

to *change* the conditions) because of his great mercy. He told the angel to stay his hand because the people had been punished enough. At the same time, David was moved with compassion for his people, whom he called sheep. Taking all the blame on himself, he asked God to let the punishment fall on him and his house. There is no evidence that such a change was made.

Verse 18. The actual atonement was made by the physical affliction. David was not permitted to assume that, but was required to perform a ceremonial service to God, to clear his personal guilt. He was commanded to build an altar and offer sacrifices. The place was designed for the service. David was not a priest; not even of the priestly tribe. Confusion sometimes occurs on this subject; it is supposed that a priest only could lawfully offer a sacrifice. It is true that all sacrifices offered on the brazen altar as part of the regular Mosaic system, had to be handled by the priest. But the particular ceremony that a priest only could perform, at any time or place, was the burning of incense. (1 Chr. 23:13; 2 Chr. 26:16-18.)

Verses 19, 20. In obedience to the prophet, David went to see Araamah. Their meeting was agreeable and the king was paid the homage due him.

Verse 21. Araamah was told what was wanted of him, and the use to be made of it. He was told that it was to be sold to David.

Verses 22, 23. Araamah was friendly toward the proposition, even offering all for David's use free of charge.

Verses 24, 25. In refusing to accept the property free, David gave us an excellent lesson on the subject of sacrifices. To offer to the Lord something that cost the giver nothing would not be a sacrifice at all. That principle is taught throughout the whole Bible. Christians are commanded to give out of their property. (1 Cor. 16:2.) If we do not give up something of value, and that could have been used ourselves, we have not made any sacrifice. Jesus gave his life for us, and his Father before him had given him up to the sinful world, as "his unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15.)

1 KINGS 1

Verse 1. *Stricken in years.* The first word is from the Hebrew *bo*, and defined, "a primitive root; to go or

come (in a wide variety of applications)."—Strong. It is rendered "to come in" 1200 times in the A. V. Thus it has no meaning pertaining to the condition of the thing or person spoken of. What may follow its use must determine the condition. The term means only that David had come into years. The same could be said of Moses who was 120 at death and in his full vigor. Likewise, Abraham was at least 137 when he begat six sons. The last part of the verse was needed to tell us of David's condition. We are not told in any place why he became so infirm and lived to be only 70. (2 Sam. 5:4.)

Verse 2. *Stand before the king* means to be always "in waiting" for his service. *Cherish* is from *CAKAN* and defined, "a primitive root; to be familiar with; by implication to minister to, be serviceable to, to cherish, be customary."—Strong. With such a relationship established under the practice of those times, this virgin would be permitted to occupy the same bed with the king, in order to give him the warmth of her body.

Verses 3, 4. The damsel secured ministered to the king in his infirmity. *King knew her* not means that he did not have the intimacy pertaining to husband and wife.

Verse 5. The death of David was evidently near, and another king will take his place. Haggith was one of his wives and Adonijah was her son. (2 Sam. 3:4.) He thought he could get his father's place and prepared to do so.

Verse 6. This explains the vanity of the young man. He was a "spoiled" child; had never been denied any request of his father. He was half brother to Absalom, another son indulged to his father's sorrow. Parents should consider the evil results of being over indulgent toward their children.

Verse 7. Almost every man, though unworthy, will have a following, and Adonijah was supported in his conspiracy. He won over Joab, David's commander-in-chief, and Abiathar, one of the priests.

Verse 8. Another priest, Zadok, Nathan the prophet, and most of the important other men, remained true to David. The condition of the king, however, would seem to give Adonijah opportunity for working up sentiment for his scheme.

Verse 9. Conspirators often like to

use general gatherings as occasions for putting over their work. They give opportunity for contact with interested parties. Adonijah arranged a grand feast for the purpose and invited his father's sons, and servants.

Verse 10. Nathan the prophet, Solomon, and the men of influence, were not invited to the feast, and the reason is easy to understand. While the feast was going on, and the plot of Adonijah was in the making, there were persons active on the other side of the controversy.

Verse 11. Bath-sheba was the mother of Solomon, and he had been designated by the Lord before he was born (1 Chr. 22:9) to be the next king. David had given this information to her. (verses 13, 17, 30.) Nathan the prophet knew about the movements of Adonijah and that David, as well as Bath-sheba, was unaware of it. As a friend to both, he came to Bath-sheba to get something done about it.

Verses 12, 13. Nathan advised her to go into the presence of the king, and make a report to him of the actions of Adonijah. She was to remind him of his promise to her, that her son was to reign next.

Verse 14. When two witnesses state the same thing, independent of each other, it strengthens the word of each. That was the plan suggested by Nathan for their plea with the king.

Verses 15, 16. Since the young woman was waiting on the king, it was not necessary for anyone else to offer such service. The appearing of Bath-sheba could not have been for that reason, so it was proper to ask why she was there.

Verses 17, 18. David was first reminded of his promise to make Solomon king. He was next told of the activities of Adonijah.

Verse 19. The aforesaid activities included his feast, and the class of persons he had invited, as well as those he had slighted.

Verses 20, 21. The plea Bath-sheba made was for David to decide who should be king next. Her point was that the selection should be made public while he was living, so that no opportunity would be open for the usurper to rob her and her son of their right.

Verses 22-25. These verses contain the same matter as the speech just made by Bath-sheba.

Verses 26, 27. There is still nothing additional in these verses. But it is well to observe the point that the rightful heir to the throne had been slighted in the invitations to the feast. Being thus treated would have been cause for complaint had there been nothing at stake but social enjoyment. Under the circumstances, however, it was significant of the conspiracy forming, that certain ones were left out.

Verse 28. Bath-sheba had retired after making her complaint and plea to the king. This was done, evidently, to give the speech of Nathan a meaning independent of hers. She was then recalled by Nathan on command of David.

Verses 29, 30. When Bath-sheba came into the presence of the king he renewed his pledge. *As the Lord liveth* means an emphatic declaration. There is no doubt about the existence of the Lord, and the assurance of the thing about to be declared is as great. The promise was repeated that had been already made, and confirmed with an oath, that Solomon should be king. Moreover, the decree was to be made known that day.

Verse 31. *Let my lord king David live for ever.* This must be taken as merely an expression of gratitude; not a serious wish. She had just been greatly concerned lest her son might not get to be king, and had gone through the entire audience with her royal husband to insure the success of her wish. But if David should live for ever, all her plans would fail.

Verse 32. David now proceeded to put into effect his guarantee to Bath-sheba, which must be done through proper persons. The importance of Nathan and Zadok is obvious. Benaiah had charge of the king's guard (2 Sam. 20:23), hence his services were needed.

Verse 33. Smith's Bible Dictionary says: "It would appear that only kings and great men rode on mules." This accounts for the order of David in this affair. Gihon was a city near Jerusalem and a suitable place for the ceremony. Being near the capital city, there would be many witnesses to the transaction.

Verse 34. Anointing one for office was frequently done beforehand as a sort of formal announcement. (Num. 3:3; Judg. 9:15; 1 Sam. 9:16; 16:6.) The ceremony would be made more impressive and fixed by the blast of the trumpet, accompanied with the

audible proclamation of the servants standing with them.

Verse 35. We should understand that David was actual king as long as he lived. But it was a practice for the reigning monarch to share the throne with the oncoming one, if such had been designated. When Solomon came from Gihon to Jerusalem, these men were directed to march after him in recognition of his appointment.

Verses 36, 37. It was fitting that Benaliah should be the spokesman at this point; he had charge of the king's bodyguard. He fully approved of the provisions made by David.

Verses 38-40. This paragraph repeats the subject matter of verses 33-35. The people added the sound of pipes (flutes) to the trumpet of the priest. *Reut* means literally, to fall apart. As this did not actually happen, we understand it to be a strong expression of the effect produced by the instruments and voices.

Verse 41. The sound mentioned in preceding verse was heard by the group at the feast of Adonijah about the time it was ended. Joab was the one who observed it and inquired for its cause.

Verse 42. At the same time, the priest's son came in. Adonijah said to him, "thou bringest good tidings." This was more in the nature of wishful thinking, for certainly the noise that was made did not all escape his ears.

Verses 43-46. The "good tidings" that Jonathan had was the report of what had been done for Solomon. Since he made a true report, and we know already what it was, no more space will be used here for it.

Verse 47. The king's servants had been among the ones invited to the feast of Adonijah. But this verse indicates that at any rate, some of them had "seen through" the conspiracy, and joined those who acclaimed Solomon as king. They did so in the presence of David, which proved their sincerity. It so pleased the king that he bowed upon the bed. The word is from *SHACHAH* and defined, "a primitive root; to depress, i. e. prostrate (especially, reflexively, in homage to royalty or God)."—Strong. It means that David acted as a subject in honor of Solomon as a king.

Verse 48. David further expressed thanks to God for having given him a son to sit on his throne. Not only

was he assured that a proper successor would be forthcoming after his death, but he had seen the formalities of his appointment with his own eyes.

Verse 49. Upon hearing the report given by Jonathan, the guests that had remained with Adonijah became frightened and deserted him.

Verse 50. Adonijah then saw that his scheme had failed. When a would-be usurper is detected, the usual treatment meted out is death. This one fled to the altar for protection. Ex. 2: 28 stipulated that a murderer should be taken, from the altar even, for execution. The thought is, that such a reference to the altar would imply that for lesser wrongs it would serve as protection. In such a hope, Adonijah fled to it.

Verses 51-53. Adonijah plead for his life. Solomon granted it to him, but on condition that he "shew himself a worthy man." That would mean, of course, that he would be obedient to whatever orders were made for him.

1 KINGS 2

Verse 1. David knew that he was soon to die, so he gave a charge to Solomon, who was the son appointed by him to reign in his stead.

Verse 2. *I go the way of all the earth.* Joshua made the same statement. (Josh. 23: 14.) It means that all people of the earth are destined to die and he was to be no exception. This was written by Paul also in Heb. 9: 27. The words *shew thyself* are not in the original. *Strong* and *man* are, the second one meaning a male with individuality. The whole statement means, "be as a strong person with individuality."

Verse 3. The charge of the preceding verse could best be carried out by keeping the charge ("duty") of the Lord; walk in his ways ("course of life"); keep his statutes ("appointments"); and his commandments ("the law"); and his judgments ("verdicts"); and his testimonies ("record of witnesses"). It is further stated that all these important items of divine regulation are written in the law of Moses. This is another rebuke of those who seek to belittle the authority of Moses. The reward for Solomon if he observed all these things was that he would prosper wherever he went.

Verse 4. David had been promised by the Lord that if his children did

right, he would always have a man to occupy his throne.

Verse 5. *Blood of war in peace.* The distinction should not be overlooked. When a nation engages in defensive warfare, the blood shed therein is lawful. But it is unlawful to shed blood under pretense of military action when not regularly enlisted as a soldier. *And in his shoes* is figurative, and means that when blood is shed unlawfully, the guilty person is walking in a wicked and bloody way of life.

Verse 6. The general charge was not to let Joab die in peace; Solomon was to use his best judgment in carrying it out.

Verse 7. Barzillai offered kindness to David when he was fleeing from Absalom. (2 Sam. 19: 31-39.) He had previously sustained him with necessities of life. In consideration for the convenience of the king, however, he declined to be a personal burden on him in accompanying him further than the river. Gratitude for his kindness prompted David to provide for his sons.

Verse 8. The words *with the sword* are added to what David said to Shimei recorded in 2 Sam. 19: 23. It explains the apparent disagreement between his two actions. These words refer to death in war; and Shimei was not drafted into military service.

Verse 9. The guilt of disrespect, however, was still on Shimei, and he was to be given capital punishment; the particular method was to be decided by Solomon.

Verse 10. *David slept with his fathers.* The second word is perverted by various materialists to favor the idea of soul-sleeping. It is from SHAKAB, and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to lie down (for rest, sexual connection, decease or any other purpose)." In the A. V. it has been rendered by lie 98 times, lie down 30, lie with 2, sleep 48, be ravished 2, and a few others of the same class. There is not one single instance where the word is used except in reference to the body. *Fathers* is from AB and is defined by Young, "father, ancestor, source, inventor." It is defined by Strong, "a primitive word; father in a literal and immediate, or figurative and remote application." The verse means that David lay down in death the same as all his ancestors had done. See the comments at verse 2. He was buried in the "city of David." That

was the part of Jerusalem called Zion. Young says it was "the southwest hill of Jerusalem, the older and higher part of the city; it is often called the city of David." Strong refers to it, "in the sense of conspicuousness (as a permanent capital), a mountain of Jerusalem."

Verse 11. 2 Samuel 2 gives the account of this division against David. After Saul's sympathizers were defeated, the entire nation recognized David as king and conducted him to Jerusalem.

Verse 12. *To be established* means to be made prosperous. The people were united behind the new king, and the prestige of his father's reign descended upon him.

Verse 13. We recall the attempt of Adonijah to obtain the throne by usurpation, which failed. He now thought to try another basis. To do so he must contact the mother of Solomon. In those days the movements of all persons related to the royal family were observed. This would be made more necessary by the plurality of marriages and the mixture of blood among the heirs that resulted. When Adonijah, son of one widow of David, came into the presence of Bath-sheba, another widow, and mother of the man then on the throne, it was natural to inquire for his purpose. He affirmed that he was coming peaceably, which meant that no evil intentions were prompting him.

Verses 14, 15. Adonijah falsified by saying that *all Israel set their faces on me.* He pretended next to acknowledge that his brother had obtained the kingdom and that by right from the Lord. All of this speech was in hypocrisy, and a preparation for introducing his request, the real motive for his coming to her.

Verses 16, 17. Obtaining permission to make his request known, he asked that he be given Abishag to wife. The request might seem fair and innocent. She was a virgin as David was too infirm when she came to him to live with her in the relation of husband and wife. Howbeit, as she was the latest woman to share his bed, it would place her in a close relationship with him. Adonijah was rash enough to think that if she became his wife, it would open up a way for him to seek the throne.

Verse 18. The request appeared so

reasonable that she agreed to speak to Solomon about it.

Verse 19. When she appeared in the presence of the throne, the king honored her by arising from it and doing homage to her. A queenmother was held in high regard, and Solomon provided a seat for his mother on his right hand. It was the most exalted position a person could be given except the throne.

Verse 20. *For I will not say thee nay.* Critics will charge Solomon with a breach of covenant, since we know he did deny her the request. There are two things to be considered. Bathsheba said it was a *small request*. The word in the original is defined by Strong as "unimportant," and doubtless she believed it to be so. With that sort of request in mind, Solomon would be willing to promise beforehand to grant it. Another consideration is, when a promise is obtained in ignorance of all the true state of affairs, and one that is wrong in principle, such a promise is not morally binding.

Verses 21, 22. When Bath-sheba made her petition known, Solomon saw through the scheme. He had not forgotten the first attempt of Adonijah to obtain the throne, and that it would have been by force. Now he proposed to secure it by marriage. Therefore Solomon said: "Ask for him the kingdom also." Another factor that would have lent a plausible basis for the petition was that he was older than Solomon, although seeking this young virgin for a wife.

Verse 23. *God do so to me.* This and similar expressions occurs in many places in the Bible. It means that if the thing threatened against some person is not carried out, then let the thing threatened be brought upon the one making the threat.

Verse 24. The threat alluded to in the preceding verse was that Adonijah was to die immediately. The mere asking for this woman as a wife might have been either granted or denied, and the matter dropped, had it not been that Solomon knew it to be but a scheme to get possession of the throne.

Verse 25. Benaiah had charge of the bodyguard of the king. This unit of service was in the nature of "secret service" today. It was proper, therefore, that he should be the executioner of the conspirator.

Verses 26, 27. Chapter 1: 7 shows Abiathar to have been with Adonijah

in his first conspiracy. He was worthy of death, but in respect for the sacred service he had been rendering previously, Solomon spared him, for the present at least. But he would not permit him to continue in that service. Instead, he was ordered to retire to Anathoth, a city allotted to the priests for residence. In taking the priesthood from Abiathar, the inspired writer tells us that it fulfilled the prediction in 1 Sam. 2: 31-35.

Verse 28. Word came to Joab of the "purge" that Solomon was making. He had sided with Adonijah in the attempted conspiracy, and concluded that his life was in danger. He may have known of the benefit Adonijah obtained by fleeing to the altar; he tried the same thing. He had been true to David as against Absalom, but deserted him and Solomon in favor of Adonijah. That was not all of which he was guilty as will be seen below. Among the things of which he was guilty was murder, and Ex. 21: 14 required that the altar should not provide protection for a murderer.

Verse 29. When Solomon learned what Joab had done he ordered the captain of his bodyguard, Benaiah, to execute him.

Verse 30. Joab still thought the altar would serve for protection, and with that idea, said he would die there. He evidently thought the sanctity of the article of divine service would not be violated by such a turbulent act as capital execution. His proposal baffled Benaiah, so he brought word to Solomon.

Verses 31-33. While the act of conspiracy was the immediate occasion of Joab's death, it was the climax of a list of crimes. Solomon enumerated them, and the reader may refresh his knowledge of the deeds by reading 2 Sam. 3: 23; 20: 10.

Verse 34. *Fell upon him* is an expression found often in the Bible. It does not refer especially to the posture of the body. The first word is defined, "to impinge," and that means, to contact. It is sometimes used in a friendly sense, as "fell on his neck and kissed him," or in unfriendly, such as the above. The verse means he contacted Joab with the sword with enough violence to kill him. Men had their private burial place in some instances; Joab had one and it was in the open country, where he was buried.

Verse 35. The *host* was the army, over which Joab had held charge;

Benaiah was put in his place. Abithar, who had been sent home, was replaced by Zadok.

Verses 36-38. Shimei was the man who cursed David. He had apologized, however, and was promised leniency. In respect for that, Solomon allowed him to live, on condition that he confine himself to his house in Jerusalem. He agreed to the stipulation and observed it for some time.

Verses 39, 40. Shimei violated his parole after three years. Some of his servants escaped and he went in person to recover them, which took him out of Jerusalem.

Verses 41-45. Solomon called Shimei to him. He reminded him of the restrictions placed over him, and that he had agreed to them. *Knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to.* The words *knowest* and *privy* are identical in the original, but the point is that Shimei not only was aware of his evil conduct, but it came from his heart, and hence it was with malice.

Verse 46. At the commandment of Solomon, Shimei was slain. The question is raised whether the account in this chapter contradicts statements in 1 Chr. 22: 8, 9. It does not, for they refer to actions altogether different. David was a man of war; Solomon never had a war. The three men slain in this chapter were executed by the officer charged with execution of those convicted of capital crimes; they were not killed as soldiers.

