. In English it says, "LORD," but that again with the capital letters. It is interesting, when we come to chapter 2, it begins to talk about man, God's relationship with man, God walking with man and God talking with man. Then, we have "JEHOVAH," the personal God, the Almighty God, the One who is great above us, and greater than us, but the One who, though He is great, the Creator, self-existent, and the Eternal One, reaches down to us, relates to us, cares for us, touches us, holds us in His arms, and supplies our needs. This is a beautiful picture and that is the picture that I think God was giving to Moses when He said, "I AM THAT I AM." None of us walk around saying, "I AM." We always say, "I am happy. I am sad," or "I am tired." God is the only One who can say, "I AM,"

because He changes not. (Malachi 3:6) God is always the same. Therefore, He is the “I AM,” and He needs no descriptive words, because He never changes. He is what He is, and He is what He will always be.

God is an uncaused God. He is One who was never created. Though God makes, He was never made. He is an uncaused God, and He is an ungoverned God. We are governed — the weather determines what we wear. The terrain tells us how to travel, gravity dictates our speed, and health determines our strength. We are governed by so many things. We can challenge those things, we can order them perhaps, but we can never move them. However, God is “I AM THAT I AM.” He is uncaused and ungoverned. He is God. We cannot hide from Him. David said, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Psalm 139:7) There is no place that he could go. I am thankful that we have this kind of God to be with us — this kind of father. We have a lot of change in our world today — relationships change, health changes, the weather changes, but our God who ruled the earth last night will be the same God who rules it today.

God has the same convictions,

the same plan, the same love for us. He is a stable point for us in a changing world. We need that stable point. It is interesting when David wrote the Shepherd’s Psalm he said, “The LORD is my shepherd.” The LORD is JEHOVAH, the Almighty one, the unchanging one. He is also the One, who is so much greater than us, and who is our shepherd. We can have a personal relationship with Him. We can praise Him. We can walk with Him.

Therefore, when we face the elements of life, the storms of life, the afflictions of life, and the sicknesses, the worries, fears, disappointments and sorrows, when we feel like we feel like we are too weak, or too confused to control anything, or we feel as though we are in a situation that seems impossible, we need a God who is JEHOVAH.

We need God, who is unchanging. who is mighty, and greater than anything that we can face in life. However, at the same time, we need God, who is personal, who reaches down to us, calms us, touches us with His love, and gives us peace, confidence, and security. May we continue to “Abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psalm 91:1)

Lessons From Anabaptist History: Steadfastness in Discipleship

Our Lord Jesus is yet calling, “Follow me.” I think that call has echoed and is echoing to us today through the corridors of time from the time when Christ walked upon this earth and called those to follow Him in a personal way. This call is yet personal today. With that call, there is qualification. Christ is saying to us, “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27)

We are looking at “Lessons From Anabaptist History,” particularly “Steadfastness in Discipleship.” Christ is yet calling. He is sending forth. The background Scripture that I would invite you to meditate on is that of Christ sending forth His disciples and directing them, found particularly in Matthew 10:16–39. As we review these verses, we can readily identify the Scriptural directives which directed the saints, direct the saints of all time and direct our lives today.

As we consider that era of time (particularly as we draw lessons from Anabaptist history) our opportunity to address this subject and to draw lessons is owing first to the faithfulness of God as He (I could say) fanned the flame

of truth. We are looking at an era of time when we often say the fire of truth was burning rather low. God fanned that flame and stirred within a faithful few (a remnant) drawing and calling, for them to steadfastly follow their Lord.

How does this reach us today? Why do we address these topics? Every saint (every Christian) is part of what we could call the “scarlet thread,” — the scarlet line. Sometimes we refer to that in relation to the Old Testament saints looking forward to Christ, those who lived and died in faith. Christ came through part of that line of the faithful remnant of saints. My thought is that we each today can be part of that scarlet thread, that line of the faithful remnant which reaches from Calvary till now and will reach the end of time. I say every believer (every Christian) can be part of that scarlet line. Further, this legacy is recorded for us to learn from and to live by. This legacy is referred to as the account. It is history lived and manifested by those who steadfastly followed their Lord. We are privileged to share in as recipients today because of a faithful few who wholeheartedly

answered the call of Christ.