1 KINGS 3

Verse 1. *Affinity* loosely means any close attachment between any two or more persons. Its primary meaning, however, is defined thus by Strong: "To give (a daughter) away in marriage." Solomon had a multitude of wives in the legal sense of practice suffered in those times. But the daughter of Pharaoh was the woman he loved as a man should love his wife. She was the one whom he called "my wife" in 2 Chr. 8: 11, and is the heroine of the book, Song of Solomon. (Song, Ch. 1: 5.) *City of David* is explained at Ch. 2: 10. *Own house* means the palace, the *house of the Lord* means the temple. (Ch. 7: 1; 9: 10.) He lodged his wife in the chief part of Jerusalem until he had time to build a house for her elsewhere.

Verse 2. *High places* is a term used frequently and has a literal meaning.

The first word is from BAMAḤ and defined, "from an unused root (meaning to be high); an elevation."—Strong. The tabernacle had been stolen by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4: 10, 11; Smith's Bible Dictionary, article Tabernacle). The people often wished to do formal service to God. In the absence of the altar, which was with the tabernacle at Gibeon, they used elevated places since they would seem to be appropriate for service to the High One. The fact of doing these services in high places was not condemned in itself. But in doing so it could be questioned whether that was the best they could do; they probably could have gone to the tabernacle. God was very lenient and tolerated many things not strictly according to the law.

Verse 3. Solomon's life in general was good up to this time, but he added the practice of using the high places in the same manner described in the preceding verse. That is, he did so although going also at times to the proper place at Gibeon. He respected the statutes of David his father who also had regarded the law of God that had been given to him in the writings of Moses. When kings and other high persons needed special guidance, they were inspired only for that occasion and purpose.

Verse 4. We have no definite information as to when or how the tabernacle got in possession of the Israelites from the Philistines. At the time we are considering, however, the change had been made, and thither Solomon went to offer sacrifices. The priests would do the manual part of the service, but the king furnished the animals from the royal treasury. The offering of animal sacrifices was not always for sin (Leviticus 3rd chapter), so the vast number of beasts offered at this time was in keeping with the favorable relationship that Solomon was observing toward the Lord.

Verse 5. *Ask what I shall give thee.* This is popularly misquoted, and made to say God told Solomon he could have whatever he asked for. This is far from correct. We have no right to say that his wish would have been granted had it displeased the Lord.

Verse 6. Solomon had great respect for his father, and appreciated the many things the Lord had done for him. *Mercy* generally implies a treatment less severe than one's conduct deserves. That was not what Solomon meant, for he stated as condition on

which the favor of God had been shown him, that his father had walked before him righteously. The original word for *mercy* is defined in the lexicon as "kindness," which is the proper word. Among the favors that the Lord had bestowed on David was the giving him a son to sit on his throne.

Verse 7. The modesty of Solomon is refreshing. He attributes his good fortune in obtaining the throne of his father to the gift of God. A *little child* is a comparative expression, meaning he was inexperienced in the great task of ruling the kingdom left him by his father.

Verse 8. His sense of littleness was emphasized by recalling to mind the greatness of the people in whose midst he was. That greatness was due to the fact that God had chosen it to be his exclusive possession.

Verse 9. *Understanding* is from SHAMA, and defined, "a primitive root; to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc., causatively to tell, etc.)."—Strong. *Good* and *bad* would not mean necessarily the questions of right and wrong morally. Solomon had the law of Moses and kings were required to keep a copy of it always by them to direct them in the right way. (Deut. 17: 18-20). But there would come times when proper judgment would be needed for determining between issues and disputes arising unexpectedly.

Verses 10, 11. None of the things mentioned would have been wrong in themselves, for God promised to give Solomon practically all of them. But they would have been favors of a personal character, and a wish for them would have been selfish. It would have indicated a greater interest in the things of self, than the ones pertaining to God. If a man puts the cause of the Lord above even the best of temporal blessings, such a man would likely make proper use of such blessings. Hence, God promised them to Solomon. This principle was taught by Christ. (Matt. 6: 33.)

Verse 12. The wisdom of Solomon has been a subject of discussion among the friends of the Bible. Some have said that, while it was far above what any other person had, it was not in the form of inspiration; that it was mental talent such as all people have through nature, except that his exceeded others. That will not hold, for Solomon was already a mature man, with all natural endowments possessed

and developed, when God gave to him the wisdom we are speaking about. Again, it is claimed that his wisdom pertained to his ability as king and judge of disputes, not to his writings; wrong again. In Ch. 4: 32, immediately after mentioning his wisdom, the writer tells us of the songs and proverbs he composed. The conclusion is, then, that Solomon was a divinely inspired man in all his writings. The fact of his unrighteous life does not affect his inspiration, any more than Peter's hypocrisy at Antioch (Gal. 2: 11-13) affected his inspiration at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 7-11) or his epistles.

Verses 13, 14. God promised Solomon three things he had not asked for; riches, honor, and long life. But these favors were on condition that he "walk in my ways."

Verse 15. Dreams constituted one of the means used by the Lord in ancient times to make known his will. (Heb. 1: 1.) There was no doubt in the mind of Solomon that God had actually spoken to him. He immediately went to Jerusalem to appear before the ark (2 Sam. 6: 17), and to complete the worship begun at Gibeon, by offering more sacrifices near the sacred article, which always symbolized the presence of God in a special manner. While the tabernacle arrangement was intact, the high priest alone was permitted to come into the presence of this holy piece of equipment for purposes of worship. Solomon recognized the solemnity and dignity of the place.

Verses 16-18. It will be more satisfactory to consider these verses together. As the women were plying the same trade it was reasonable they might as well occupy the same house. Birth control was not as much developed as it came to be, and the natural result of their conduct gave occasion for the births to occur as they did. Such women would also be living alone, hence when time came for the deliveries they would be expected to assist each other.

Verse 19. This was the one born last and the mother was exhausted. The babe also was still un nourished and easily suffocated in being crowded by the mother.

Verse 20. Motherly instinct finally aroused her, only to find her child dead. The story of the other woman would seem plausible.

Verse 21. Along toward morning the other woman, whose babe was three

days old and thus had started the function of nursing, thought to give her child its nourishment. It was easy to perceive, even while not very light, that the babe was dead. And when full light came, she was able to see that it was not her child.

Verse 22. There was nothing said about any marks of identity by which either woman claimed to know her child. The alleged action of the one woman would be the key to the situation. There could be no question as to which was the older, and thus the one for whom the nourishment had arrived would belong to the woman claiming it. All of the above reasoning pertains only to the truthfulness or falsity of the women. It would not disclose to Solomon which actually was delivered first.

Verse 23. The closing remarks in preceding verse are explanatory of this verse. Acting from human testimony only, all Solomon could say was that the claims of the women were on equal ground.

Verses 24-27. There is no doubt that Solomon's inspiration could have told him specifically which was the mother of the living child. But God used the occasion to exhibit an unusual mode of reasoning. After the transaction was accomplished, it was understood by the people that Solomon's judgment was more than human. Had there been sincere doubt in the minds of the women as to which was which of the babes each knew that she had borne a child. Each would know also that if the only living one were slain, hers would be dead for certain. A woman who would be willing for another to have her child rather than have it slain would be the more worthy of mothering a babe regardless of its parentage. The decision of Solomon, therefore, was correct from every viewpoint.

Verse 28. *Judgment* in both places means a verdict. The wisdom displayed by Solomon thereby filled the people with respect for him, and they attributed it to God.

1 KINGS 4

Verses 1, 2. *Princes* comes from *sar* and is defined, "a head person (of any rank or class)."—Strong. The word cannot be restricted to any one group; instead, a prince in any group would mean an outstanding man of such group. This definition would apply whether considering religious or

military or clerical departments of a kingdom. The word has been rendered in the A. V. by captain 125 times, chief 33, general 1, governor 6, keeper 3, lord 1, master 1, prince 208, principal 2, ruler 33, steward 1. It was thought well to give this extended view of the word because of the various and frequent use made of it in the Sacred Writings. Being the son of Zadok, Azariah would be in the priestly line independent of any provision made by Solomon. The word *priest* is from *Kohen* and defined, "literally, one officiating, a priest; also (by courtesy) an acting priest (although a layman)." —Strong. All of Aaron's lineal descendants were eligible for the priesthood, but not all were in active service; only as many as needed. That is the reason for the expression "priest that is anointed" occurring in some places. (Lev. 4: 3; 6: 22; Num. 3: 3.) Azariah was the acting priest.

Verses 3-6. This paragraph sets forth members of the cabinet. See 2 Sam. 20: 23-26.

Verse 7. *Officers* means men stationed in the several places. *Victuals* is from a word with general meaning of provisions. The connection, however, shows it means the providing of food. Each man was responsible for one month's supply out of each year. He would have the power to commandeer all sources of necessities in the district where he was stationed, if such power were needed. Having one month only out of each year to be responsible for, there would be no reason for shortage.

Verses 8-19. This paragraph names the 12 men charged with the duty described in the preceding verse. Usually the mention of the name with brief reference to his territory is all that is given. A slight personal notice is occasionally made. (Vs. 11, 15.)

Verse 20. *Judah and Israel*. See comments at 1 Sam. 11: 8 on this expression.

Verse 21. Solomon was the first man to realize the fulfillment of the promise of Gen. 15: 18. The reason the Israelites never before did so was their disobedience of God's commands. In proportion as the conditions were neglected, God cut short the fulfillment of his promises. *The river* refers to the Euphrates, and *border of Egypt* is equivalent to "river of Egypt." *Brought presents* signified the subjection of the kings to Solomon. See comments at 1 Sam. 10: 27.

Verses 22-24. Solomon personally would not use these provisions, but his vast number of dependents would. *The river* again means the Euphrates.

Verse 25. *Judah and Israel*. (See 1 Sam. 11: 8.) Solomon was at peace with all kingdoms and hence his people dwelt *safely*, which is defined by Strong to be not only safe in fact, but also have the feeling of safety. *Under his vine and fig tree*. In times of national danger a citizen would need to take the products of his ground in haste and hurry to a place of safety to consume them. But now he could eat at leisure right on the spot where they grew. Dan to Beer-sheba was a symbol of the entire country. Dan was at its extreme north, and Beer-sheba at its south boundary. This condition of peace continued through the reign of Solomon.

Verse 26. *Forty thousand stalls*. The corresponding passage in 2 Chr. 9: 25 gives *four thousand*. Both cannot be correct. *Forty* is from *ABBAYM*, and Strong defines it, "multiple of ABBA ["four"]; forty." Thus by adding the three letters it produces a multiple of the word. In the passage in 2 Chr. 9: 25 the suffix has been omitted. The word for *thousand* is in the original in both places, so the question would be with the words *four* and *forty*. In both passages, also, we have twelve thousand horsemen, and these with the horses were distributed among the cities, which were many. Twelve thousand horsemen to have charge of four thousand horses would make three men for each horse. That would be unreasonable, while forty thousand horses would give three or four horses in charge of each horseman, and that would be practical. Numerals were written with letters, and a letter in a used manuscript could become blurred so that the transcriber would overlook it. The question arising is, how does this affect the authenticity of the Bible. When Jesus was here he condemned the scribes for many sins. But not one instance is recorded where he even intimated they were unfaithful in their work as scribes. Had they been, that would have been the greatest of wrongs, and Jesus would certainly have mentioned it. We therefore understand that such omissions as we are considering were incidental, and did not discount the truthfulness of the Inspired Book.

Verse 27. This is explained at verse

7. The statement is added that nothing was lacking of the things needed.

Verse 28. These men were to provide feed for the beasts of service as well as food for the people. *Dromedaries* were swift beasts of various kinds, used in the post-routes.

Verse 29. We have another proof that Solomon was inspired. *Wisdom* and *understanding* are practically the same. The second specially means knowledge and the first means the ability to use it aright. *Largeness of heart* means breadth of mind. *As the sand* means his measures of wisdom were thus compared.

Verse 30. *The east* refers to the country of the Arabians and Chaldeans, whose people were reputed to be unusually wise.

Verse 31. The men named were noted in old times as outstanding in wisdom, and the reference to them is merely for purpose of comparison. *Fame* means the honor of the nations was extended toward Solomon.

Verse 32. *Spake proverbs*. The first word is defined, "to arrange," and the second, "a pithy maxim." From this verse we would know that not all of Solomon's literary compositions were written in the Bible. This is indicated also by the words "song of songs." (Song, 1: 1.) But enough of them are given to show his superiority.

Verse 33. Frequently what is called poetry and song today is chiefly a display of words without any attention to subject matter. This verse offers us the thought that Solomon did not waste words for mere sound, but had important subjects.

Verse 34. These great persons did not come so much for the benefit of his wisdom, as for the testing of the reports. Such is the direct statement regarding the queen of Sheba. (Ch. 10: 1.)

1 KINGS 5

Verse 1. Tyre was the principal city of Phoenicia, a country bordering on the Mediterranean, with the mountain range of Lebanon on its eastern line. Hiram had shown his friendliness for the Israelites previously by building a house for David. (2 Sam. 5: 11.) Upon hearing of Solomon's succession to his father's throne, he *sent his servants*. Nothing is said directly of the purpose of this, but the connection shows it was what we would call a "good will" mission.

Verses 2, 3. Solomon returned the good will in a substantial way. *Thou knowest how*. Just how definite this is to be taken is not clear. In the place where David had been put under the restriction mentioned (1 Chr. 22: 8, 9), nothing is said about Hiram. But the information given him now would explain why he had not been invited by his father to contribute more than for just his personal house.

Verse 4. The kingdom was then in complete peace. There was no adversary actually posed against it, nor even any evil *occurent*, which means remotely indicated.

Verse 5. The way being now cleared, Solomon will build the house that his father was forbidden to build. It would be in harmony, also, with the understanding God gave to David concerning his son.

Verse 6. It may not be clear to the reader about the ownership of Lebanon. Hiram was asked to get materials therefrom, as if he were the owner. Again, if Solomon called for such to use in his building, he must have been the owner. It will be well to quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary. "Lebanon was originally inhabited by the Hivites and Gibeonites. Josh. 13: 5, 6; Judges 3: 3. The whole mountain range was assigned to the Israelites, but was never conquered by them. Josh. 13: 2-6; Judges 3: 1-3. During the Jewish monarchy it appears to have been subject to the Phoenicians. 1 Kings 5: 2-6; Ezra 3: 7. From the Greek conquest until modern times Lebanon had no separate history."—Article, Lebanon. The ownership, therefore, was so indefinite that the right to its products would be shared by the two kingdoms. *Sidonians* were the people in and near Sidon (otherwise called Zidon), a city of Phoenicia. They were especially skilled in wood-working, and were employed in the work requested by Solomon. They appeared, also, to have been already in the service of Hiram.

Verses 7, 8. The proposition of Solomon was highly pleasing to Hiram, and he agreed to furnish the cedar and fir, very fine timbers, to be used in the Lord's house.

Verse 9. The distance from north to south over land, between Lebanon and Jerusalem, was much greater than the combined distances from Lebanon to the sea, and from there to Jerusalem. And the distance over water could be made so much easier than

would have been possible over an entire land transportation, that the water route was decided upon.

Verses 10-12. The two kings exchanged their possessions in a friendly way. Some fanciful theories have been devised regarding types and anti-types. The temple is regarded by New Testament writers as a type of the church. This is especially evident in the book of Hebrews. But care should be exercised not to run the comparison too far. Like the parables, some items have to be mentioned to make the story intelligible that might not have any application in the comparison. It is sometimes asked why Solomon called on Hiram, an "outsider," for help in building the Lord's house. It should be always borne in mind that the Jewish kingdom was political as well as religious. It was perfectly regular for one political king to have business dealings with another. But if it should be required, it can be shown that a parallel exists from a religious view. The church gets its new recruits (members) from the world, and has to take them by the water route (baptism) to their place in the spiritual temple of the Lord.

Verse 13. *Levy* is from *mic* and defined, "properly a burden (as causing to faint), i. e. a tax in the form of forced labor."—Strong. This shows that if a government has the right to compel its men to fight, it has the right to compel them to work.

Verse 14. The thirty thousand went to Lebanon in relays. One-third went at a time and worked one month, then were relieved for two months at home. There was an overseer for them named Adoniram.

Verse 15. *Bare burden* is defined by Strong as porters. Their duty was to wait on the masons mentioned in this verse.

Verse 16. These officers were superior to the foremen directly connected with the workmen, and to them would be allotted the charge of seeing that all other officers did their duty.

Verses 17, 18. These forces were engaged in the work with the stone materials, while other workmen were in the forests of Lebanon getting out the timber. *Stonesquarers* were inhabitants of Gebal and made hewing of timber their occupation. This fact is the reason for their employment in the work of the temple.

1 KINGS 6

Verse 1. There appears to be some difficulty in chronology. This verse allows only 480 years from the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon. We know there was more than that by adding the various terms plainly given. It is not like some of the chronological instances where the difference is a round number, and explained by the blurring of a numeral letter. The difference in the present case involves several numbers of odd amounts, and they cannot all be accounted for by the above mentioned method. The problem, however, is clearly solved by a noted chronologer, who has worded it so well that his statement will be here quoted: "According to 1 Kings 6:1 it was 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon. But a glance at the various periods elsewhere noted, namely the 40 years wandering, period of the judges which Paul, in Acts 13:20 says was 450 years, and the reigns of Saul and David taken together, show the length of time to have been far in excess of 480 years. Hence the clearest explanation is that the statement in 1 Kings 6:1 recognizes only the years in which God's rightful leaders were in power and rejects the years of the servitudes and the usurpation of Abimelech. The six servitudes are Cushan 8 years, Eglon 18, Jabin 20, Midian 7, Ammon 18, Philistines 40, and the usurpation of Abimelech 3. These added give 114, the years ignored in 1 Kings 6:1. These added to the 480 gives 594, the exact time from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon."—Philip Mauro, in *Chronology of the Bible*. The number 594 includes the 13 years between the conquest and the beginning of the oppressions which started with Cushan. Any solution of a question that accounts for all the essential phases is a legitimate one, and the above solution does that.

Verse 2. The temple corresponded with the tabernacle in its general structure and purpose. But it was much more complicated in detail and far superior in costliness and beauty. *House* in this verse is applied to the central part of the structure as a whole. It was twice the length of the tabernacle, twice its width, and three times its height. No reason is given us for this increase in the dimensions.

Verse 3. The length of this porch corresponded with the breadth of the house described in the preceding verse.

Porch is from ULAM and Strong defines it, "a vestibule (as bound to the building)." One meaning of *temple* is "capacity," and the thought is, the porch took in the capacity indicated by the breadth of the house.

Verse 4. *House* means the main building as a whole, including its two departments to be described at the next verse. *Windows; narrow; lights.* The first is from CHALLOWN, which Strong defines, "a window (as perforated)." The second is from ATAM and defined, "a primitive root; to close (the lips or ears); by analogy to contract (a window by bevelled jambs)."—Strong. The third is from SHAQPH and Strong defines it, "an embrasure or opening with bevelled jamb." Transparent glass was not used in those times, and light was admitted through some form of open work like perforations or lattice. From the above information we may come to this conclusion: The walls of the building, being made of stone, were thick, and a narrow opening through them would admit very little light. And yet, if they were wide, too much exposure to the weather would result. Hence, the openings were narrow on the outside, reducing exposure to weather to a minimum, then the jambs were bevelled back on each side toward the inner side of the wall. That would remove some of the obstruction to the light without increasing the outside exposure.

Verse 5. *Chambers* occurs twice but is from different originals. The idea is that rooms or "lean-to" apartments were built all round the main building. These rooms were then strengthened and beautified with thin extensions like flanges. *Temple* and *oracle* were the two parts of the building, otherwise called holy and most holy. (Vs. 16).

Verse 6. The chambers were three stories high, which harmonize with the extra height of the main building. (Vs. 2). These stories were of unequal width, the lowest one being the narrowest. Each had heavy planks to support it. In order that these chambers could be in the nature of lean-to additions, yet not be injected into the walls of the main house, there were *narrowed rests*, defined "a ledge or offset," made in the main wall, and these supporting planks rested on the offsets.

Verse 7. Attention to this verse will show us that the stone parts of the

temple were all that were considered in the statement about tools. It has been a favorite notion that the entire work of the temple of Solomon was done silently. 2 Chr. 3: 9 says that fifty shekels of gold nails were used in the temple. It is unreasonable to say these could be used without the use of hammers, and a hammer would make a noise. The verse in our paragraph has reference to the tools for shaping the stone. Certainly, those large stones would have to be carved and shaped at the quarries before being brought on the ground.

Verse 8. The three-storied set of chambers described in verse 6 were entered by stairways from one story to the other. The lower one had been entered from a side door.

Verse 9. This refers to the heavy lining of the house, especially the top part.

Verse 10. This is just a detail of the work already described, giving us the height of the chambers whose widths are given in V. 6.

Verses 11, 12. God promised to bless Solomon and the house built if he would observe the *statutes, judgments, and commands*. See Ch. 2: 3 for explanation of the words.

Verse 13. God has always had some formal method of indicating his presence among his people. In the Patriarchal Dispensation it was the family altar. In the Jewish Dispensation it was the tabernacle that Moses made, and now it was to be this temple.

Verse 14. This should be understood as a general statement regarding the work of the temple, that Solomon made a complete job of it. Further details will be given.

Verse 15. The principal thing to notice is the kinds of wood used in the interior of the house of God. The cedar is described by Strong as having very tenacious roots. The fir was a strong wood and adapted to heavy uses.

Verse 16. This *oracle* was also called *most holy*, which was the most exclusive room in the temple, as it was in the tabernacle built by Moses.

Verse 17. In contrast with the part considered in the preceding verse, and which was called the *most holy* place, the second important room was called *temple*. Otherwise, the word applied to the building as a whole.

Verse 18. The inside of the building

was lined with cedar, and it was ornamented with carvings. The *knops* were formed like semi-globes, and the *open flowers* were just what the term indicates; flowers with the blossoms developed.

Verse 19. This gives a link in the chain for the ark, and the reference is to 8: 1. The *oracle* was the proper place for the ark, and Solomon was preparing the room for it. At present it is in the tent which David pitched for it. (2 Sam. 6: 17.) The tabernacle was at Gibeon. (1 Chr. 16: 39.)

Verse 20. This room was a cube of twenty cubits. The corresponding room in the tabernacle of Moses was also a cube, but of ten cubits. (Ex. 26.) *Pure gold* is defined by Young as "refined." The *altar* was not in this room, but mentioned here because the writer was concerned with the use of refined gold.

Verse 21. There was a partition between the two rooms of the house which was plated with gold. And just by the partition there were golden chains stretched across.

Verses 22, 23. In one verse the altar is said to be "by" the *oracle* (most holy place), while in the other the cherubims are "within" the *oracle*. "Within" is more specific than "by." The conclusion is, therefore, that the altar (of incense) was not in the most holy place. *Cherubims* is from *KEBUW*, which Strong defines, "of uncertain derivation; a cherub or imaginary figure." These figures were made of wood, gold-plated.

Verses 24-28. These cherubims were ten cubits (15 feet) high, and the wings (including the bodies) reached over a space of ten cubits. The two cherubims with their wings extended completely spread out twenty cubits (30 feet), or, from wall to wall, and were fifteen feet high! They must have been beautiful and awe-inspiring.

Verse 29. This carving was for ornamental purposes. The literal or material beauty of the temple was appropriate, because it was a type of the spiritual temple, the church, which was to be glorious. (Eph. 5: 27.)

Verse 30. *Within* and *without*. The interior of the temple as well as the places for treading on the outside, was paved with gold.

Verses 31. These doors were in the partition between the holy and most holy places. Many of the words of the verse are not in the original. *Side* and *part* have been supplied, and also the

words in italics. *Lintels* and *posts* mean practically the same. The first having special reference to the strength of the support. *Fifth* is defined in the margin as "fivesquare." The idea is that some sort of doorway through the partition was so formed as to resemble a five-sided vestibule.

Verse 32. There were two of the doors and ornamented with carvings, gold-plated.

Verses 33-35. The entrance to the temple or holy place was similar to that in the partition wall, except they were foursquare.

Verse 36. This *inner court* corresponded with the court round the tabernacle. It was called "inner" because it enclosed the house proper. This court was made of three walls of stone, running parallel, and one of hewed cedar beams.

Verses 37, 38. This verse is important in that it states briefly the period of years used in building the temple of Solomon. *Throughout all the parts thereof* means that not only the main structure, but all the details were completed in the time.

1 KINGS 7

Verse 1. *Own house* means the palace, and the verse is a general statement, including all the parts directly and indirectly connected; details will come in following verses. The question has been raised why Solomon devoted almost twice as much time to his own house as he did to the temple. Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives the clearest explanation, which will be quoted: "After the building of the temple, which, as we have before said, was finished in seven years, the king laid the foundation of his palace, which he did not finish under 13 years; for he was not equally zealous in the building of the palace as he had been about the temple."—Antiquities, Bk. 8, Ch. 5, Sec. 1.

Verse 2. This begins the details on the building referred to in the preceding verse. The word *also* conveys the idea of something additional; that Solomon built something besides that of the first verse. That is not the case. The word is not in the original and means nothing to the story. After telling us in the first verse, in general terms, that Solomon completed the work of his palace in 13 years, the writer proceeds to give the details. The word *forest* is from a word that

means "wood" as often as "forest," and the writer means to show of what wood the palace was made; that it was of the wood from Lebanon. The first sentence of this verse should read, "He built the palace of the wood from Lebanon." The three dimensions are then given, with the supports. Four rows of cedar pillars with beams tying them on top, supported it.

Verse 3. *Covered* means it was lined. In some way there were beams in the form of ribs or flanges that supported the heavy cedar planks lining the top of the house.

Verses 4, 5. The three rows of windows were so placed that they were exactly opposite to each other in the two sides of the house.

Verse 6. *Porch* is from ULAM and Strong defines it, "a vestibule (as bound to the building)." The remarks about the pillars being *before*, means that they were sufficient in number and so placed as to take care of the weight of the porch.

Verse 7. The building about which we are studying was quite a composite structure. As a whole it was called the palace. But it included departments for large assemblies. Also a room specially considered the throne room. That is what is meant in this verse. *Covered* means it was lined with cedar, which reached from the floor on one side, up and over and down to the floor on the other side.

Verse 8. This verse includes two special departments. One was the palace proper, corresponding to what is called the "living room or quarters" in a house today. The other was a special apartment for the king's favorite wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. Men with plurality of wives would naturally not be living in the same quarters with them. That made an occasion for providing special places according to sentiment of favoritism.

Verses 9-11. These verses simply itemize the kind and importance of the stones used in the various departments of the house.

Verse 12. This is what is described at Chapter 6: 35.

Verses 13, 14. This man was of mixed race. His mother was a Jewess and his father a Tyrian. The father was dead, and the son learned the occupation of brass casting. Solomon employed him to do such kind of work about the temple and its furnishings.

Verse 15. These columns of brass were 27 feet high and 18 feet around.

Verse 16. A chapter is an ornamental cap or head piece. These were seven and a half feet high, and as large in diameter as the columns, at least.

Verse 17. These chapters were carved with ornamental net-like work, resembling lace. There were seven rows of such work around each chapter or cap.

Verses 18-22. These various items of carving involve a great deal of repetition and might lead one to be confused. There were just the two columns, and were carved and fashioned in artistic designs all over. Being 6 feet in diameter, and 34 feet in height (including the caps), they were imposing in appearance, and appropriately named. *Jachin* is from YAKIYN, and Strong defines it, "he (or it) will establish." *Boaz* is from a Hebrew word similar to the English, *BOAZ*, and Young defines it "strength."

Verse 23. This *molten sea* corresponded to the laver of the tabernacle. However, it was doubtless much larger, inasmuch as the temple and its parts were generally on a scale larger than the tabernacle.

Verse 24. A knop is like a globe opened, or, a figure of a semi-globe, with the open side showing. They were about an inch and a half in diameter, and two rows of them ornamented the great vessel. The mold for them was prepared before the metal was cast.

Verse 25. Jer. 52: 20 says these beasts were bulls and made of brass. Standing in groups of 3 and looking outward, the 12 brazen beasts served as a base for the sea.

Verse 26. The walls of this vessel were a *hand breadth thick*. Strong defines the word to mean the width of the palm of the hand, not the spread of the fingers. The brim or edge of the opening was worked with ornamental designs like flowers. *Contained two thousand baths*. The corresponding account in 2 Ch. 4: 5 says *three thousand*. The contradiction is apparent only. *Contained* is from KUWL and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; properly to keep in; hence to measure; figuratively to maintain (in various senses)." Since the word has such a wide range of meaning, the difference in the two accounts is easily explained. The vessel measured up to the larger amount, but it certainly would not be

kept brimful, which would be impractical for use. It thus would usually have the smaller amount in it. Young says a bath was about 8 gallons, hence this vessel would have 16,000 gallons of water in it.

Verse 27. These bases were to serve as pedestals, to hold up the lavers. (verses 30, 40, 43). They were 6 feet square and over 4 feet high.

Verses 28, 29. The sides of these bases had panels worked, called *borders*. Around the edges of the panels were raised framework parts called *ledges*. Both these panels and their surrounding frames were worked with ornamental figures of beasts and cherubim. These were cast into the pieces. (verse 46.)

Verses 30-33. The bases rested on brass wheels, and the whole unit was ornamented with various designs for beauty and general attractiveness. Part of the arrangement was to give the appearance of progress, in that chariot wheels were displayed.

Verse 34. *Undersettlers* were should-ers or projections, to give the assembly an appearance of security, the bases having an ample provision for their rest.

Verses 35-37. The 10 bases were alike. Near the top edge, and just at the edge, there was an ornamental band, worked with cherubims and trees and lions. All of this work was according to the richness and beauty that could be seen throughout the temple.

Verse 38. The lavers contained 40 baths (320 gallons), and rested on the bases described in verse 27. The purpose of these lavers and the sea is well described by Josephus: "Now he appointed the sea to be for washing the hands and the feet of the priests when they entered the temple, and were to ascend the altar; but the lavers to cleanse the entrails of the beasts that were to be burnt offerings, with their feet also." Book 8, Chapter 3, Section 6.

Verse 39. The temple faced the east, which would make the south side the right. Five of these lavers were set on each side of the temple. The sea was at the southeast corner of the house, and it was so arranged as to be approached from the south.

Verses 40-45. This paragraph sums up the foundry work that Hiram did for Solomon, including the details that began with verse 13.

Verse 46. The size and number of the castings required for the work would make it impossible to do it in a regular foundry building, were any such in existence. It was done, therefore, in the open field where the plastic nature of the clay furnished a means for casting.

Verse 47. No attempt was made to weigh the vessels that Solomon had Hiram to make, on account of the great number and the enormous amount of metal used.

Verses 48-50. The tabernacle of Moses and its articles of furniture (except the ark) were at Gibeon. (2 Chr. 16: 39; 21: 29.) Solomon made these articles to be used in the temple according to the law of Moses, and they replaced those other pieces in the service. This means except the ark; it was at Jerusalem and never was duplicated nor replaced by another.

Verse 51. David was not permitted to build a house of God because of his many wars. But he contributed much material and had it in readiness for Solomon, which he now brought in (2 Sam. 8: 9-11; 1 Chr. 29: 1-5).

1 KINGS 8

Verse 1. The temple having been completed, Solomon called the leading men to him in Jerusalem. He gave them first a charge about the ark. This is another link in the chain for the ark, and the reference is to verses 6-9. The ark was in the tent that David had pitched for it in Zion, a part of Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 6: 12, 17.)

Verses 2, 3. It seems appropriate that this dedication of the temple should come in the 7th month. That was the month when the day of atonement came, at which time the high priest entered the most holy place to offer the yearly service for the nation. (Lev. 23: 27.) The standing of the congregation as a whole was brought down to date, thus making a significant occasion for the new start with the temple service.

Verses 4, 5. The tabernacle that Moses built had been at Gibeon for some time. It now was brought to Jerusalem, along with the holy vessels, except the ark; it had been brought up in the days of David. The fate of the tabernacle is largely a subject for secular history since no trace of it can be found in the Bible after the account given in this paragraph. It will be well to quote from Smith's Bible Dic-

tionary concerning this subject: "Here [at Shiloh] it [the tabernacle] remained during the time of the judges, till it was captured by the Philistines, who carried off the sacred ark of the covenant. 1 Sam. 4: 22. From this time forward the glory of the tabernacle was gone. When the ark was recovered, it was removed to Jerusalem, and placed in a new tabernacle, 2 Sam. 6: 17; 1 Chr. 15: 1; but the old structure still had its hold on the veneration of the community, and the old altar still received their offerings. 1 Chr. 16: 39; 21: 29. It was not till the temple was built, and a fitting house thus prepared for the Lord, that the ancient tabernacle was allowed to perish and be forgotten."

Verses 6-9. This gives the final link in the chain for the ark. Make the reference to 1 Sam. 4: 4. The holy piece was taken from the tent that David had pitched for it and placed in the oracle, or most holy place, in the temple. There is no definite historic account of it after this, hence the reader has been referred back to the beginning passage for the chain of references. *Drew out the staves*. This expression is unusual, and will call for some critical study. The first word is from ARAK and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to be (causatively, make) long (literally or figuratively)." It has the idea that the staves were made to appear longer (not actually so), and the effect was produced by drawing them partially out of the rings, thus protruding out from under the wings of the cherubims. This position made them visible to anyone in the oracle, but not without. This position of the staves remained to the time of the writing of this book. We do not know when or how the manna and rod were removed.

Verses 10, 11. The immediate need for the priestly service was over, therefore they were made to leave the holy place by the splendor of the cloud from the Lord.

Verse 12. *Thick darkness* is from ARAPHEL which Young defines, "secret or high place." We usually think of "darkness" as an unfavorable expression. But it is used in a figurative sense about God, referring to his exclusiveness of being; that he is infinitely above all others. For that reason he cannot be contained in any structure made by man, except in a representative way.

Verse 13. Solomon had built a house

for the Lord to dwell in according to the idea expressed at the close of preceding verse, as was predicted. (2 Sam. 7: 13; 1 Ki. 5: 5.)

Verse 14. *Blessed* as a verb is from BARAK and defined by Strong, "a primitive root; to kneel; by implication to bless God (as an act of adoration), and (vice-versa) man (as a benefit)." The word has been rendered in the A. V. by kneel 1 time, kneel down 1, blessed 72, be blessed 3, bless 211, congratulate 1, praise 2, salute 5, thank 1, and others. From the foregoing information we will understand the word to have both a manward and a Godward bearing. When used according to the first, it means that God or man makes another person happy, or wishes it so. When used according to the second, it means to acknowledge God as the source of happiness. In the verse now at hand, Solomon was wishing for the happiness to come on the congregation that he, as an instrument of God, could bestow on them. It is significant of great respect that the people stood.

Verse 15. The word *blessed* is used in the second sense, and refers to the happiness bestowed on the nation as promised to and through David.

Verse 16. The peculiar favor shown to David is mentioned. God had not as yet selected any city as a site of a dwelling place. But he had made choice of David to be ruler over his people.

Verses 17, 18. The desire to build a house for the Lord was righteous; God commended David for it. The circumstance shows that a motive can be right in principle, but objectionable from some other standpoint.

Verse 19. The expression "father and son" was used very indefinitely in Biblical language. It sometimes meant grandfather and son (Dan. 5: 18). But the importance of the relationship was made definite by saying it was to be one coming out of his loins, which is from a word that is defined, "the seat of vigor." That would apply only to a son of a man's body begotten; the offspring of his physical strength.

Verse 20. The outstanding thought is that Solomon's exaltation to the throne of his father was according to the Lord's promise; which included the privilege of building a house for the Lord.

Verse 21. The ark was of superior

importance because it contained the covenant that God made with the fathers of the nation.

Verse 22. Solomon *stood* as he began his prayer. The prayer was accepted (Ch. 9: 2) which shows that prayer was acceptable to God if offered by a person standing.

Verse 23. *Heaven* means the realm of the air and the region of the planets. There was no one or thing in the third heaven claiming even to be equal with God. But everything in the first two heavens, also in the earth, had been worshiped, and Solomon exalted the Lord above all. It should be noted that God shows mercy to his servants provided they walk uprightly before him.

Verse 24. God requires his servants to carry out their professions with actions. He has set the example by his dealings with David.

Verses 25, 26. *So that* is worded "only if" in the margin, and harmonizes with the general requirements God makes of his servants. Solomon did not expect the Lord to carry out his promises to David on to his son except on obedience to the terms.

Verse 27. See comments at verses 12, 13.

Verses 28, 29. Solomon would not ask God to come bodily into a house which he had built, when the universe could not contain him. He would pray, however, that he would look toward the house; especially since he had said that his name would be there. That was said of the tabernacle that Moses built (Deut. 12: 5, 11), and the same was true of the temple after it will have been consecrated to the divine service.

Verse 30. *Toward this place* is rendered in the margin, "in this place." That is correct, for a part of Strong's definition of the original word for *toward* is, "near, with or among." This agrees also with the law of Moses that the males come 3 times a year to the place of national worship. (Ex. 23: 14, 17; Deut. 16: 16.) This *heaven* is the third one; Gen. 1: 20 is the first. Solomon prayed that God would forgive them *when thou hearest*. It is taught that forgiveness would be granted in time, but not until the N. T. Dispensation. The request was for the forgiveness to be granted at the time of the prayer, and Ch. 9: 3 says that Solomon's petition was to be granted.