That call has qualification. Jesus says further in Luke 9:23, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” The call to discipleship encompasses all of our life. There is not one portion of our life as disciples which we can say now, “This does not fall under the call of the Lord Jesus.” No, rather it is a call that encompasses all of our life.

Steadfastness in discipleship. I would briefly define my title as, “the firmness of belief and the adherence to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles.” Turn with me to the Gospel of John 8. We want to draw lessons from Anabaptist history. The Scriptures were the basis to call each and every disciple to steadfastness. We want to hear that call. We want to affirm that call in our own hearts as we seek to draw lessons from history. In John 8, we have the words of Jesus coming to us concerning discipleship. The context — we would say quite a few were professing a belief in Jesus. Jesus brought each one to the firm manifestation of discipleship. Notice what He says, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disci-

ples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31, 32) We note the call to steadfastness, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” Continue — steadfastness in discipleship. Again, we have the thought of firmness, holding on to, adherence. There are many Scriptures and I will not turn to them all. In our own heart, the call of the Scriptures is to faithfulness, adherence, holding on, holding fast, striving, and to seeking. We are looking at our opportunity to have eternal security. Yes, it is conditional upon our firm belief and our adherence to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles. It is our opportunity to have eternal security as we are faithful in discipleship — steadfast.

We want to draw lessons. I have chosen to focus largely upon the early period of time of Anabaptist history. We are looking at an era of the 15, 16, 1700’s, but it would be my desire as we identify lessons from that era that we can challenge our hearts today. Our experience is not identical to that era, in relation to the circumstances surrounding our lives as disciples today. I think we need to confess that we have been granted some extra comforts in our day, from

our heavenly Father and the opportunities that we have as disciples of the Lord Jesus today. We are, however, drawing these lessons from an era of time when the opportunities surrounding the lives of the saints, was not like what we enjoy today. There are further lessons that we can glean, and perhaps we will touch on this. We can see the circumstances, particularly as we identify the testing and trial of faith that came to those who endeavoured to be steadfast in discipleship when those times of persecution lessened. Then, we can draw lessons further how the tests came to them when the circumstances became more congenial, as we say sometimes. Was it more congenial to steadfastness in discipleship? This is certainly a challenge to us.

1) *The first lesson I would like to glean particularly as we focus on the early era of the Anabaptist history is that the Reformation was a result of those who desired to be steadfast in discipleship.* We are thinking of the time, as I already identified, when the flame of truth (the manifestation of God's will upon earth) the fire of truth was burning rather low. God kindled that flame in hearts to stir within them to yet rise to the call of Scriptures. Thus, the Reformation I am referring to is

the time when there were those who had experienced that stirring and call and responded to it. We need to qualify this first lesson because as we read, we can understand that while there was in the hearts of some a stirring and a beginning to follow their Lord, yet they failed to go all the way. They failed to be faithful in discipleship in answering that call. However, we can say the Reformation was a result, and we can say it in our time is a result of that work in our hearts and a desire to be steadfast.

2) *Another lesson we can glean is that history clearly reveals that not every reformer (referring to those who sought to take a stand for truth) came to, or called others to true discipleship.* We can cite a few examples. Those of us who have had opportunity to study Anabaptist history can recognize names of individuals who began to answer that call but failed to go all the way. Zwingli and Martin Luther are only a beginning of a few names that we could give. History reveals that they failed to come to, as well as to call others to true discipleship.

3) *Our third lesson we can glean is that true discipleship runs counter to the popular religious belief of the day.* How true it is for us today. As we focus on

that era and see how they felt within, and the call of the Scriptures, and sought to answer that call immediately, it brought them to realize that they needed to break with the popular religious belief of their day. In particular we can identify the Roman Catholic state church. They needed to break with it because true discipleship, the call of the Scriptures, was calling them to rise to an expression of discipleship which those of the popular churches of the day failed to answer. How true this is today for us. True discipleship runs counter to the popular religious (we would say) Christendom today.