Verses 31, 32. In Old Testament times God's people were permitted to make oaths. If a charge of trespass was made against a man, the issue was to be brought to the place of public worship. The accused was required to support his testimony with his oath. The judge in the case was to decide according to the merits of the case, not on any personal motive.

Verses 33, 34. This paragraph is related to Lev. 26: 35-42. The people actually did lament their condition while in captivity. (See Psa. 137: Ezkl. 37: 11; Neh. 1: 9-11.) This prayer of Solomon was answered. The sin of the nation was forgiven and it was brought back into the native land.

Verses 35, 36. In 1 Ki. 17: 1 is an account of the stoppage of rain. The people had been wicked and they were to be punished by a drought. It was broken in Ch. 18: 41-45. There is no direct record of the repentance and prayer mentioned by Solomon, but it is necessarily implied since the Lord said (9: 3) that his prayer was heard.

Verse 37. The calamities named were liable to come at any time as a punishment for wrongs of the nation, but no specific instance can be pointed out. The *caterpillar* was a form of locust, and was a pest on the vegetation. *Cities* is rendered "jurisdiction" in the margin. It is from the same original as "gates" in Deut. 28: 52, and that word is frequently used in the general sense of the territory under control.

Verse 38. This includes both the national and individual prayers. In either case, the petition was to be toward, or with respect to, the house where the Lord had his name recorded. (Deut. 6: 10.)

Verse 39. *Heaven thy dwelling place*. The first word is from an original that is used for either of the three heavens spoken of in the Bible; the atmosphere, the region of the planets, and the place of God's throne. The context, therefore, must be considered in determining which is meant. The last two italicized words tell us the answer in the present case; it means the place beyond the material universe. While God is spoken of as being everywhere, it means in the sense of his spiritual existence. His personality, however, is represented as dwelling in the same place as the abode of the angels; the place to be the eternal home of the saved of earth. *Ways* is from *DEREK* and Strong de-

fines it, "a course of life or mode of action." Solomon prayed God to treat people according to their conduct, and the state of their hearts, since he knows that.

Verse 40. To *fear* the Lord means to have respect or reverence for him. A special motive for this fear is the privilege of living in the land inherited from the fathers.

Verses 41-43. The Mosaic system was a combination of religion and civil government, and hence certain privileges would be granted to *strangers* (those of another nation), that would not have been allowed had it been religious only. It was much like a foreigner visiting the United States. He would be granted certain favors that were being enjoyed by the citizens of the country. There is another fact that should be remembered; all the world was in some religious connection with God. If a man were not an Israelite, he was under the Patriarchal Dispensation. That would make it appropriate for him to be interested in the institutions of God, even though not directly related thereto. Again, both the Mosaic and Patriarchal Dispensations were destined to give way to the Christian. When that time will have come, the temple will be referred to as a type of the Church. That would make it a subject of interest for Jew and Gentile; therefore, it was proper for all the world to be "let in" on the significance of the literal place that was "called by thy name," which would prepare them to understand and appreciate the spiritual temple, the Church of Christ.

Verses 44, 45. *Whithersoever thou shalt send them* tells us that God sometimes sent his people out to war. If war is always wrong, it is so from a moral standpoint. Moral principles never change; if war is wrong morally, it was wrong at the time God sent his people out into it. Notwithstanding, Solomon prayed for the success of the arms of the Israelites, and Ch. 9: 3 tells us his prayer was accepted.

Verse 46. *No man that sinneth not* is the general fact on which Solomon presupposes the sin of the nation. *If they sin . . . and thou be angry with them*. The second group of words indicates that not every instance of sin would cause the anger of God to come on the nation. The Lord is very long-suffering and suffers his people to hold to the divine favor even though unworthy at times. If it goes too far,

however, they will receive the severe punishment on the nation, even to the extent of captivity.

Verses 47, 48. *Bethink themselves* means that they will come to think on the situation. When they do so they will recall the threats that had been made and the fallen condition that has come on them will be realized. They will be convinced that all of this punishment has come on them justly. The prediction of this state of mind is recorded in definite terms in the 137th Psalm; the historical fulfillment of it may be seen in Ezkl. 37: 11. When the Israelites shall have come to this state of mind they will pray for deliverance, and in their heart will return to their native land.

Verses 49, 50. The specific point of interest in their prayer will be that God will *maintain their cause*. This is explained in the next verse to mean that their sins as a people will be forgiven. As evidence of this forgiveness, their captors will be induced to show them compassion. The prophetic prayer was fulfilled, and the history of it is in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Verse 51. *Inheritance* as used here means possession. Ex. 19: 5 promised that Israel would be a peculiar treasure unto the Lord; peculiar means a possession exclusively the Lord's. Solomon reminded God of this great fact, which was a basis of the prayer. Egypt is called a *furnace of iron*. This is a figurative reference to the terrible afflictions endured in that land, and which had been foreshadowed by the burning bush; the bush was made to burn but was not consumed. (Ex. 3: 2.)

Verse 52. *Supplication* means entreaty and is a stronger word than mere request. It is an earnest begging for the favor of God.

Verse 53. The children of Israel were in Egypt for four centuries; in that time they had become sufficiently numerous to be formed into a separate nation as a people. This made it necessary to bring them out from under bondage. Now then, if they are again engulfed by bondage in a foreign land, may the Lord remember his inheritance and give them deliverance.

Verse 54. This verse shows Solomon in a kneeling position in his prayer, while v. 22 shows him standing. We do not know at what point in his prayer he changed. The fact that he used both positions, and that in the

same prayer, indicates that God was not particular about the posture of the body while a servant was praying to him.

Verse 55. To bless means to wish and promise benefits on the people, when the word is used in the sense of direction toward them.

Verse 56. To bless the Lord means to recognize him as the source of the benefits. The particular benefit referred to by Solomon was the rest from their enemies. *Not failed one word* must be understood in the light of conditions on which the promises were made. See Josh. 21: 43-45; Judg. 2: 1-5.

Verse 57. See comments in the preceding paragraph. God was with the fathers when they obeyed him.

Verse 58. To walk in the *ways* of God means to walk the way he has directed. *Commandments* is a general term for the requirements of God; *statutes* has special reference to the original enactments of the law; *judgments* means the inspired decisions that were made from time to time as occasion called for them.

Verse 59. Solomon believed that if his prayer was acceptable to God, he would keep it under consideration constantly and deal accordingly. This would include such times as needed the divine help, whether prayer was being verbally spoken at the time or not. That is a principle also of the New Testament system. If a Christian's life in general is right, he will be in constant touch with the blood of Christ in its saving effects. This will apply whether he should be engaged in any specific act of the service or not, at the time the need for the favor came up. (John 1: 7.)

Verse 60. If the God of Israel maintained the cause of his people, that would prove to the world that he is unlike all other gods. The ones that were being worshiped by them would not help them in their time of need or distress; they could not even defend themselves. (Judges 6: 31.)

Verse 61. In one part of the verse Solomon plead with the people to let their heart be perfect with the Lord. This statement is explained to mean that they walk in His Commandments.

Verses 62, 63. No one man could handle this vast number of animals, hence the statement means that the king furnished the beasts, and *all Israel*, by the hands of the proper

persons, did the manual work. The specific purpose of this service was to dedicate the temple. Such a service was once performed to dedicate one article of furniture in the tabernacle. (Numbers 7.)

Verse 64. This court corresponded to the court of the tabernacle, in which was the altar of sacrifices. The use of this space was necessary; an emergency arose which made it lawful. The emergency consisted in the large number of sacrifices.

Verse 65. Hamath was a city in the northern part of the country, and the river of Egypt was at the southern boundary. The congregation present at the service for the temple had gathered from all this territory.

Verse 66. *Eighth day* means the day following the second period of seven days. To bless means either to wish favor on one, or to acknowledge him as a cause of favor. In the light of the latter, they regarded the king as the instrument in God's hands in bestowing all these favors on them.

1 KINGS 9

Verses 1, 2. *House of the Lord* means the temple, and *the king's house* means the palace. The comparison to the time the Lord appeared to Solomon at Gibeon is to indicate that his appearance now was for a favorable purpose.

Verse 3. *I have heard thy prayer* means the Lord accepted it and would grant the requests. To *hallow* means to consecrate and consider as clean and holy. God's name was to be in this house *for ever* which means to the end of the age. Had the Jews retained their national organization through faithfulness, their temple would have continued to be the headquarters for their religious and civil life to the end of the Jewish Dispensation. After the Christian Dispensation came, the temple would still have been their headquarters, but for civil purposes only. And in all of those periods, down to the end of the world, God would have recognized them as his special people. (Psa. 144: 15.)

Verses 4, 5. *Integrity* means a condition of completeness of devotion to God, with the heart in true service to Him. *Uprightness* means a life filled with right doing. *For ever* is explained in the preceding paragraph. God had promised David that he would always have a successor to occupy his throne.

Not that the same man would live perpetually, which we know was not done. But the throne would always be occupied by a man who was a lineal descendant of David. This promise, however, was made on condition that the several descendants follow the kind of life set forth in this paragraph.

Verse 6. Two trends in the conduct of the people are warned against; one is away from God; the other is toward idols. *Serve* is from ABAD and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to work (in any sense); by implication to serve, till, (causatively) enslave, etc." *Worship* is from SHACHAH and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to depress, i. e. prostrate (especially reflexively in homage to royalty or God)." The latter word refers chiefly to the attitude toward the idol gods; the former to the activities of life in their name.

Verse 7. This is a direct prediction of the Babylonian captivity, and the history of its fulfillment is in 2 Kings 24 and 25. *Cast out of my sight*. The last word is used figuratively since nothing literally is out of God's sight. But he will not look favorably on the temple when the time comes that is threatened. The Jews have been the target of jokes, sneers, and remarks of contempt for centuries.

Verses 8, 9. The ruin of the temple and city was to be so evident that all people would observe it. The natural inquiry would be as to why such a condition came on the people so favored of God formerly. The answer would also be ready for the inquirers, because the warnings will have been so often repeated that they will become public knowledge; and the historians will write on the subject.

Verse 10. The two houses are the temple and the king's palace. The years spent in building them are specified in Ch. 6: 38 and 7: 1. See comments on second passage.

Verse 11. These cities were not an exchange in the sense of payment for the materials that Hiram furnished Solomon. He paid for them as will be seen below. But it would be considered a great concession to be permitted even to buy such sites in another country. This favor was granted Hiram in appreciation for what he had done for Solomon.

Verses 12, 13. Hiram was not pleased with the cities, although he accepted

them. He called their territory the land of Cabul. Strong defines the word as, "limitations; sterile." Young defines it, "dry, sandy." While the places were not of much value commercially, perhaps, they were very desirable as posts in a foreign land.

Verse 14. This exchange of money for the cities was a business transaction, and made their possession legal for Hiram.

Verse 15. *Levy* is from a word that means a tax in the form of enforced labor. See comments on this at Ch. 5: 13. The reason for such a levy was the work required for the buildings mentioned; also the strengthening of the cities. Millo was a fortification within Jerusalem, in the part referred to as the "city of David."

Verses 16-18. The cities named had to be *built*, which means they needed repairs. The reason for special mention of Gezer is, Pharaoh had taken it from the Canaanites and given it to his daughter, wife of Solomon, as a dowry.

Verse 19. *Cities of store* were those used for keeping provisions. Those for housing the chariots as well as the horsemen, and all other structures that Solomon desired to use, he built and equipped.

Verses 20, 21. The people mentioned were not the Israelite line. Making bondservants of them fulfilled Gen. 9: 25.

Verse 22. While Solomon did not make bondservants of the Israelites, he did use them in his service. Such terms as *men of war*, *princes*, etc., are grouped round that of *servants*, which indicates they were servants of a dignified class.

Verse 23. It is true that Solomon required many of his own people to work. (See comments at Ch. 5: 13.) They even had to work at hard labor. (Ch. 12: 4.) The number of these workers was so large that 550 men were needed to oversee them; but they were not put under bondage as were the alien peoples.

Verse 24. Ch. 7: 8 tells of a house Solomon built for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. Her stay in that place, however, was to be temporary, and only to be until a permanent one could be built for her personal occupancy. 2 Chr. 8: 11 tells why this change was made. Solomon realized that his favorite wife (Song 1: 5) was an alien to the Lord's nation, and that it would

not be appropriate for her to remain in the city of David. In this he showed a preference for the things of God over his deep love of woman; a principle that should be an example for everyone. Millo was a fortification located in that part of Jerusalem called "city of David." That is where the wife of Solomon had been living in a temporary residence. It was appropriate, therefore, that he postpone the extensive work of this fortification until his wife had been removed.

Verse 25. The three times referred to correspond with the requirement of the law of Moses. (Ex. 23: 14, 17.) The last sentence of the verse is merely reflective and not intended as additional information.

Verse 26. The reader should not be confused by the mentioning together of Eziongeber and the Red Sea. The map shows two long, narrow arms of the main body extending upward, one in a northwestwardly direction, the other in a northeastwardly one. The main body of this water, also either of these arms, is referred to in the Bible as the Red Sea. The former arm is the one the Israelites crossed in their flight from Egypt; the latter is the one meant in this verse.

Verses 27, 28. Hiram cooperated with Solomon in this expedition by furnishing experienced seamen. The object was to procure gold from Ophir, which was known to be of unusual fineness. The location of Ophir is a subject of dispute among the various authorities. I have consulted Smith's Bible Dictionary, Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia and Josephus, and they leave the question in doubt with me. The specific location, however, is unimportant, since the Scripture does not state any. It is enough to know that it was accessible to sea travel, which opened the opportunity to obtain valuables therefrom.

1 KINGS 10

Verse 1. Sheba was a locality of the Sabaeans, situated in the south part of Arabia. *Fame* is not as strong a word as commonly understood. It means merely a report; the weight of the word must be gathered from the connection. The report the queen was so much interested in was in connection with the house Solomon had built for the name of God. *Prove* means to test, and *hard questions* is from CHYDAH and means a trick. The sentence as a whole means she came to test Solomon with puzzling questions.

Verse 2. *Train* refers to the forces and general equipment with which the queen came to Jerusalem. She communed with Solomon which means she had conversation with him, in which she opened her heart to him.

Verse 3. *Told* is from *NAGAD* and one meaning is "to explain." *Questions* means "words." The verse means Solomon explained all the words the queen used in his hearing.

Verse 4. The queen had a full hearing that revealed to her the wisdom of Solomon; also his ability at planning as seen in the house he had built.

Verse 5. *Meat of his table* refers to the ample provisions of life. *Sitting of his servants* means the number and situation of that group. *Attendance of his ministers* denotes the position of those who contributed to the king's comfort. On the *ascent*, see comments at Ch. 6: 8. *No more spirit in her* means she was overwhelmed with amazement.

Verse 6. *Report* and *acts* are from the same word, and have general reference to the doings of Solomon, directed by his superior wisdom.

Verse 7. *The half was not told me*. These words are used erroneously as a basis for a popular church song, in which the subject is the Gospel story. But that story has been all told. See Rom. 10: 18; 1 Cor. 2: 10; Col. 1: 23. The queen said the report was true; notwithstanding, she said the half had not been told. This gives us a specific instance showing that the truth does not always give a fair estimate of a situation; it takes the whole truth to do the matter justice.

Verse 8. The happiness the queen attributed to the servants and other men, was due to their relationship with Solomon. And this happiness was made possible by wisdom.

Verse 9. The queen was a heathen ruler, and did not know the Lord previous to her visit with Solomon. The conclusion is, therefore, that he had spoken to her about the God of Israel, and had given the credit for all present favors to Him.

Verse 10. 1 Sam. 10: 27 with comments will explain the occasion of this verse. The mere exchange of presents was a formal way of recognizing dignity. Solomon was the richest of men, and there was no financial reason why the gifts to him should be unusually large. But the exceptional degree to

which the queen expressed her appreciation.

Verse 11. The *almug trees* were of red color; they were heavy, hard and fine grained. The wood evidently was similar to ebony, except in color.

Verse 12. These pillars were a reinforcing, not part of the original structure; it had been already completed. The harp and psaltery were stringed instruments. The former was of more ancient invention; it was usually played with a plectrum, which was a small attachment for the finger, unless the instrument were of the smaller type. The psaltery was played on with the fingers. The *almug* wood was well adapted to the making of these instruments.

Verse 13. This does not indicate any undue intimacy between Solomon and the queen, as is sometimes slanderously affirmed. The language is not the direct kind the Bible uses when revealing such acts. Solomon committed bigamy once, and polygamy 998 times, and it is plainly revealed in the Scripture. Had he been guilty of wrongdoing in this case, the writer would have said so. Here is the explanation of the verse. Distinction is made between the possessions of Solomon as king, and those he had as a private citizen. For a like distinction, see 1 Chr. 29: 3. The queen wished to receive the customary "presents" from both sources. For information about these presents see comments at 1 Sam. 10: 27.

Verse 14. According to Moffatt's translation, the amount of gold was nearly 29 tons.

Verse 15. Besides this income of gold from his direct sources, Solomon received much in the form of commercial trade and tribute from the nations mentioned.

Verses 16, 17. These *targets* and *shields* were in the same class except for size. Also, the former was more impressive as a menace to an antagonist. It was in the form of a large tablet and covered with sharp pointed spears. *House of the forest of Lebanon* is explained in detail at Ch. 7: 2.

Verse 18. Since ivory is such a valuable substance, we do not know why Solomon would use it, then hide it with gold. Evidently its texture insured strength, flexibility and non-shrinking.

Verse 19. The throne was so large that it required six steps to reach the

seat. *Round behind* means it was not merely a surface form, but was filled out in the nature of an immense character. The *stays* on the sides were hands, projecting from the seat. The place was made further impressive with the presence of a lion at each hand.

Verse 20. There were 12 of those "monarchs of the forest" placed in such a manner that the ends of the six steps, on each side of the throne, were guarded by them. No other king had anything like this, which was according to the promise made to Solomon at Gibeon. (Ch. 3: 13.)

Verse 21. *Pure gold* means gold un-mixed with any other metal. The reason given for such choice of materials is that silver was not thought much of in the days of Solomon.

Verse 22. *Tarshish* is the same as Tarshish, and is located on the western shore of the Mediterranean Sea. This fleet of merchant vessels had been made by Solomon and was used in conjunction with that of Hiram, to bring him the things mentioned.

Verse 23. This was what had been promised Solomon in his dream.

Verse 24. This verse is another declaration of inspiration to the effect that Solomon received his wisdom direct from God. So outstanding was the wisdom that it attracted the peoples of the earth.

Verse 25. For comments on this "present" see 1 Sam. 10: 27. A significant fact in this case is that they brought these presents *year by year*. That means a continuation of their recognition of Solomon and his greatness.

Verse 26. The reader should consult the comments on Ch. 4: 26 in connection here.