Using a quote I found in preparation for this assignment, “Anabaptism was a more earnest effort than the other Protestant groups to break with religious and ecclesiastical tradition, in order to render absolute obedience to the text of Scripture.” That further helps us to understand the call that came to break. Yes, there was not a lack of religion or lack of, what this writer identified as ecclesiastical tradition — identifying the church as directing one’s religious exercise. True discipleship runs counter to popular religious belief.

Further, this same writer says, “They had sound principles of

interpretation as well as determination.” This is identifying the faithful few, the Anabaptists those who answered faithfully the call to discipleship. He says, “They had sound principles of interpretation as well as determination to make the Bible alone the norm of their faith and practice. They held to Biblical doctrines of God, man, sin, salvation.” We say they are very basic doctrines, and many today will say, “Well, we believe those doctrines as well.” However, it did not stop there with the believing. We are thinking of steadfastness in discipleship. Discipleship is taking up the cross and bearing it in obedience to the Scriptures. Yes, there is the firm belief in the doctrines of God, man, sin and salvation, but further they believed in the high calling and place of the Church. They called others to follow them together as brethren, to enter into commitment, faithfulness, expression of discipleship, that again called them to make a clear break with the popular religious belief of their day.

Thus, we can say that Anabaptism was a result of a few who followed God and allowed God to work into their hearts through the reading of His Word as well as an earnest determination to follow God in everything.

In everything — notice not only in part of our life, but in all of life. Again, one writer worded it this way, “There was no choice,” (I would add the word “other;”) “There was no other choice. God had to be obeyed at the cost of liberty of life and for this step,” (we could say for this choice) “they were willing to part with possessions, friends, family, and even life itself.” This is steadfastness in discipleship. For this choice, to answer the call, to take up the cross and follow their Lord, they were willing to part with possessions, friends, family and even life itself.

4) *Further, we can glean the lesson that they did not allow themselves to be terrified by fire, water, sword, or executioner.* No human being and nothing on earth could take anything from their hearts. They preferred to die the bitterest death, rather than to forsake the truth that they had come to know and love. What is the lesson we are learning or gleaning? What is it that we would allow? Is there anything that we would allow to terrify us or to draw us away? We are thinking of steadfastness in discipleship. They did not allow themselves to be terrified by fire, water, sword or executioner.

5) *Another lesson we can glean is that from the shedding of*

this innocent blood (I would call it) identifying those who were faithful and steadfast in discipleship, there was a light and a testimony for those around. Those who viewed, knew, watched, and witnessed. From this shedding of innocent blood there arose a fruit. Many were moved as they viewed the lives of those who followed their Lord faithfully and endured to the end in faithfulness. Many more were moved to serious thought.

We are thinking of lessons that we can glean as we consider steadfastness of discipleship. The challenge and the call comes to us; is there such a message going forth from our lives? No, we may not be called to shed our blood or to give our life as many were called to in the era of time we are focussing on. We are called today to follow in faithfulness. This light can reach, and will reach yet, to others. They were moved, yes, to serious thought as they viewed and witnessed this innocent blood being shed. They were moved to order their life, thinking, and striving in preparation for that future as identified already — the Scripture from John 14 — to prepare for that place that is prepared for the saints of all times. They were steadfast in discipleship.

I would like to yet further identify seven (what I could call) tokens, or signs of steadfastness in discipleship. I have chosen these from the era of the early time of Anabaptism. I would like to use these to challenge us further to our own steadfastness in discipleship. The first I would identify, I already introduced in my former thoughts. 1) First is the need for firm stand upon the Scriptures in face of false accusations and misinterpretations whereby they, or (we could say we) may be tempted to recant. Again this focusses on those who would come in upon the faithful disciples and quote Scriptures, or bring in thoughts which seek to draw or call us away from following the way of true discipleship. Many would seek to call us away or call us to recant. How is it with us today? Are we willing to stand firmly on the Scriptures in face of those who today would question, mock, or scorn our stand? Remember, it will not be popular to follow Christ. We are called to stand firmly.

2) Secondly, I would cite particularly the response of the faithful disciples in the time of Anabaptist history and down through time as well. They firmly stood in relation to nonresistance, in giving themselves over to their persecutors, yielding

themselves into the hands of those whom they knew likely would be the ones who would lead them to their death and their passing from time. This is one area of broadening the thought of the firm stand upon the Scriptures, in the area of nonresistance. For the message I think we will broaden into other areas. The call for us is to stand firmly upon the truth of Scriptures in the area of nonresistance. Now is the time to build conviction and practice ourselves and our hearts daily in nonresistance. The call is to “Resist not evil.” (Matthew 5:39) We are to give no resistance to evil. The challenge was already brought how that comes to us even as we drive the highways.

3) Thirdly, another token or sign of steadfastness, are the words of exhortation to fellow Christians as those faithful ones were led to their place of execution or suffering. They gave words of encouragement and exhortation to fellow believers, to yet encourage and strengthen their hearts. This call comes to each of us. Are we giving those words to strengthen one another’s arms in the Lord and to encourage one another? Further, they gave words of exhortation to those around them who were not faithful — to someone who had

once stood where they stood but had been drawn away, as well as many who had never answered the call. The faithful few earnestly called to their spectators, as well as even to their executioners. They called them to repentance and amendment of life. It was an expression of steadfastness.

4) *Fourthly, they gave clear expressions of humble worship.* Again, this broadens the thought of their knowledge of the Scripture, and knowing what Jesus had told them. Jesus teaches us, “The disciple is not above his master.” (Matthew 10:24; Luke 6:40) As we answer the call to discipleship we think of the expressions of humble worship that of quoting Scripture, the earnest prayer, and the exuberant praise to lift our hearts. We understand the place which singing fills in our hearts to strengthen and direct our thoughts. Singing helps to channel and curb the thoughts that would be tempting us to recant or to “draw back unto perdition.” As the Scripture is calling, we are not among those, “who draw back,” but among those who “believe to the saving of the soul.” (Hebrews 10:39) Thus, it is an expression of humble worship. Are we filled with the Spirit and our hearts filled with

the Word? Have we hid the Word in our hearts? Are our lives bathed with prayer and do we give expression of praise?

5) *Fifthly, another token I believe is that of writing of letters.* I would like to challenge us, and I believe this is an area where many are entering, and can enter, and should enter into. We have records of quite a number of letters written by those who were steadfast and faithful in following their Lord. These letters, I believe, stimulated, first of all, a personal faith. When we put something into writing, there is thought that goes into that. As those faithful disciples wrote those letters they had large portions of Scripture and they were hand written. These letters stimulated their personal faith. It reached and spoke to them, and called them also to faithfulness.

6) *Sixthly, I would cite as a token of faithfulness, the uplifted hands.* If you would read those accounts, they were no longer able to speak because of the limitations that man had put upon their earthen vessel. Yet, those who could would raise their hands. I would challenge us as the Scriptures do in 1 Timothy 2:8, where it calls us to lift “up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” Think how those areas identify steadfastness in

discipleship. Lifting up of the hands identifies entreaty. Lifting up of the hands can identify thankfulness. Lifting up of the hands can identify dependence. The call is to steadfastness. Are we lifting up our hands?