Verse 27. The abundance of silver and cedar was such that Solomon could use them as freely as he would stones and cheap wood.

Verse 28. The bringing of these horses from Egypt violated Deut. 17: 16; but this was only one of the errors Solomon committed as we shall see. Receiving the yarn at a *price* means it was purchased as a commercial transaction, not taken as a tax, nor even in the form of a "present."

Verse 29. The preceding verse does not say what was the price paid for the yarn. If the present verse is any indication on that subject, it was not

very high. A chariot could be bought for 75 pounds of silver, and a horse for 20 pounds. Israelites and heathen alike could do such bargaining.

1 KINGS 11

Verse 1. *Loved* is from AHAB and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to have affection for (sexually or otherwise)." A man could not love hundreds of women in a purely sentimental way, therefore it means that Solomon loved them "sexually." *Strange* is from NOKRIY and usually means "foreign." The full definition Strong gives is "strange, in a variety of degrees and applications (foreign, non-relative, adulterous, different, wonderful." We have no direct evidence that Solomon married even one Jewess. The peoples named are outside the Jewish nation which is the reason they are said to be *strange* (outside or foreign) women. The daughter of Pharaoh was also a woman from the outside, but is specially mentioned because Solomon evidently loved her in a sentimental way. She is the heroine of the Song of Solomon.

Verse 2. In taking these wives Solomon disobeyed the command not to marry strange women; also the one against marrying a multitude of wives. (Deut. 17: 17.) Plurality of wives was tolerated (not "permitted") in ancient times. But the chief reason for the command against marrying foreigners was that they were idolaters, and would lead their companions into the worship of strange gods. Solomon gave to these women in *love*, which is the noun form of the word in verse 1.

Verse 3. *Wives* is from a Hebrew word that means women in general. The connection must be relied on at each instance to determine the social and moral status. That is why the writer adds *princesses*, which means a social rank. *Concubines* were on equal terms with "wives" morally. The chief difference was in regards to social and property rights. The second occurrence of *wives* has no limitations, hence we would conclude that all of his women had an evil effect on Solomon.

Verse 4. *When he was old*. Solomon was true to God, as regards idolatry, through the years of young manhood and in his prime. That was the period when his physical nature was interested in the kind of "love" we have seen he had for the women. His fleshly interest, even, did not seem to

predominate over that for the true worship. It was after the moving impulses toward the women had subsided that he permitted their bad influence to affect him. It is even so today in many cases. Christians will marry the wrong kind of persons, claiming all the while that interest in them is secondary. For a time it may appear to be so; but when the fleshly urge has subsided, they will relax also in their devotion to God. How well it would be if all Christians would restrict their marriage to others of like faith and interests. Then their fleshly interests (which are natural and right) and those for Christ would continue together through the years of youth, prime vigor and old age, and they would journey on down to the narrow valley, with all their original principles of life united.

Verse 5. The heathen believed the gods to be both male and female; also that each clan or district could have its particular god. Ashtoreth was a female deity of the Zidonians; Milcom (Molech, v. 7) was that of the Ammonites. *Abominations* is the comment of the writer. The worship of this god was especially abominable and disgusting.

Verse 6. *In the sight of the Lord*. Many things man does may look very good in his own eyes; they may even seem to be beneficial in a temporal sense. But that does not prove them to be right in the sight of the Lord. (Luke 16: 15.)

Verses 7, 8. *Abomination of Moab*. For explanation of the first word, see v. 5. The high places were elevations of earth or stone, on which the likenesses of heathen gods could be posted, and where altars could be installed for the burning of incense and animal sacrifices.

Verse 9. The two times God appeared to Solomon are recorded in Ch. 3: 5 and 9: 2. With such marked evidence of the divine favor, there was no excuse for his acts of ingratitude and wavering. *Angry* is a strong word; it comes from *ANAPH* and Strong defines it, "a primitive root, i. e. be enraged." Considering the many and great benefits the Lord had bestowed on Solomon, this attitude of anger toward him seems just.

Verse 10. To render him still less excusable in his wrongdoing, Solomon had been specifically told what he should not do.

Verse 11. A *covenant* is a pact between two parties; such had been made between the Lord and Solomon. (Ch. 3: 14.) This covenant had been broken on the part of Solomon in that he failed to keep the divine statutes. If one party to a contract breaks it, the pact is made void and the other party is released. Hence, the Lord announced that he would take the kingdom from Solomon and give it to another.

Verse 12. Consideration for David (not Solomon) was to defer the transfer of the kingdom until the days of his grandson.

Verse 13. The transfer of the kingdom was not to be total. Still remembering David, God promised to retain one tribe for his grandson, the son of Solomon. Actually, two tribes were left to him, Judah and Benjamin. But the latter was a small tribe and not always mentioned with the other.

Verse 14. God began to carry out the prediction of the 11th verse. By stirring up a human adversary, another prediction was fulfilled. See 2 Sam. 7: 14. *King's seed* means Hadad was related to the king of Edom.

Verses 15-17. This paragraph explains the occasion for Hadad's enmity against the kingdom of Judah. In the days of David a great slaughter had been made in the land of Edom. Hadad was a little child then, and escaped the general destruction, together with some of his father's servants and came into Egypt.

Verse 18. This verse records a stop en route to Egypt, as the location named was on the way to that country. Upon having passed through Midian they came to Paran, another point still farther on toward the south. Here they associated other men with them, and together they came to Egypt. Pharaoh provided for Hadad's comfort by giving him some land and a house.

Verse 19. This verse merely means that Pharaoh came to like Hadad as he grew to manhood. He expressed his friendship for him by making him his brother-in-law. Tahpenes was the wife of Pharaoh and her sister became the wife of Hadad.

Verse 20. A son named Genubath was born to Hadad and his wife. The intimacy of the two families was such that Pharaoh's wife took over the care of her nephew.

Verse 21. *Slept with his fathers* is a Biblical way of reporting death of

some prominent person. Hadad heard that David and Joab had died; that meant the chief men who had opposed his people were out of the way. He then asked Pharaoh's consent to leave Egypt and return to his native land.

Verse 22. Pharaoh thought something was wrong with his surroundings and asked what it was. The answer showed that his desire to leave Egypt was not on account of any complaints. That left the implied conclusion that some special motive was drawing him toward home. With the facts before us as we have seen them, we may assume that his enmity for the nation of Israel was the motive. When he returned home he opposed Solomon in some way, unrevealed to us, which was indicated in v. 14.

Verse 23. Zobah was a city in some part of Syria, and its chief ruler was Hadadzezer. He had a servant named Rezon, who deserted his lord.

Verse 24. Damascus was the chief city of Syria, and not far from the land of the Israelites. Formerly, while David lived and slew many of the people of his city, which was Zobah, Rezon had made a flight as mentioned in the foregoing paragraph. In doing so he gathered some men about him, with whose support he took possession of Damascus.

Verse 25. Being thus located near Solomon's territory, he had opportunity to harass him. He did so all the days that he lived; this was through the plans of God, who had said (2 Sam. 7: 14) he would chastise a disobedient son with the "rod of men."

Verse 26. *Jeroboam the son of Nebat* is a phrase that will become very familiar to the student of history concerning the Jews. The verse makes general mention of the fact that he lifted up himself against the king.

Verse 27. *This was the cause* is the introduction to a series of events leading up to the time when Jeroboam will receive his encouragement against Solomon. Millo was a fortification in Jerusalem, and the king was having it repaired.

Verse 28. Solomon observed that Jeroboam was industrious, and made him foreman of the repair work. *House of Joseph* is a figurative reference to Israel. See Ex. 1: 8.

Verse 29. This engagement of Jeroboam brought him to Jerusalem, in the vicinity of which was the prophet Ahijah. At this time the prophet was

wearing a new garment, and he met Jeroboam coming away from the city.

Verses 30, 31. Manual or other literal demonstrations were used by the prophets in ancient times; the purpose evidently was to give emphasis to the prediction made. Note the cases of the girdle (Jer. 13: 1-11), the tile (Ezk. 4: 1-6), and the stuff for removing (Ezk. 12: 3, 4). Ahijah did a performance with the garment he was wearing by tearing it into 12 pieces, symbolical of the tribes of Israel. It would require more strength to tear a new garment than an old one; hence the superior might of God was pictured by this kind of garment. Giving the exact number of 10 pieces to Jeroboam, the prophet Ahijah made the prediction that the same number of tribes would be given into his hand. This encouraged him to seek for the transfer of power, and it is the explanation of *this was the cause*, in verse 27.

Verse 32. This verse is a parenthetical thought, and put in to explain why not all of the tribes would be given to Jeroboam. The tribe of Benjamin is not named, although it is to be included when the division takes place. See comments at verse 13.

Verse 33. The sin of idolatry was to bring about the rending of the kingdom. See explanation at v. 5 for the mention of these deities. It is well also to observe that the neglect of true worship is associated with the service for idolatrous gods. To walk in God's ways means to walk the way he requires. The statutes were the fixed and original enactments of the Lord; the judgments were the inspired decisions pertaining to questions that came up, and which also became fixed laws afterward.

Verses 34, 35. Frequent mention is made of God's regard for David as being the reason for leniency toward others. It is the reason given for retaining part of the kingdom for the son of Solomon, the son of David.

Verse 36. The Lord gave a personal reason for his retaining of the one great tribe (Judah), which was that David would always have a light in Jerusalem, the place of the formal recording of His name.

Verse 37. This was spoken to Jeroboam, and might seem to have given him an unbridled scope of authority. The limitations will be seen in the next verse.

Verse 38. The conditions on which the promises of the preceding verse were made, required that Jeroboam should walk in the ways of God. If he will do that, his *house* was to be made sure. The word "house" is from an original with a wide variety of meanings. It is from BAYITH and has been rendered in the A. V. by court 1 time, door 1, family 5, hangings 1, home 25, house 1789, household 52, inside 1, inward 7, palace 1, place 16, temple 11, web 1. The right to a throne was supposed to follow in the family line; for that reason an assurance that one would have a sure *house* was equivalent to that of a throne.

Verse 39. A question might arise as to why God would promise to bless a situation that seemed to have arisen through sin. The answer is in the verse at hand; it was for the purpose of punishment on the seed of David. And the consolation was given that the punishment would not be for ever. Since it consisted in the division of the kingdom, the removal of that condition would be ending of the punishment. The reunion of the twelve tribes took place, and it was specifically predicted in Ezk. 37: 1-22. The fulfillment of it is recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and in the profane histories extant, too numerous to cite here. The fact of their restoration is also recognized in the New Testament. (Acts 26: 7; James 1: 1.)

Verse 40. In some way, Solomon heard of the "tip" that had been given to Jeroboam, and sought to kill him. How foolish to think he could prevent a plan of God by removing one of his servants involved. Had he succeeded in slaying Jeroboam, God would have replaced him by another servant. But the Lord evidently was already working against Solomon's interference by opening a way of escape, so that Jeroboam fled to Egypt where he was given a home as long as Solomon lived.

Verse 41. The books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon, contain writings of Solomon; but reference is made to outside writings, and they are named in 2 Chr. 9: 29. There were other writings extant at the times covered by the Biblical ones, besides those included in the Bible; inspired writers referred to them. (Josh. 10: 13; 2 Sam. 1: 18; Acts 17: 28.)

Verses 42, 43. This is a brief and unadorned statement of the reign and death of Solomon. *Slept with his fathers* was a common way of report-

ing the death of a prominent person. For extended comments on *slept*, see 1 Ki. 2: 10.

1 KINGS 12

Verse 1. The inauguration ceremonies for a king did not always take place in the capital city. (1 Sam. 10: 1; 11: 15; 2 Sam. 5: 3.) Shechem was a city whose situation was beautiful, between the mounts of Gerizim and Ebal. It was about 34 miles north of Jerusalem. To this sheltered city all Israel came, supposedly to anoint Rehoboam.

Verses 2, 3. Jeroboam had fled to Egypt for fear of Solomon. (Ch. 11: 40.) Learning of the death of Solomon, he responded to the call of his countrymen to return to his native land. Their purpose was to have him represent them in a petition, which follows.

Verse 4. The complaints made against Solomon were all true. He had consumed 20 years of time building the temple and palace. This work had to have the services of many men. (Ch. 5: 13-18.) As far as we know, there was no fault found with Solomon in the matter. Such vast projects (which the Lord approved) could not be carried out without drafts upon labor. But that work was all done, and there was no longer any need for the burdensome tasks. The request made to Rehoboam, therefore, was just.

Verse 5. The king dismissed the people with a promise to hear them again in 3 days.

Verses 6, 7. The king consulted the old men who had been with his father. They advised him to serve the people, which would induce them to serve him. Such a use of these words proves that the same word does not always have the same meaning. A king and his subjects could not serve each other in the same sense. We must understand, therefore, that it means the king would serve the best interests of the people by ruling well; and the people would serve the king by grateful obedience to his authority. The specific ruling the old men advised was that the king relieve the tax burden formerly imposed by his father.

Verses 8, 9. "Old men for counsel, and young men for war" was not the policy followed by Rehoboam. His associates of like age would likely be more sympathetic for his ambitions, and their advice was of that kind.

Verses 10, 11. *Little finger.* The

second word is not in the original as a separate word. The two came from a Hebrew word, meaning something little or insignificant. It is as if Rehoboam had said: "Comparatively speaking, that which is little about me will be greater than what was great in my father." *Whips; scorpions.* Literally, the chief difference between these is that of severity. The ordinary whip was merely a lash; the scorpion was a knotted scourge. The severity of this instrument was compared to a scorpion, a small animal with a poisonous fluid in its tail that was deposited in the flesh of the victim, resulting in very keen pain.

Verses 12-14. This paragraph is a repetition of what is in the preceding one.

Verse 15. Solomon had offended the Lord, and a punishment was declared against his kingdom. It was not to come, however, until the days of his son. This delay was in respect for David, the father of Solomon. Now the time had come to bring about the punishment. The stern attitude Rehoboam took, resulting in the division of his kingdom, was a judicial misfortune; not any moral wrong. It was consistent, therefore, for the Lord to influence Rehoboam into making such announcement that would result in the division of the kingdom.

Verse 16. This verse marks a decisive period in the history of the nation; the revolt of the 10 tribes.

Verse 17. Through the remainder of this book, and most of the next, we will be reading the history of the divided kingdom. Two tribes remained with Rehoboam and his successors at Jerusalem, and will be known as the kingdom of Judah. Ten tribes under Jeroboam and his successors will be known as the Kingdom of Israel. The history of the two kingdoms will run somewhat parallel. That is, the writer intends to keep the record of each kingdom "up to date," so to speak. To do this, he will write a while about one, then about the other. Since the length of reigns will not be uniform, it follows that accounts of the respective kingdoms will often overlap somewhat. That will cause a repetition of some of the events. This condition will be caused, also, by the fact that the two peoples were often engaged in conflicts with each other, making it necessary to refer to both in the same account. For instance, in writing of a certain event in the kingdom of

Judah, it will be necessary to tell of contact with Israel. Then when on the history of Israel, the writer will need to mention Judah again, and on a subject that had been already treated. Occasionally, the writer will be telling of the actions of some king, when perhaps we have just read of his death. All of this may be explained by the zig-zag sort of the narrative; trying to bring the history of both kingdoms along together, or as nearly so as possible.

Verse 18. *Tribute* means the labor forces; Ch. 4:6 tells us that Odoram had charge of them. Rehoboam thought he could ignore the revolt of the 10 tribes and continue to supervise their working forces. Evidently, he went in person to give authority to Adoram's position, since he was frightened away by the stoning of his agent.

Verse 19. *Unto this day* means the date of that writing.

Verse 20. This begins the history of the kingdom of Israel. The reason for mentioning only the tribe of Judah is explained at Ch. 11:13.

Verse 21. Rehoboam failed in his attempt to foist his own foreman onto the working men of the 10 tribes; but he was unattended by military forces. He now thought he could put down the revolt with his soldiers.

Verses 22, 23. Shemalah was a prophet. (2 Chr. 12:5.) God usually spoke through them (Heb. 1:1) instead of speaking directly to the people. *Remnant of the people* would mean the stragglers not identified with any particular tribe.

Verse 24. *For this thing is from me.* On the human side, the motives that brought about the division of the kingdom were evil. But since those motives deserved divine punishment, and since that was to be in the form of this revolt, it explains why the Lord said it was from him.

Verse 25. Shechem became the temporary capital of the kingdom of Israel, but changes were made soon after. It is important to note that it was in Mt. Ephraim.

Verses 26, 27. Jeroboam understood the system that the children of Israel got from Moses, and that it required them to go to Jerusalem at stated times for the national activities. He feared the influence the temple might have on them as they beheld it from year to year. To counteract that he formulated a wicked plan.

Verse 28. *Took counsel* means he thought over the matter. The sacred bull was a leading god among idolaters. The selection of calves for this plan was indicative of the long reign of idolatry that was just in the beginning. Jeroboam told his people it was too much for them to go to Jerusalem. This was an appeal to the longing of mankind for convenience. Today it is the same as of old; too far or too inconvenient to go to the assembly or to do other tasks. Jeroboam made the same claim for these calves that Aaron had made for the golden calf at Sinai. (Ex. 32: 4.) The history of that ancient event with its fearful results seemed not to be remembered.

Verse 29. Dan was at the extreme border of Palestine, and Bethel was near Jerusalem; just about as near as possible to be still inside the territory taken over by the ten tribes. By using these places, he counted on detracting the attention of his people from Jerusalem. He succeeded so well that it became a common thing to refer to Jeroboam as the man "who taught Israel to sin."

Verses 30, 31. Up to here, nothing has been said about the tribe of Levi when discussing the division of the kingdom. It was purposely reserved for this place. 2 Chr. 11: 13-15 should be read now. The tribe of Levi followed Jeroboam, but they were rejected by him when he was ready to form his religious system. When that occurred, the Levites returned to Rehoboam. We cannot feel very good over the wavering conduct of the Levites. However, we are relieved to know that the actions of Jeroboam gave the kingdom of Judah a lawful priesthood.

Verse 32. The particular feast referred to is Tabernacles. (Lev. 23: 33.) Other important feasts took place in the 9th month at Jerusalem, but they required use of the temple, which Jeroboam could not approach for his idolatrous practices.

Verse 33. *Devised of his own heart* means he had no authority for setting such a date. Having set up idolatrous images for worship, Jeroboam also erected an altar for sacrifices and incense. The priests whom he used in these services were the ones he had placed to supplant the rightful tribe of Levi.

1 KINGS 13

Verse 1. *Man of God* is an expression used very many times in the Bible,

and with some variation in meaning. As a rule, however, it refers to men with special qualifications, such as prophets. God communicated with his people through them. (Heb. 1: 1.) Jeroboam was standing by the altar he had erected, preparing to burn incense.