7) *Seventhly, I would identify what I would call the “glow of glory,” that surrounded the faithful ones.* It was the testimony of the presence of God as they came to the end and close of their earthly life. It was a glow of glory which others could see, and behold. It was none other than the presence of God — the Spirit of God with them as God prom-

ised yes, to Israel through Moses, “My presence shall go with thee.” (Exodus 33:14) It was that same presence which strengthened our Saviour as He faced the cross there in the Garden. The Scripture says, “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” (Luke 22:43) Will we be among the faithful today who are steadfastly adhering to the Scriptures and following the Lord Jesus Christ? The promise is, “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

Scripture References

Genesis		Malachi		John	
1:1	28	3:6	29	8:31, 32	31
1:3	28			14	34
2:4	28				
		Matthew			
		5:39	35	1 Timothy	
Exodus		10:16–39	30	2:8	36
3:13	25	10:22	37		
3:12–14	26	10:24	36	Hebrews	
6:2	27			10:39	36
33:14	37	Luke			
		6:40	36		
Psalms		9:23	31		
91:1	29	14:27	30		
139:7	29	22:43	37		

From the Previous Issue:
Thinking Through Valentine’s Day Vanities
 From a message by Luke Sensenig
 Sunday, January 15, 2006
 Waterloo Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)
One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 20.
Solomon.

I. Domestic life.

1. Son of David and Bathsheba. — 2 Samuel 12:24.
2. A man of peace. — 1 Chronicles 22:5, 8, 9.
3. His wives and concubines. — 1 Kings 11:1-3.
4. Their effect upon him. 1 Kings 11:4; Nehemiah 13:26.

II. Domestic reign.

1. Anointed king over Israel. — 1 Kings 1:39; 2:12; 1 Chronicles 28:5; 29:20-25.
2. Adonijah submits to him. 1 Kings 1:41-53.
3. The Temple.
 - a. Built. — 1 Kings 6; 2 Chronicles 3; 4.
 - b. Dedicated. — 1 Kings 8.
 - c. Solomon's blessings and prayer. — 1 Kings 8:12-61; 2 Chronicles 6.
 - d. Sacrifices. — 1 Kings 8: 62-66; 2 Chronicles 7:4-7.
 - e. God's covenant with Solomon. — 1 Kings 9:1-9; 2 Chronicles 7:12-22.

NOTE. — this, like all of God's covenants, was conditional upon the faithfulness of man. In our covenant relation with God, let us remember that God is always true to His promises. If the covenant is broken, Is our fault, not God's.

4. His possessions. — 1 Kings 10.
5. Domestic troubles.
 - a. Cause. — 1 Kings 11:1- 13; 2 Chronicles 10:4.
 - b. Hadad. — 1 Kings 11:14-22.
 - c. Rezon. — 1 Kings 11: 23-25.
 - d. Jeroboam. 1 Kings 11:26-40.
6. Death of Solomon. — 1 Kings 11:43; 2 Chronicles 9:31

III. Foreign policy.

1. Marries Pharaoh's daughter. — 1 Kings 3:1.
2. Forms a league with Hiram, king of Tyre, for the erection of

the Temple. — 1 Kings 5:9; 11–14; 2 Chronicles 2.

NOTE. — Solomon made three alliances: (1) with heathen kings, (2) with heathen wives, (3) with heathen worship.

3. Received tribute from surrounding nations. — 2 Chronicles 9:42.

4. Foreign commerce. — 1 Kings 9:26–28; 2 Chronicles 3:17, 18; 9:20–28

NOTE. — A splendid showing before the world; but listen to Solomon's own testimony. (Ecclesiastes 2:1–11.)

IV. His religion.

1. Prayer for wisdom and the answer. — 1 Kings 3:5–15; 4:29–31.

2. Sacrifices. — 1 Kings 8:62–66; 2 Chronicles 7:4–7.

3. God's Covenant with him. — 1 Kings 9:1–9

4. Led off into idolatry. — 1 Kings 11:4.

V. His glory.

1. His wisdom. — 2 Chronicles 9:1–6, 23.

2. His court. — 2 Chronicles 9:4.

3. His throne. — 2 Chronicles 9:17–19.

4. His wealth. — 2 Chronicles 9:22.

5. His dominion. — 1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chronicles 9:26.

6. A comparison. — Luke 12:27.

VI. From the life of Solomon we, learn —

1. That God is generous in His response to unselfish prayer.

2. That God's promises are conditional upon man's faithfulness.

3. That an alliance with worldly people leads to complications in worldly wickedness.

4. That peace brings prosperity.

5. That looseness in morals on the part of parents is apt to be transmitted to children.

6. That marriage with unbelievers is apt to lead to abominable idolatries.

7. That a pompous display of worldly glory is always at the expense of others' happiness.

8. That the most dangerous period of a man's life is when the

world honors him.

9. That there are bitter dregs in every cup of worldly pleasure.
10. That it is possible for the wisest of men to fall.

1. Compare Solomon with David.
2. Was Solomon's wisdom worldly or divine
3. Relate a few instances giving proof of Solomon's wisdom.
4. Do we understand from Solomon's proverb that he repented again in his last days?
5. Mention some of Solomon's greatest mistakes.

LESSON 21.

The Kingdom Divided.

I. Causes.

1. Solomon's idolatry. — 1 Kings 11:4–11.

NOTE. — This was the principal cause (1 Kings 12:15). The other causes were of secondary importance.

2. Solomon's oppression. — 1 Kings 12:4.

NOTE. — A natural consequence of kingly splendor. When a ruler revels in luxury, his subjects usually suffer.

3. Weakness of Rehoboam. (See 1 Kings 12:1–15; 18.)

4. Popularity of Jeroboam. (See 1 Kings 11:28; 12:3, 12, 20; 2 Chronicles 10: 3)

II. The Division. — 1 Kings 12:16–20.

III. Policy of Rehoboam.

1. Is forbidden to fight against Jeroboam. 1 Kings 12:21–24; 2 Chronicles 11:1–4.

NOTE. — This seems for a time to have had a favorable effect upon Rehoboam, which leads us to think that he was not as wicked as he was weak.

2. Strengthens his kingdom. — 2 Chronicles 11:5–12.

3. Three years of upright life. — 2 Chronicles 11:17.

NOTE. — Three years of prosperity, during which time the Levites in Jeroboam's kingdom came over to Judah, and Benjamin appears to have been won.

4. His polygamous inclinations. — 2 Chronicles 11:18–23.

5. Wicked reign and results. — 2 Chronicles 12.

IV. Policy of Jeroboam.

1. Plans for keeping his subjects loyal — 1 Kings 12:26–33

NOTE. — Jeroboam's first act was to break faith with God. God had raised him to his lofty position; could He not sustain him there? Instead of going to the Lord for instruction as to what he should do, he seems to have taken all credit for his success to himself and communes with his own precious self as to the best course to pursue. No wonder he drifted off into idolatry. Having forsaken the true God, there was nothing left to worship but idols.

2. Defiles the priesthood. — 1 Kings 12:31, 32.; 13:33, 34; 2 Chronicles 11:13–17.

3. Judgment upon the house of Jeroboam. — 1 Kings 13:1, 2; 14:7–16.

V. Wars between the rival kings. — 1 Kings 14:30; 15:6; 2 Chronicles 12:15.

VI. Thoughts on the lesson.

1. When we read of the perpetual quarrels between the rival kings, we cannot but reflect that they were both wrong. When God is decidedly on one side, quarrels are short-lived.

2. Rehoboam missed two golden opportunities: (1) when the people offered to serve him on condition that he lighten their burdens; (2) when, after three years of submission to divine authority, he turned back to his former sinful ways. He lacked two things essential to a great mind: (1) decision of character, (2) self denial.

3. Jeroboam's fatal weakness was his ambition. God was displeased with the reigning house of Israel, and raised up Jeroboam as the head of the more powerful of the rival kingdoms. Forgetting that this was the work of God, and not of himself, he endeavored to immortalize his name by setting up idol worship. The world knows the result. We remember Jeroboam as a failure. Had he chosen to substitute fidelity to God for personal ambition, his name might today stand out on a level with Abraham and Moses and David. Ambition is a curse to any man.

4. When a church is torn up in factions, some argue that the proper thing is division for the sake of peace. Well, Israel tried it; but was there peace? Did not the same turbulent, factional, pusillanimous, devil-

ish spirit continue the strife among the factions until the kingdom was completely destroyed? Better argue in favor of a general falling down upon the knees and a sincere prayer to God that He may remove the contentious spirit.