Verse 2. This prediction was made about 970 B. C., and Josiah began to reign 639 B. C. The prediction, therefore, was made at least 331 years before the fulfillment, which is recorded in 2 Kings 23: 15.

Verse 3. It is easy to make predictions; but they do not become valid proof until fulfilled, unless something occurs immediately to demonstrate the authority of the prophet. Therefore, it was stated that on that day the thing would happen to the altar.

Verse 4. There were attendants with Jeroboam at the altar; he signaled to one of them to lay hold upon the prophet. But the hand by which he gave the signal withered at once so that he could not relax it to his body on account of the stiffness.

Verse 5. The demonstration mentioned in verse 3 took place just as predicted.

Verse 6. This brought Jeroboam to his proper frame of mind. He besought the prophet to pray for his recovery. It was done and the hand was restored to soundness.

Verse 7. Jeroboam was evidently grateful to the prophet and offered to reward him.

Verse 8. The kind offer was declined; not that the thing offered would have been wrong in itself. The reason for rejecting it will be stated in the following verse.

Verses 9, 10. God had commanded the prophet to go on his mission, then return by a different route. Also, he was told not to eat or drink in that place. These orders he began to carry out, and started on his return journey.

Verse 11. There is nothing unusual in this verse. Evidently this was a "retired" prophet whose sons believed he would be interested in an account of what had taken place. The part of the report that especially interested him pertained to the bones, and the treatment they were to receive in the future.

Verses 12, 13. Inquiring about the direction taken by the other prophet, this old one told his sons to saddle an

ass for him; he then went in the direction indicated.

Verse 14. The old prophet overtook the other, sitting under an oak. To make sure of the identity, he asked him for the information, and received it.

Verse 15. This is another verse that would seem to have no special significance. However, we will learn that this old prophet had a far-reaching plan in his mind.

Verses 16, 17. The man of God then repeated the instructions that would forbid him to accept the hospitality of the old prophet.

Verses 18, 19. We know that God sometimes changes his mind and reverses a command he has given. How, then, was this person to know that the old prophet was lying to him? Well, if God changes his orders he had given to an inspired prophet, he does not call another inspired prophet to tell it. The first prophet should have suspected something when he remembered that God had not spoken again to him.

Verses 20-22. While the two were eating, God gave the old prophet a message for the other, who had ignored his own position as prophet and listened to another. Now when the Lord had a special message for him, he also ignored him as a prophet, and communicated through the other prophet. The prediction was made that his body would not be buried in the family burial ground. The explanation will be seen in next verses.

Verses 23-25. The unnatural action of the lion was the Lord's doing. Standing guard over the mangled body of the prophet, the passers-by reported it in the city.

Verse 26. This city was the home of the old prophet, and he heard the report. Recalling the word that God had given him concerning the disobedient prophet, he connected the circumstances.

Verses 27, 28. Another unnatural, or unusual circumstance awaited the old prophet. A lion will not stand quietly by when flesh is available for him, nor let another beast remain near him unmolested. The only explanation is that God was taking a hand in a plan to fix a prophetic scheme, serving as one of his "sundry times and divers manners." (Heb. 1:1.)

Verses 29, 30. The old prophet took charge of the body, and there is no indication that he had any trouble with the lion; a further proof that God

was in the matter. The prophet of Bethel used his own personal grave for the body of the other prophet, and the usual ceremonies at burial of the dead were performed. That is what is meant by the expression *mourned over him*.

Verse 31. There is no apparent reason for this strange instruction. No benefit could possibly be derived by having one's bones near another's. However, there is a certain amount of veneration for the body, which is right, since it was made in the image of God. The old prophet was looking out for the future "repose" of his body, based on the prediction made by the prophet from Judah. The fulfillment of it is in 2 Ki. 23: 16.

Verse 32. This explains why the instruction were given to his sons, by the old prophet of Bethel, to bury him in the grave with the other prophet.

Verse 33. *High places* means the mounds of earth, either artificially built, or found and consecrated to the service of idolatry. *Lowest* does not necessarily have any moral significance, but rather a social one. It is from a word that means the people in general. Jeroboam did not stop any place in selecting his priests; but when he saw a man whom he wanted to serve as priest, he consecrated him.

Verse 34. The tendency of all this sin was to lead the kingly line into sin and finally to plunge it into ruin.

1 KINGS 14

Verses 1, 2. This disguising was not for the public. Verse 5 shows that the woman had intended to mislead the prophet. Jeroboam knew that he was not a righteous man and that he was not entitled to the mercy of God. If the prophet did not know who was asking for the favor, perhaps he would grant it. He should have realized that, if no one can hide from God, neither can one hide the truth from his prophet.

Verse 3. *Loaves* is a general term for food made of grain, and *cracknels* means that which had been formed into cakes or biscuits. These are not to be considered as bribes; they constituted a customary expression of good will. Jeroboam believed that whatever the prophet said would be true, because he was the one who had predicted his rise to the throne of Israel.

Verse 4. The prophet Ahijah was blind from age, and it would have been

easy to deceive him as to the identity of the woman.

Verse 5. Had the Lord waited until the conversation started to enlighten Ahijah, it might have been claimed that he recognized the woman's voice. But he did not wait for that; he had him informed so that her intended deception would be exposed even before she came to the inside of the room.

Verse 6. Ahijah let the woman know he was aware of her identity. That alone might not have been so unusual, since it could have been possible for some visible sign to disclose it. But the thoughts of one are not visible; therefore, the ability of Ahijah to read them to her would prove his divine authority. *Heavy tidings*. The second word is not in the original as a separate word. The first one is from a Hebrew word that means something hard or severe. The context shows that the speech of the prophet is what is considered, so the common wording is correct.

Verse 7. To us, the chief point in this verse is the information that it was God who brought about the action of Jeroboam, in drawing off the tribes of Israel.

Verse 8. Ingratitude is a cardinal sin in the eyes of the Lord, and Jeroboam was guilty of it. He was given a large portion of the dominions of David, yet the righteous life of that king seemed not to impress him.

Verse 9. The guilt of Jeroboam was said to be greater than that of any of his predecessors. *Other gods* would refer to idolatry in general, and molten images would mean those cast out of gold and other metals.

Verse 10. For comments on this obsolete word about the excretions of the body, see 1 Sam. 25:22. The thought of the writer is that all the males would be destroyed. The importance of that threat lies in the fact that none but males were used in warfare, the chief activity of most of the nations in that day. Reference to dung at the close of the verse was to show the low estimate the Lord placed on the descendants of Jeroboam.

Verse 11. So debased will the descendants of Jeroboam be in the minds of the people, that their bodies will not be given burial. That will expose them to the dogs in the city, and to the birds in the open fields.

Verse 12. After giving to the wife of Jeroboam these "heavy tidings," the

prophet Ahijah told her to go back home. A further display of his qualifications as a prophet was a prediction of the exact instant at which the child would die.

Verse 13. The age of the child is not given, but we know he was not an infant. He was credited with some favorable attitude toward God, which would not have been true of a babe. For this good that was in him, his body was to be given honorable burial, and not suffer the shame described in verse 11. Respectful burial of a body was regarded with much attention then, as well as in the present time. And it was especially desired that no shameful treatment be given the bones of a friend or relative. Hence the instances where sums of money were paid for burial places.

Verse 14. *Cut off the house of Jeroboam*. Ch. 15: 25-28 tells us that the line of kings was changed from the house of Jeroboam, and given to another family. *But what? even now*. The condition to exist when this change is to be made will be bad. The condition, also, was bad enough at the time Ahijah made the prediction. The words, therefore, have the meaning as if he had said: "What; do you think it strange that I should predict such a bad condition later on? *Even now* it is bad enough.

Verse 15. A reed growing in water would be always moving back and forth as if it were not permanently set. Israel shall also be made to waver. *Beyond the river* means beyond the Euphrates. *The groves* is a reference to idolatry, which was the chief sin of the nation, and which caused them to neglect their duties under the law of Moses.

Verse 16. Jeroboam was a wicked man and practiced his wickedness in the form of idolatry. Not only so, but he led the nation into corrupt practices.

Verse 17. Thus far was the speech of Ahijah to the wife of Jeroboam. She arose at his commandment (V. 12) and went home. The prediction about the death of the child came true just as she was entering.

Verse 18. *All Israel mourned for him* is a statement with formal as well as sentimental meaning. The third word is very strong as a primitive root, and describes the physical demonstrations of tearing the hair and beating the breast. Such outward expressions were not shown except in times of great concern.

Verse 19. *Chronicles* refers primarily to the official records of the kings of the Israelites, and the books in the Bible so named are partly formed after those official documents. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia has this to say: "*Chronicles* contains a reliable history, being drawn from the official records of the Israelites." God did not wish to take up space in his Bible for all the details of the lives of these kings. For the information of those who might wish to know more of the details, the inspired writers referred to these official records as we would consider "outside reading matter."

Verse 20. *Slept with his fathers* is a Biblical way of recording or reporting the death of prominent persons.

Verse 21. The scene now moves from the kingdom of Israel to the kingdom of Judah. The reader should consult the comments at Ch. 12: 17. The importance of Jerusalem is seen in that it was the city the Lord chose for the formal place of his name on earth. The name of a king's mother is often given for identification. The reason is that men had more than one wife in those days, and the statement is to show the complete naming of one's parentage.

Verse 22. When *jealousy* is coupled with the practices of the Israelites it is usually, if not always because of idolatry. Ex. 20: 5 states that God is jealous and the verse was on the subject of images for worship. This sin of idolatry was growing among the members of the kingdom of Judah. They did not become totally idolatrous, as did their neighbor, the kingdom of Israel. But they had many advantages over the other, in that they had the use of the temple and were served by the lawful priesthood. This made their partial idolatry more condemnable than the apparently worse state of Israel.

Verse 23. *High places* were what the term literally means. The physical fact of their being elevated spots would have been considered innocent in itself. But they came to be looked upon as something to be admired because of their loftiness, a great deal like religious people today who take "pride" in their elegant church buildings. Moreover, the idolatrous worship in most instances came to be connected with these high places. It became so much the rule that the very sight of an elevated place often suggested an idol. For these reasons the Lord condemned them and forbade his people building

such places at all. The same sort of veneration was paid groves and even single trees, where the idea of idolatrous worship might be suggested.

Verse 24. *Sodomites*. The original is set forth in the lexicon as denoting a class of males who pretended to be devoted to a separate kind of life. Their character was very corrupt, and they made their profession an opportunity for gratifying their unnatural lusts. Smith's Bible Dictionary has this to say of Sodomites: "This word does not denote the inhabitants of Sodom; but it is employed in the A. V. of the Old Testament for those who practice as a religious rite the abominable and unnatural vice from which the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah have derived their lasting infamy." The connection indicates undoubtedly that these sodomites were Israelites, and their presence and practices were tolerated by the nation. This conclusion is based on the fact that they are referred to in connection with the heathen nations that God had rejected. That is, they were compared with them as being as bad, while they were supposed to be a better class, seeing they belonged to God's nation.

Verses 25, 26. The *treasures* were the moneys and other items of value that had been collected from the various sources, such as tribute, toll and voluntary offerings. *Shields*, where actually used, were for the purpose the name indicates. But they were not always so used. Smith's Bible Dictionary says these shields were suspended about public buildings for ornamental purposes. Their presence suggested the protection of God and a figurative reference is made to them in Psa. 3: 3 and 28: 7. In taking these articles away the king of Egypt was foolish enough to think he was depriving Rehoboam of the protection of his God. He had also the motive of their material value.

Verse 27. As far as literal use was concerned, the shields made of brass would be better than the ones made of gold. The protection, therefore, that had been furnished by the former ones was not lost after the invasion of the king of Egypt.

Verse 28. The natural use of the shields would suggest that the guard should bear them while escorting the king. When they had served their purpose at an appearance of the ruler, they were taken back to their place of keeping in the guard chamber.

Verse 29. For comments on *Chronicles* see verse 19.

Verse 30. The statement was true of the two kingdoms in general. They were almost, if not entirely at war while they existed in power.

Verse 31. *Slept with his fathers.* See comments at Ch. 12: 17 for this. *Mother's name* is explained at Ch. 14: 21.

1 KINGS 15

Verses 1, 2. The date of a king of Judah is based on the reign of a king of Israel. See the comments at Ch. 12: 17. For *mother's name* see Ch. 14: 21.

Verse 3. Abijam could not have been the son of Rehoboam and David in the same sense. It was a common thing in ancient times to speak of persons in an important family line as father and son, etc. In Dan. 5: 18 Nebuchadnezzar is said to be the father of Belshazzar, whereas he was his grandfather. David was the first righteous king of Judah; for that reason he was frequently referred to when the writer was commenting on the character of some of his descendants.

Verse 4. The exceptional righteousness of David caused God often to be lenient toward the failings of his descendants. *Lamp* is used figuratively, referring to the son who should follow him on the throne.

Verse 5. *Save only.* We do not believe the Bible contradicts itself. At first sight this expression seems to say that the sin about Uriah and Bath-sheba was the only sin of David. In 2 Sam. 24: 10, 17, however, he confessed that he had sinned and done wickedly in the case of numbering the people. All apparent contradictions are explainable when the various angles are considered. One word in Strong's definition of the original for *only* is "although." The idea in his view of the case is that the life of David as a whole was exemplary, although he did sin grievously in the matter of Uriah. The history of David's life is one of perfect integrity up to the incident mentioned. The verse as a whole means that David's life and reign had been perfect, and he never deviated from the right path until the affair with Bath-sheba. And we might add that even in that case, David did what he could to correct it, by unreserved confession of his sin, and by respectfully bowing to the punishment God imposed on him.

Verse 6. The antecedent of "his" is Rehoboam since he died before Jeroboam.

Verse 7. For *Chronicles* see Ch. 14: 19 and comments thereon. Note the mention of war again; it was a condition constantly prevalent between the two kingdoms.

Verse 8. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at Ch. 2: 10. It is usual to say of the kings of Judah that they were buried in the city of David. That was the most important part of Jerusalem, and the location of the capitol. It was fitting, therefore, that the kings of that line should be buried there. The kings of Israel were buried in various other places.

Verse 9. Again we see the reign of one king dated from that of another, and of a different kingdom. See Ch. 12: 17 and comments.

Verse 10. Some of the kings of Judah were good men, while all of the kings of Israel were idolatrous. Asa was one of the good kings and had a long reign. No less than 7 kings of Israel will have appeared on the historical horizon in course of the good reign of Asa. *Mother's name* is explained at Ch. 14: 21.

Verse 11. *Right in the eyes of the Lord* is a statement occurring in numerous places; it is a very significant one. A thing may be right in the sight of men, but be evil in the sight of God. This was taught by Christ in Luke 16: 15.

Verse 12. For explanation of *sodomites*, see comments at Ch. 14: 24. Removal of the idols would be in line with, or include the removal of the sodomites.

Verse 13. The mother of a reigning monarch was called a queen as an honorary title, not one that denoted authority; the full name was queen-mother. The word *idol* is not the ordinary one used when the worship of false gods is meant. It is from an original used in no other connection than this act of Maachah, recorded here and in its corresponding passage. (2 Chr. 15: 16.) The word is MIPH-LESETH, and Young defines it, "Horror, a cause of trembling." Strong defines it, "From PALATS, a primitive root; properly perhaps to rend, i. e. (by implication) to quiver." Moffatt renders it, "an obscene object." It was evidently some horrible object so formed as to combine suggestions of lust and power. The ancients asso-

ciated lust with religious services (Ch. 14: 24) and this wicked woman was making such a contribution to the vicious institution. The action of Asa is to be highly commended, in that he did not let his blood relation blind him to the errors and corruptions of the thing the woman was doing.

Verse 14. Since these *high places* were not wrong in themselves, the Lord tolerated them with a man like Asa, whose life as a whole was so good.

Verse 15. The law of Moses required certain contributions from the personal wealth of the Israelites. In addition, they might make freewill offerings and dedicate them to the service of the Lord. This was done by Asa and his father before him. The *vessels* were articles made of precious metals, such as bowls or platters, also any kind of armaments or items that could be used in national defense.

Verses 16, 17. The continuous state of war between the two kingdoms is mentioned to account for the action of Baasha. Ramah was an important city not far from Jerusalem. The word *built* means it was repaired and fortified and thrown into a state of siege.

Verses 18, 19. The action of Baasha alarmed Asa and he decided to make a move to counteract it. Damascus was the capital of Syria, a kingdom just north of Israel; the two kingdoms were leagueed together at this time. Asa planned to divert the attention of Baasha from the city of Ramah by forming a league between himself and the Syrian kingdom. The treasures mentioned as being offered to the latter king are not to be regarded in the sense of a bribe. It was the form of official recognition in the practices of that time, and used to attest the friendship of the king of Judah for Syria.

Verse 20. The strategy of Asa had the desired effect. Benhadad king of Syria sent his soldiers against some of the important towns in northern Israel and smote their citizens. This was according to the league formed with Asa king of Judah.

Verse 21. The military actions of Benhadad drew Baasha off from his siege of Ramah, and he retired to Tirzah, the capital of his kingdom at that period.

Verse 22. With the forces of Baasha gone, Asa was free to undo the works that had been built against Ramah. To get this done, he drafted all the able-bodied men in his realm. The

stones and timber were taken to repair Geba and Mizpeh, other cities of his kingdom.

Verse 23. *Nevertheless* usually introduces some thought that would seem to be against what had been just expressed. In this instance the idea is that Asa accomplished the many works enumerated in spite of the affliction that came on him toward the end of his long and useful reign.

Verse 24. *Slept with his fathers*. See Ch. 2: 10 for explanation of this form of expression. For *buried in the city of David* see Ch. 15: 8 and comments.

Verses 25, 26. The history again switches to the kingdom of Israel. See the comments at Ch. 12: 17 for explanation of why Asa is mentioned, although his death has just been reported.

Verses 27, 28. We have already read about this king (verses 16-21). But those verses were inserted into the history of Asa, king of Judah, to relate an episode that took place in course of his long reign. In the present paragraph the writer takes up the record of Baasha proper. The account shows the beginning of his reign, and the means by which he obtained the throne, which was by assassination of the reigning king.

Verse 29. One wicked man was sometimes used by the Lord to punish another. This act of Baasha in slaying the members of Jeroboam's family had been predicted by the prophet Ahijah. (Ch. 14: 10-14.)

Verse 30. The sins of Jeroboam were great even as they pertained to himself. What magnifies them is the fact that Israel was influenced by them to rebel against God.

Verse 31. This verse belongs after V. 28. The history was interrupted to relate some things about Nadab's successor. For explanation of these *chronicles* see Ch. 14: 19.

Verse 32. This is the same as verse 16.