1. Compare the personal characters of Rehoboam and Jeroboam.
2. Did Jeroboam's erection of new altars have its desired effect?
3. To what extent was Solomon responsible for the wickedness of Rehoboam?
4. To which division does the lineage of Christ belong?
5. What does Rehoboam's response to his oppressed subjects teach us?

Children's Book Reprint (Continued)
THE FOLLY OF PROCRASTINATION;
OR, THE STORY OF CHARLES AND EDWARD MARTIN.
Revised and Reprinted © 2003

THE TEST

ON one Friday afternoon when the vacation, of which we have spoken, began, the boys came home through the orchard, where they found their father, saw in hand, busily pruning the trees. He called them and went with them into the next field, where he gave to each a little patch of rich ground, in which they might raise anything they pleased. He kindly promised to give them whatever seeds or advice they needed, and added,

"Now, my dear children, I hope you will show a little care and industry, for I generally expect that as a boy manages his garden, so he will manage his farm, when

he becomes a man."

"When would you have us begin, father?"

"Well, as the ground is already ploughed and harrowed it can be easily laid out and planted. It is rather too late to do anything to it this evening. But you can go down to the barn and see that the spades, rakes, and hoes are in order. I brought some new ones home for you today; and you will have to put handles to them yourselves."

"Thank you, thank you, dear father," said the boys, "if tomorrow should be a fine day we'll go right to work."

"As you please," replied their

father, and returned to the orchard. Charles and Edward went off to the barn to see after their new tools, and were soon merrily at work, all the while chatting about their gardens, and many were their plans as to what it was best to sow, the shape of the beds, width of the drills, and such like.

They had worked about an hour. Charles's share was finished, and only one hoe of Edward's remained to be fitted with a handle. Charles looked at his nice tools with a good deal of satisfaction, and said, "There now, Edward, my work is done in time, for once. I believe you are right; it is best when anything is to be done, to do it directly. I'll try and follow your example, and procrastinate no more, I'm resolved. Then too, maybe, I'll regain father's and Mr. Charlton's good opinion."

"I hope so, I am sure," answered Edward affectionately. At this moment they were called by their mother. She wished Edward to go on an errand to her sister's across the bridge, and Charles to take a letter to the post office.

The lighthearted children set off in different directions and returned about dusk. The family had taken tea, so Charles and Edward sat down to eat their sup-

per together. Ned was still thinking of the plants he was to raise, but it was clear that Charles had taken something else into his head.

"Ned," said Charles speaking softly, as soon as his father had left the room, "here! I want to tell you something."

"What is it?" asked Edward, smiling at his brother's mysterious air.

"Why, as I was at the post office, I met George Jones. George came with me nearly half-way home. He told me that Arthur and William had come home to spend a week, and they are all going to C—, for a picnic and fishing. Oh! there is going to be a glorious time; they will pack a lunch and the fish are biting good. They are going tomorrow, and George wants you and me to go along."

"Oh, how I should like to go" cried Edward. "I have a great mind to go," but he checked himself. "No, no, I cannot; 'Business before pleasure.' Our gardens, Charles, you know—our gardens! I'm sure father expects us to go to work tomorrow, and when he is so kind it would be wrong to disappoint him.

"I wonder if he would let us go."

"I don't know, but I think we had better stay at home."

“I’ll ask father. I’ll take his advice.” And Charles, quite satisfied with this resolution, set off in search of father, leading his half-unwilling brother by the hand. “Father! dear father! Mr. Jones’s boys have come home and are going tomorrow for a picnic and fishing; they want Edward and me to go along, may we go, father?”

“Mr. Martin looked steadily at his sons, and after a moment’s pause gravely answered, “I thought you were going to plant your gardens.”

“Oh yes, we meant to do so until I met George Jones. But, father, you know we can’t often go fishing, and our gardens can wait *one day*.”

“If they wait one day, they must wait two days, for the day after tomorrow is Sunday. Recollect that. Edward, do you want to go too?”

The boy hung down his head, and modestly replied, “I should like to go on the picnic and do some fishing much, father, but I don’t like to leave my work undone.”

Mr. Martin mused a little longer, and at last said, “My dear children, as for Mr. Jones’s sons, it is but fair that they should have a holiday when Arthur and William have just come home, after being so long away. They

are well behaved, carefully brought up boys, and I am sure will not lead you into mischief nor danger. I cannot be always with you, and you must learn to think and judge for yourselves as soon as you can. I have given you precepts; you must yourselves learn to apply them. You may go or stay, as you please; I shall not be displeased whatever you decide.”

Experience had taught Mr. Martin the importance of teaching young people practically to apply the general precepts they have been taught.

Many people *think* for their children, to save them the trouble of thinking for themselves; and are perfectly satisfied if the latter yield obedience to their *express commands*. Such a course leaves young people as soon as they quit the paternal roof, like ships without a pilot sailing by a dangerous coast. It is perfectly right that children should obey the *commands* of their parents, *but it is not all they should do*. They should learn to govern their conduct by *fixed principles of right*, which, with God’s blessing, will in all circumstances furnish them with a guide.

Charles tried to persuade himself that after the permission he had obtained, he had a *right* to go.

Edward, on the other hand, clearly saw, that their father, in allowing them to decide for themselves, aimed at exercising their judgment and strengthening their characters. He resolved to stay, and to carry out his maxim, "Business before pleasure."

After the usual Family Worship was ended, the family retired to rest. Charles and Edward were soon asleep, though it is doubtful whether both of them did not dream of the picnic.

The next morning they arose early, and after breakfast, and their usual morning duties were done, they went to the barnyard, where we have first introduced them to the reader. Charles, with his hands in the pockets of his roundabout, was leaning against the fence; and Edward was fitting a handle to the hoe he had left unfinished. Charles seemed fully to have made up his mind to go.

Edward was putting him in mind of the resolution he had formed the evening before, which was to give up his habit of *procrastination*. Alas! there was no temptation before him when he made the good resolve; and temptation is the fire which tries our virtue.

Charles relied too much on his own strength, and sought no other aid to carry out his good design: consequently it was "as

the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away." (Hosea 13:3).

He listened good humouredly to his brother's arguments, but had contrived to persuade himself that, as his father had given *permission*, he might very lawfully please himself. So he said,

"Well, Ned, you are welcome to do as you please, but I shall go with Mr. Jones's boys, and I'll reckon we'll have some real fun."

Don't you think father would rather we were usefully employed, than having such fun as you anticipate?"

"Why, yes; but one day won't make any difference, and then I can go to work busily on Monday morning. That will do just as well."

"Remember what father said; two days will be lost to your crop."

"Oh, well;" and Charles restlessly kicked the dirt with his toe.

Edward placed his spade, rake, and hoe on his shoulder, and started for his garden. Charles followed him, until they crossed the orchard fence, and struck the path which led to Mr. Jones's house.

"Good-bye, Ned. Then you are not, going?"

"Good-bye, Charley, I hope you will have a pleasant time."

Having laid down his tools,

Edward returned to the house for a garden line, and, by the time his brother was out of sight, was busy in good earnest. His first care was to divide the patch into two parts. One, he intended to sow immediately; the other was to be kept for the transplanted and late vegetables. So steadily did our young friend work, that at twelve o'clock, when the signal for dinner was given, the beds of the first patch were all laid out and dug. Meanwhile such fine plans had come into his head, that he had forgot all about the picnic, until he had turned as if to call Charles to dinner, and then

he remembered that there was no Charles there.

Mr. Martin was just seated at the table as Edward entered. He eyed him with satisfaction and asked for Charles.

“Gone to the picnic, father. You know you gave him leave, father,” added he, excusingly.

“And did I not give you leave also?” “Yes, father, but—but—,” Edward stammered and could not readily proceed.

“But you thought I would rather see you attending to your business. Yes, Edward, you obey the precepts I taught you. That is true obedience.”

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