Verses 33, 34. This is a repetition of V. 28. The reader should frequently consult the comments at Ch. 12: 17, to prevent confusion over the zig-zag form of the history.

I KINGS 16

Verse 1. Jehu was a prophet (V. 7) and God used him to give a message to Baasha.

Verse 2. *Exalted thee out of the dust* is figurative reference to the elevation

of Baasha from a lowly place. He was not in line for the throne, but was suffered to make successful conspiracy against Nadab. That was in reprisal for the sin of Nadab in laying siege against the city of Gibbethon. It had been given to the Levites (Josh. 21: 20-23) and should have been respected.

Verse 3. Baasha did not show appreciation for the honors bestowed on him. For this he was to feel the weight of God's wrath, by having the members of his family humiliated after the manner suffered by Jeroboam.

Verse 4. To be deprived of decent burial has ever been regarded one of the greatest of dishonors; it was to come upon the descendants of Baasha. Instead of being buried in respectful disposal, their bodies were to be given to the dogs and birds.

Verses 5, 6. For this paragraph see comments at Ch. 2: 10; 14: 19. Baasha was buried at Tirzah because that was his capital city. (Ch. 15: 33.)

Verse 7. The death of Baasha has just been reported. The present verse is a retrospective glance into some of the life of Baasha that had not been fully described. *Because he killed him.* Baasha did not kill Jeroboam personally; he killed his descendants. (Ch. 15: 29.) That punishment on the house of Jeroboam was intended of the Lord, yet Baasha's personal motive while acting as God's instrument was evil, and for that he was to be punished.

Verses 8-10. Assassination was not an uncommon method for reaching a throne. Zimri was only a servant of the king, but his place in the household gave him some advantage for carrying out his conspiracy. Selecting a time when his master was debased by drink, Zimri assassinated him and took the throne.

Verse 11. Baasha had slain the descendants of Jeroboam; in return for that, Zimri slew the male members of his family. For comments on the obsolete word for males see 1 Sam. 25: 22.

Verse 12. A true prophet was one who was inspired of God. No other could see the future and predict its transactions. When the Lord directed Jehu to make the announcement to Baasha that his posterity would be destroyed, he was able afterward to bring it to pass, which we have just seen fulfilled.

Verse 13. These wicked men were not content to practice their iniquity

as personal entertainment. They urged their evil doings onto the people. Anger is not necessarily wrong; but if it is provoked by the wrongs of others, they are to be condemned. All of this conduct of Baasha and the people provoked the Lord to anger and brought his wrath justly upon them. *Vanities* is from a word that means something empty; the practice of idolatry had nothing of good in it, therefore it was vain.

Verse 14. For explanation of *chronicles* see Ch. 14: 19.

Verse 15. The reign of Zimri was mentioned at V. 10. The next few verses, however, were to record some things he did in fulfillment of divine predictions, including the slaying of Elah and other descendants of Baasha. After that interruption, the reign of Zimri was resumed. Gibbethon had belonged to the Philistines, but had been taken from them and given to the Israelites. (Josh. 19: 44.) At the time of this verse there was a host encamped against this city.

Verse 16. While in the camp around Gibbethon, word got around that king Zimri had obtained the throne by assassination. This roused their anger and they appointed Omri to be their king, and prepared to oppose Zimri.

Verse 17. Leaving the siege of Gibbethon, the people with their appointee marched to the capital city, Tirzah, and laid siege to it.

Verse 18. Zimri realized that he was defeated, and rather than fall alive into the hands of the besiegers, committed suicide by fire. But his resistance to the last was emphasized by his act of burning the palace, depriving his successor of its use.

Verse 19. Some of the acts of Zimri were fulfillment of God's predictions. That fact, however, did not justify his personal wickedness and motives.

Verse 20. The *treason* was committed when he slew the reigning king. It was necessary that Elah be chastised; but that did not justify Zimri for murdering him.

Verses 21, 22. This was a short-lived conspiracy against Omri and in favor of Tibni. The latter was the loser and Omri reigned.

Verse 23. In this and the preceding chapter we have mention of several kings of Israel, dated on the basis of the reign of Asa, king of Judah. This unusual continuation in the line of

one of the kingdoms, instead of alternating more frequently, is due to the long reign of Asa (41 years, Ch. 15: 10) as against the short reigns of these kings of Israel. The entire length of Omri's reign is stated; also the portion of it that passed at Tirzah. This is because Omri planned to change the capital city.

Verse 24. *Samaria* was the name generally borne by a hill; Omri obtained formal possession of it by purchase. On this hill he built a city to be the new capital. He honored the man from whom he purchased the hill, by giving the city a name formed from his name. *Samaria* thus became the capital city of the kingdom of Israel, and it remained so as long as the kingdom continued in power.

Verses 25, 26. Omri was so exceptionally effective with his wicked examples that he was given special mention by a prophet. (Micah 6: 16.) For *vanities* see comments at V. 13.

Verses 27, 28. Omri was accredited with being a man of might. How regrettable that his talent was not used in the right manner. His life was given further detailed description in the annals of the kings. For *chronicles* see Ch. 14: 19; and for *slept* see Ch. 2: 10. He was buried in *Samaria* because that had become the capital.

Verse 29. This introduces one of the most famous of the kings of Israel; famous because he was so infamous. The length of his reign is stated in this verse, but we are destined to read of many of his acts, running through several chapters, ere we get to his death. He began to reign three years before the death of Asa, king of Judah.

Verse 30. A comparison is made between Ahab and all his predecessors, so as to rank him ahead of them all in wickedness. The verse, however, is only a general statement. Some of the specifications will be cited in verses to follow.

Verse 31. God's people were commanded not to marry strangers. Ahab not only violated this command, but married one of the worst kind of strangers. Jezebel was wicked personally; she was the daughter of a heathen king, and wielded a great influence for evil over her already wicked husband.

Verse 32. Ahab not only "leaned" toward idolatry, but built a house for Baal in *Samaria* and equipped it with an altar.

Verse 33. *Made a grove* in itself would seem to have been an innocent thing, but the connection shows it was planted to shelter idolatrous worship. The comparison is again made, that Ahab did more to provoke God than all his predecessors.

Verse 34. There should be no responsible connection between the wickedness of Ahab and the rashness of Hiel. The significance is that the general effect of Ahab's wicked reign was such that men would be encouraged to defy the will of the Lord. The reader may see the comments on this subject of rebuilding Jericho at Josh. 6: 26.

1 KINGS 17

Verse 1. Elijah was a national prophet, a man of God who was used for the purpose of delivering divine messages to the people. (Heb. 1: 1.) These servants of God were given much authority, and were tenderly cared for, even by miraculous provisions. *Tishbite* is defined by Strong, "inhabitant of Tishbeh (in Gilead)." We will hear a great deal about Elijah. God determined to afflict the land with a dearth on account of Ahab. The prophet Elijah told this wicked king of the impending drought. A point of special importance is that the conditions of the weather were to be *according to my word* as Elijah expressed it. This was to demonstrate him to be a prophet of God.

Verses 2-4. When God plans a general state of destruction or other adverse condition, he always makes special provision to protect the worthy ones. In the flood he had the ark to save Noah and family. In Sodom he sent the angels to warn Lot. So in the case of Elijah; he was to be miraculously nourished during the general dearth.

Verse 5. The brook was before Jordan. Why depend on the brook if he was near the Jordan River? The river of Jordan is a swift flowing stream and its water is muddy. The brook is described in the reference works as a seasonal stream, and thus its water would not be muddy or stagnant either.

Verse 6. The raven was a tireless bird on the wing (Gen. 8: 7) and was constantly soaring to and fro in search of food. It would therefore not be a "hardship" to use this bird for the service of Elijah. The word *flesh* is from one that denotes "fresh meat." As the raven craves only tainted meat, he would not care for fresh, and would not have to overcome his appetite to

give it to Elijah. *Bread* is from an original that has a general meaning, including grain. It is easy to see how the raven could find such an article without any miraculous help from God. The miracle was in causing it to make regular trips to the prophet with the food.

Verse 7. The brook was a seasonal stream; the absence of rainfall, therefore, would cause it to go dry.

Verses 8, 9. Usually it would be unreasonable to expect a widow to help one in time of general want. This is an instance for observing that when God commands one to do a certain thing, he always qualifies him for doing it.

Verses 10, 11. Even during a drought there might be some drinking water available. The request of Elijah, therefore, was not unreasonable. But as the woman started to get the water he gave another request that seemed more difficult under the circumstance brought about by the long dearth that had afflicted the land.

Verse 12. The morsel of bread that Elijah called for would be food already prepared from grain. The *cake* means the same; but provisions had become so scarce that all articles were consumed as fast as they were prepared. That is the reason the woman spoke as she did about not having a cake. She still had a small amount of ground grain and enough olive oil with which to mix it and which she was going to prepare. *Two sticks* indicates the scarceness of the woman's supplies, for that amount of fuel would not produce much fire, nor last very long. There is no reason to think the woman said this in the spirit of complaint. But she stated the facts so that Elijah would not be expecting much.

Verse 13. The nature of this command would indicate that an unusual person was speaking. She had just told him that she had only a handful of meal to divide between herself and son. Now she is told she may yet have it for their use, but must first make a cake for her guest.

Verses 14, 15. The original for *days* has a wide range of meaning, including a period of indefinite length. Since the meal and oil never ran out, we cannot give the word a definite meaning as used here.

Verses 17, 18. *My sin*. The idea might be suggested, since this is in the singular, that the woman was ac-

knowledging the illegitimacy of her son; that is not the case. She was a widow and we have no reason to question her right to be a mother. The original for *sin* is in no other place so translated, which shows it is an unusual word, with an indefinite meaning. It has been rendered in the A. V. by fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment of iniquity. All persons realize they are "erring creatures," and if some unusual misfortune befalls them, they just consider it is a "judgment sent on them" for something they have done. Such was the idea in the mind of this woman. *What have I to do with thee* means, "what do you want me to do for you?"

Verse 19. *Loft* is from the same word as *chamber* in V. 23, and means an upper room. This was where Elijah's sleeping quarters were and he took the child's body there for privacy while praying and restoring the life to him.

Verse 20. *Evil* does not necessarily mean anything morally bad. One part of the definition of the Hebrew word is "bad physically." Elijah did not find fault with the Lord; his mentioning of the fact that he was a guest was to show his motive in praying for the restoration of the child.

Verses 21, 22. In various instances of miraculous healing, some kind of action has been done that apparently had nothing to do with the case. (2 Ki. 4: 29; John 9: 6.) In this case it was part of the plan for Elijah to apply his body to that of the child in bringing about the desired effect. *Soul come into him again*. This refutes the doctrine of soul-sleeping and all other forms of materialism. The soul could not come into a dead body had it not left it at death. So it is important to note that the child revived after his soul came into him again.

Verse 23. The chamber was a part of the house where the woman lived, but it was a separate room for sleeping purposes. The verse has the same sense as if we would say a person came out of a bedroom into the living room.

Verse 24. This shows the main object God had in mind when he enabled Elijah to perform this miracle; to demonstrate his divine mission and authority. This idea has been outstanding throughout the Bible. (Ex. 12: 2, 7; Num. 17: 5; Mark 16: 20; John 20: 30, 31.) The bodily benefits

bestowed in the miraculous cures were incidental; the main purpose was to prove the divine power.

1 KINGS 18

Verse 1. The *third year* of the drought had come and God was about ready to end it. As Elijah had declared at the beginning (Ch. 17: 1) that no rain would come until he said the word, so the Lord will operate through his word in ending the affliction. Ahab was the king of Israel; that is why Elijah was told to appear to him.

Verse 2. The dearth was general, but Samaria was mentioned in particular because it was the capital of the kingdom of Israel.

Verses 3, 4. Obadiah was not in authority; he served as chief caretaker of the house. Being in that position, he had access to much of the provisions in store. He was a righteous man and not in sympathy with the conduct of his master and mistress. But he had to do his work for the prophets in secret because of the wickedness of the king and his wife. *Did them by fifty* means he divided the 100 into two groups as a precaution. If one group should be discovered the other could escape. Such a precaution was taken by Jacob. (Gen. 32: 7, 8.) Food was very scarce, so the simple fare of bread and water was no doubt relished by these men.

Verses 5, 6. This would seem to us to be a very natural circumstance, for Ahab and his chief servant to divide the territory and go in search of sustenance for the animals. It will prove to be the occasion, however, for communication with Elijah.

Verses 7, 8. *He knew him*. The first pronoun is Obadiah. He had some acquaintance with Elijah, but under the strain of conditions, wished to make sure; that is why he asked for identification. *Lord* was a term of respect and meant to recognize Elijah as a man of God, since he was an inspired prophet. But Elijah referred to Ahab as Obadiah's lord. That was true in a secular sense, for he was his king. Then he asked Obadiah to bring his lord (Ahab) into his (Elijah's) presence.

Verses 9, 10. Ahab had made numerous attempts to locate Elijah. When some rumor came to him of the whereabouts of the prophet, he would go thither in hopes of taking him. When

the search failed, he questioned whether the rumor was false, or that the people withheld the truth from him. To make sure, the king put the people under oath.

Verses 11, 12. As long as God wished Elijah to evade Ahab he assisted him in escaping. Obadiah did not realize that the time had come for the prophet to contact Ahab; and, not knowing it, feared for his life. Should he notify his king that Elijah was in a certain place, and then in the mean time he should vanish while Ahab was coming, he would slay Obadiah as a falsifier, and because of his disappointment. Obadiah protested such a circumstance on his profession of being one who feared God.

Verses 13, 14. As concrete evidence of his friendliness toward the Lord, Obadiah cited his care for the prophets hidden in the cave. On the basis of this practical proof of his devotion, he thought he should be spared.

Verse 15. *As the Lord of hosts liveth* is a mild form of an oath. It means, as surely as God lives, so surely will I; etc.

Verse 16. On the assurance given him by Elijah, Obadiah gave the word to Ahab. The word of his chief servant was doubtless of much worth in the mind of Ahab, for he acted upon it and went forth to meet Elijah.

Verse 17. *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* This is in the form of a question, but was intended for an accusation. It is an old story to hear accusation of causing trouble, when opposing those who are really the ones responsible for the trouble. And when a person is in the wrong, he is likely the one who will object to any investigation of the situation; that was true of the guilty Hebrew in Ex. 2: 13. Truth does not fear the light, neither does a righteous man object to being questioned. If a person is doing wrong, he is responsible for all "trouble" that results from investigation and opposition to that wrong.

Verse 18. Not only did Elijah deny being the troubler of Israel, but he pointed out wherein Ahab and his people were the guilty ones. There were two angles of the case; they had forsaken the commandments of God, and had gone after Baalim.

Verse 19. The prophets of Baal were the ones specifically devoted to that god. The groves were also used generally as open temples for idolatrous

services, and these prophets of the groves were the ones not devoted exclusively to Baal. They were the special guests of Jezebel. Ahab was challenged to have the issue put to a test, and was told to gather a group, 850 altogether, of the prophets of idolatry.

Verse 20. This states that Ahab gathered the prophets into a meeting, but no distinction was made between the two groups mentioned in V. 19. This shows there was no difference between them as to their actual standing.

Verse 21. *Halt* means to hesitate; that is, try to act as if they were in favor of both *opinions*. The last word is from an original that is also translated "thoughts." One word in Strong's definition is "sentiments." The idea of Elijah is, why try to hold to the two sentiments. Jesus set forth the same subject when he said that no man can serve two masters. (Matt. 6: 24.) The people had no answer to the question of Elijah, and the reason is clear. There could be no sound basis for trying to serve two gods that were opposed to each other.

Verse 22. If numbers count for anything, these idolaters had the advantage. Elijah was alone, while the prophets of Baal were 450, to say nothing about the prophets of the grove who numbered 400.

Verses 23, 24. Elijah had insisted on their choosing one god to the exclusion of the other. It would be logical, therefore, that some decisive test be made so that the choice would not be a blind one. He proposed a test that would be in keeping with the service of a god; it was the offering of animal sacrifice. And it would be consistent for the god to demonstrate his favor for the service that he accepted. The proposition was agreed to by the worshipers of Baal.

Verse 25. Elijah was confident of success, and if he made his test first, that would stop the proceedings. He wished the whole transaction to be a complete test; not only to demonstrate the power of God, but the utter weakness of Baal. He suggested to them, therefore, that it was fair for them to go first, since they were a multitude.

Verse 26. Note the fact that no voice was heard. Had there been any kind of sound, they could have maintained that it was from Baal, even though he did not send fire. The complete silence, therefore, drove them mad

with disappointment. One meaning of the word for *leap* is to "dance." The word *upon* is translated in the margin, also in a number of versions I have consulted, as "about." The idolaters were dancing in a hysterical manner around their altar, because Baal did not answer them.

Verse 27. The facts about the case would justify their being *mocked* in the usual sense of that word. However, Elijah was using language that his contestants professed to believe in regard to their gods. It was the belief of idolaters that the gods were like men in many respects. They had their own territory (2 Ki. 17: 26) and would sometimes take journeys into that of another god. Also, being like men in some respects, they would become weary and need rest and sleep. Elijah reminded them of what they already believed. Baal might be *talking* (holding conversation with another god), *pursuing* (perhaps hunting), *in a journey* (visiting in another territory), *sleeping*. By calling their attention to all these professed practices of the gods, they could not afterwards use them as excuses for the silence of Baal. So they used enough time for Baal to have been finally contacted had he been engaged as described.

Verse 28. *After their manner* means according to a custom which they had as part of their religious practice. The law of Moses forbade the Israelites to mutilate their bodies. (Lev. 19: 28; Deut. 14: 1.) God wished his people to be different from the heathen nations round them.

Verse 29. The idolaters *prophesied* to the very last that Baal would hear them. *Evening Sacrifice* did not mean anything to these worshipers of Baal; it is mentioned as the time when Elijah "called time" on them. His reason for doing so was first, they had had sufficient time for their test; second, the Israelites had an established practice of offering a daily sacrifice in the evening. (Ex. 29: 39.) It was thus appropriate for Elijah to bring his test at the time usually devoted to sacrifices.

Verse 30. Elijah was not willing to use the altar built by the idolaters although that of the Lord had been broken down. See Ch. 19: 10, 14.

Verses 31, 32. The Lord's altar was repaired or rebuilt with a stone for each of the tribes. The trench was to receive water soon to be poured. *Two*

measures is defined by Moffatt to be 1800 square yards.

Verses 33-35. The barrel was a vessel of indefinite capacity. It is sometimes translated "pitcher" and may be carried on the shoulders. We should not think, therefore, that the 12 barrels of water would fill such a large trench. The last expression of the paragraph tells us that filling the trench was an act in addition to the pouring of water on the wood. One barrel or pitcher of water might not thoroughly saturate the wood, so they were told to pour on four of them. But that might be questioned being enough to penetrate the fuel, and to make doubly sure, they were told to repeat the act. For fear that lingering doubt might exist, the act was done the third time. By then no doubt could be raised, because the water ran round about the altar. But perhaps by the time Elijah's prayers were ended the ground would absorb the water that was then visible, therefore, Elijah had the large trench filled with water. There could then be no doubt of the thoroughly saturated condition.

Verses 36, 37. *Abraham, Isaac and Israel* (Jacob) were the men usually meant in reference to the "fathers." They were regarded with special veneration as the founders of the nation. The primary motive, for the demonstration which Elijah was expecting, was to prove the divinity of Israel's God; also, to show that Elijah was a true servant of that God, and was acting on his orders. *Turned their heart back* means that the exhibition of divine power would force the minds of the people to recognize God as the true object of worship. Verse 39 shows such was the result accomplished.

Verse 38. We can see the advantage of having the large trench filled with water. That element is a natural enemy of fire and usually is the winner in a contact. In this case it was the loser, although being much "in the majority."

Verse 39. This was referred to in V. 37. With us there might seem to be no difference between *Lord* and *God*; that they mean the same person, and that the acknowledgment of these people meant nothing. Here is the point; the word *Lord* is from YEHOWAH and Strong defines it, "(the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God." The word *God* is from ELOHIYM, and the first definition of Strong is, "gods in the ordinary

sense." What these people meant was that the being whom the Israelites recognized for their national Lord, was the one to be acknowledged as the One to worship.

Verse 40. Let us not forget that "all Israel" was called unto this demonstration (V. 19) as well as the prophets of Baal. It was the people, therefore, who made the acknowledgment of the preceding verse. The prophets had forfeited their rights to live under the law of Moses. (Deut. 13: 2-5.) But the people, having had their heart "turned back again," were to be assistants to Elijah in executing the law on the prophets of Baal. The brook Kishon was a seasonal torrent and dry at times. Its bed would therefore be a fitting place to slay the false prophets. There is no available information of what disposition, if any, was made of their bodies.

Verse 41. *Get thee up* meant for Ahab to leave the scene of the slaying, which was in the dry bed of the brook Kishon. There were indications of a heavy rainfall, and that place would soon become a torrent, and no place for living beings. Besides, the grand test of the gods was over and it was time to relax and partake of food.

Verse 42. Ahab and Elijah separated, the former going to his own habitation, to partake of nourishment. Elijah had accomplished his work for the time being and retired to Carmel, a famous mountain ridge in the southern part of Palestine. Much of the history of Elijah, and his successor (Elisha) is connected with this place. To it Elijah (with his attendant) went after the work at the brook Kishon, to await the immediate developments of the Lord's plans.

Verse 43. While in a meditative mood, Elijah put his servant through a little test of faith. For six times he saw nothing when he looked toward the (Mediterranean) Sea. But he was not permitted to give up until he had gone the 7th time.

Verse 44. The bringing of the rain was not much different from the natural appearances, except that it was brought at this particular time by the divine will, and that Elijah was given ability to hear it coming before there were any visible signs of it. The appearance of a cloud the size of a man's hand was due to its distance from the scene. Ahab had already been told to get back to his own headquarters, but

the speed of the coming storm made it necessary to urge him on, which the servant was to do.

Verse 45. A great storm of rain and wind beat down, and Ahab drove his chariot ahead of it to Jezreel, his residence.

Verse 46. Ahab was equipped with a horse-driven chariot, while Elijah had none. The Lord gave him miraculous help, however, so that he traveled on foot faster than Ahab in his chariot, and got to Jezreel first.

1 KINGS 19

Verse 1. Ahab was under the domination of his wife Jezebel. (Ch. 21: 25.) When the occurrences at the brook Kishon were over, he reported them to her.

Verse 2. As would be expected, Jezebel was enraged at the report of the death of her prophets. *Do to me and more also* is an expression found often in the Bible. It means that she was determined to do a certain thing against Elijah, and if she did not, let the gods do something still worse to her. The particular thing she threatened for Elijah was to have him killed, even as he had killed *them*, meaning her prophets.

Verse 3. Jezreel was the residence of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Upon her threat to kill Elijah he fled for his life into a "neutral" territory. The statement that Beer-sheba belonged to Judah is based on the original allotment of the land for Judah. Josh. 19: 1-9 tells us that a redistribution was made of the land, so that at the time of our study Beer-sheba actually was a city of Simeon, which was a part of the kingdom of Israel. The flight of Elijah to this city was because it was really a part of Ahab's dominion, although at a safe distance from his residence, and he wished to leave his servant in the proper country.

Verse 4. Elijah was not afraid to die, but had fled rather than be slain by the wicked Jezebel. Now that he had eluded her, and also since his work was accomplished, which was what he meant by *it is enough*, he wished to leave this world. Many of his fathers or ancestors had been called upon to die for the sake of the Lord's cause, and he felt no more worthy to live than they.

Verses 5, 6. Although the dearth had been broken, there had not been time enough to replenish the shortage

of provisions. Elijah fell into a sleep under the tree; doubtless a state of exhaustion. He was awakened by an angel who had just brought some food. This was an instance of the service of angels according to Heb. 1: 13, 14.

Verse 7. Elijah had not partaken very heavily of the food before lying down again. That caused the angel to return and urge him to eat more in view of the strain soon to be put on his strength. His present location was not suitable for him, and the journey planned for him will be one of many days.

Verse 8. It is about 200 miles from Beer-sheba to Horeb, and God wanted Elijah to go there. In order to do so, the food he had taken in the two meals was made to sustain him for the journey, which took him 40 days and nights.

Verse 9. After reaching the vicinity of Horeb, Elijah was still dejected and took hiding in a cave. God spoke to him and asked what he was doing.

Verse 10. Elijah then made a speech that is often referred to by speakers and writers when discussing apparently hopeless conditions. The prophet was *very jealous* for the same reason God was jealous in Ex. 20: 5. The evils complained of had been done, but the destruction was not total as he thought. Moreover, it was Jezebel who had sought his life, and she was not an Israelite.

Verse 11. God will make a demonstration to show Elijah that noise and wind and physical tremors do not always indicate danger; neither do such appearances necessarily mean the presence of God.

Verse 12. The word *still* is from an original that means "calm." *Small* means about what the word usually denotes. A voice could be of large volume and yet not be boisterous; also, it could be small in volume and yet be rough. So the phrase means that God spoke with a calm voice and one with little volume. This was because a large volume was not needed, such as was heard at Sinai. (Ex. 20: 18-22.)

Verse 13. When Elijah heard the voice of God, he covered his face with his garment. Leaving the mount, he went back to the entrance of the cave. The Lord repeated the question he asked in V. 9.

Verse 14. Elijah gave the same answer he did in V. 10. His sincerity could not be questioned, for he was

isolated from the public so much that he could not see all the conditions. In due time God will enlighten him on the matter, after giving him some instructions for a special service to the kingdoms concerned.

Verse 15. Damascus was the capital of the kingdom of Syria, just north of Israel. God has always been concerned in the affairs of earthly kingdoms, and has taken a hand in the appointment of their rulers. (Dan. 2:21; 4:17.) This verse, then, should be no surprise to us.

Verse 16. This Jehu must be distinguished from the prophet with the same name. (Ch. 16:1.) The anointing of Jehu is ordered here, but he will not become king until 2 Kings 9. *Prophet in thy room* was said because there was a line of national prophets in service after the Israelite nation was established, beginning with Samuel. See Acts 3:24; 13:20. They communicated between God and the people. (Heb. 1:1.)

Verse 17. The motives prompting the actions of Hazael and Jehu may prove to be different, but in each case the will of God will be served, for it will bring punishment upon the idolaters.

Verse 18. Appearances are often misleading. Elijah thought that everyone had gone over to idolatry but him. It was true that most of them had, and doubtless there were but a few in any one place who remained loyal. When all were counted, however, the number was great. It will be well to compare the statement of Jesus as to the number that will be saved. (Matt. 7:13, 14.) When considered in connection with the ones lost, the saved ones will be few. When considered to themselves the number will be great. (Rev. 7:9.) *Kissed* is from a word that Strong defines, "to kiss, literally or figuratively." It is the word for "kiss" in Psa. 2:12. The meaning in this verse is that they had not shown any affection for Baal.

Verse 19. Elisha was not a prophet in his early life, but followed the occupation of a farmer. *With the twelfth* merely means to tell the place he took as driver of the oxen; it was behind the rear pair. Elijah threw his mantle on Elisha as he passed. Smith's Bible Dictionary, basing its conclusions on historical data, says, "he throws over his shoulders the rough mantle—a token at once of investiture with the

prophet's office and of adoption as a son."

Verse 20. Elisha seems to have understood the action. Elijah had passed on in his journey, and Elisha ran to get in hearing distance of him. He wished the privilege of a formal farewell greeting for his parents before proceeding with Elijah. *For what have I done to thee*. The second word is not always a question, but is used also as an exclamation, or as a word to rivet attention on some important subject. Elijah permitted Elisha to return for the farewell party, but cautioned him not to forget what had been done to him with the mantle.

Verse 21. *Instruments of the oxen* were the yoke and whatever was needed in the work. These would be of wood and could be used for fuel. After the feast, to which the people were invited with his father and mother, Elisha left home. From now on he will be an attendant upon Elijah until the latter is taken from the earth.

1 KINGS 20

Verse 1. In Ch. 19:15 we read of the anointing of Hazael as king of Syria. The anointing of a man for a place did not mean that he would take it immediately. In the mean time, Ben-hadad will occupy the throne of Syria. He brought a siege against Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel; his forces included 32 kings. These were inferior rulers over small territories, and were confederate with Ben-hadad.

Verses 2, 3. From the camp of the besiegers the king of Syria sent messengers to the inside of the city. The demand was for Ahab to turn over his personal effects, including his wives and servants, for the use of the Syrian power.

Verse 4. It is difficult to understand why Ahab agreed to so disgraceful a demand. The clearest suggestion would be on the popular saying, "of two evils, choose the less." By turning over the things and persons demanded, the siege might be lifted and thus a still greater humiliation would be averted.

Verses 5, 6. The insincerity of Ben-hadad was exposed in his next demand. In the first instance, Ahab was left free to make the selection of things and persons to be turned over. The next time he was told that Ben-hadad's servants would seize, upon search, *whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes*,

which meant the things regarded as most desirable. This demand not only would deprive Ahab of his belongings, but would admit the enemy into the privacy of the city and homes.

Verses 7, 8. The connection shows that Ahab reported both demands to his elders, although this paragraph mentions only the first. The advice of the elders was that the second demand of Ben-hadad be denied.

Verse 9. *My lord the king* was said in view of Ahab's agreeing to the first demand of the king of Syria. That agreement acknowledged Ben-hadad as his lord, to the extent that he had consented to turn over the things and persons demanded.

Verse 10. This was a virtual declaration of war. It also was a boastful threat based on numbers. It meant that if each grain of dust in Samaria were turned into a soldier, Ahab would not have as many as would be with Ben-hadad.

Verse 11. Ahab understood the boast, as his reply indicates. Girding on the harness means the putting on of the armor; and that would be done before any fighting had been done. Ahab's significant remark was to the effect that a boast before the battle might prove to be in vain, for it would not be known then who was going to be the winner. But the man who would be taking his armor off would have been through the battle, and in a position to boast.

Verse 12. The reply was delivered to Ben-hadad while he was drinking in the tents. It aroused him and he ordered his men to prepare for action.

Verse 13. God spoke to Ahab by the prophet. (Heb. 1:1.) Although he was a wicked man, he was the king of Israel and was being opposed by a foreign army. Moreover, the events soon to follow were to teach him a lesson, and impress him with a fact of which he seemed to have slight appreciation, namely, that it was the Lord doing things.

Verse 14. Upon inquiry, Ahab was told that the forces to lead the charge were the 232 princes. The battle was to be commanded by him.

Verse 15. The princes were leading men of the various provinces. After them were to come the masses of the people, 7,000 in number.

Verses 16, 17. Ben-hadad with his 32 subordinate kings was relaxing and feasting in the pavilions or tents.

Something caught his attention, and he sent messengers to learn of the situation. They returned and told their master that some men had come out from Samaria. They were the 232 princes under Ahab, who had taken the lead under orders from their king.

Verse 18. Ben-hadad did not know the purpose of the men in coming out; he did not care to take any risk, and ordered his forces to capture them regardless.

Verses 19-21. This paragraph pertains to Ahab's 232 princes. They defeated the plans of Ben-hadad stated in the preceding paragraph. Instead of being "taken alive," each of them took hold of a Syrian and slew him; that frightened the others who fled. They were pursued, however, and great numbers of them were slain. Ben-hadad and some others with horses, escaped. Other horses and chariots (their drivers) were slain by the king of Israel. This fulfilled the prediction of V. 13.

Verse 22. The Mosaic system was both religious and secular. That was the reason God's people were permitted to engage in defensive warfare. The inspired prophets, therefore, would properly be used when their services were needed. (Heb. 1:1.) The king of Syria was so weakened by the defeat inflicted on him that he was not able to renew the war at once. But the prophet told Ahab to reinforce his army, for the Syrians would renew the war at the return of the year, which meant the next year.

Verse 23. See the comments at Ch. 18: 27 as to the belief in the personal characteristics of heathen gods. The Syrians considered the Israelites as just another nation like themselves, with their own special gods. As a balm for their defeat, they thought of the explanation about the supposed advantage of the hills as a place for combat. The servants of Ben-hadad suggested this idea to him as a piece of advice.

Verse 24. They further advised him to replace the kings with captains. Smith's Bible Dictionary says of *king*, "In the Bible the word does not necessarily imply great power or great extent of country. Many persons are called kings whom we should rather call chiefs or leaders." The word *captain* is more of a military term; in the next attempt against the Israelites, therefore, it was thought that

the captains would be more efficient than the kings.

Verse 25. The servants further advised Ben-hadad to replace the army in full for all that had been lost in the first battle. With all the equipment, and by staking the battle in the plains, they assured their master of success. He believed them and planned on carrying out their counsel.

Verse 26. As the prophet had warned, Ben-hadad returned the next year to fight against Israel. *Numbered* means he mustered his men in army units. The Aphek of this verse was a city on the road leading from Syria to Israel.

Verse 27. The Israelites met the Syrians in the vicinity of Aphek and pitched their camp. *Two little flocks of kids* is an expression of comparison with the hordes of the Syrians. Great numbers, however, do not always count for success.

Verse 28. *Man of God* is a term used in the sense of an inspired prophet; such was the one who promised success to Israel in V. 13. The Lord wished his people to win the battle mainly because of the disrespectful remarks about him. The Syrians spoke of him in the same way they did of their gods; that he was limited by such considerations as the hills. These idolaters were to be given such a defeat they would be convinced they were dealing with the self-Existent, universal Being, not one confined to the hills nor to any particular spot in the universe.

Verse 29. Both armies lay in sight of each other for seven days and nights before the action. On the seventh day they joined battle and the Syrians lost 100,000.

Verse 30. Seeing the pitched battle was lost, the Syrians fled towards the city of Aphek nearby. There a further disaster befell them; a wall fell, killing 27,000 more. The king was not hit by the wall, and he sought hiding in a chamber that was on the inside of another chamber.

Verse 31. The Syrians realized their utter defeat, and that they must take whatever treatment the victors saw fit to inflict. In their extremity they were concerned most for their king, and advised throwing themselves upon the mercy of the Israelites. Sackcloth was used in times of great sorrow or extremity in the same way that crepe has been worn in modern times. The ropes entwined about the head ac-

knowledgeed they were trapped and in grief.

Verse 32. The suggestions of the servants were carried out and they appealed to Ahab for the life of their king. Their plea met with a favorable reception; the king of Israel was even surprised, pleasantly, that Ben-hadad was yet alive. *Brother* is from ACH and Strong defines it, "a primitive word; a brother (used in the widest sense of literal relationship and figurative affinity or resemblance)." Ahab meant to grant the king of Syria his freedom; not only that, but to place him on friendly terms as a neighboring ruler. This gracious consideration was granted Ben-hadad, notwithstanding the Syrians had twice jeopardized the Israelite nation, and had insulted their God by comparing him to their heathen deities.

Verse 33. The servants of Ben-hadad did not intend to miss the least favorable word that might come from Ahab. When he used the term *brother*, they quickly grasped it and repeated it in recognition of the goodwill. Upon this overture they were bidden to bring Ben-hadad into the presence of Ahab, who, when he came, was invited to come up into the chariot occupied by the king of Israel.

Verse 34. Ahab not only agreed to let Ben-hadad go free, in peace, but made a covenant with him. It involved exchanges between the two nations that implied an equality of worthiness between them. Since Syria was a heathen country, and had held the God of Israel in contempt, this arrangement made by Ahab was displeasing to the Lord.

Verse 35. At various times inspired men have been called upon to go through certain physical performances as a form of predictions. Some of such instances will be cited. The torn garment, 1 Ki. 11: 29-31; The wounding of the prophet, present case; the cohabiting with the wife, Isa. 8: 3; wearing a girdle, Jer. 13: 1-7; eating of filth, Ezk. 4: 12, 13; cutting the hair, Ezk. 5: 1-4; moving of household goods, Ezk. 12: 3-7; eating a book, Rev. 10: 8-11. We are not told specifically why all this was done; but it was in line with the statement of Paul in Heb. 1: 1. It might be suggested that visible exhibitions of divine predictions are sometimes impressive where the simple wording is not. All that we know of the present instance is, the prophet was preparing for a

protest against what Ahab had done in releasing Ben-hadad. *Sons of the prophets* means the men who were pupils of the older ones. In the word of the Lord means he had orders from the Lord to have himself wounded. No explanation was given as to why the neighbor was told to smite the other. While it would be natural to shrink from the deed, the fact that it was a prophet who gave the command should have influenced him.

Verse 36. An impostor could make a prediction; only when it was fulfilled would his authority be proved. The prediction was not general; it specified the manner and the time when the neighbor would be slain. Another thing proved is, when an inspired man gives a command, it is the same as if the Lord gave it direct; and the disobedience is counted as disobedience against God.

Verse 37. The next man obeyed the request to smite the prophet; the stroke wounded him. The original word is defined, "to split." Evidently, the skin was opened but no serious injury was caused; however, it would be sufficient to attract attention.

Verse 38. There could have been two purposes for the disguise. Ashes would indicate a condition of distress and thus cause the passers-by to be attentive. Another was to hide his identity until he got his message across to the king while he was still unprejudiced. See 2 Sam. 12: 1-7 for a similar plan.

Verse 39. The ruse worked and the king's attention was gained. While still behind the disguise he told what proved to be a parable, based on a supposed case. There was nothing questionable about the idea of being charged with a prisoner, since he had gone into the midst of the battle, and was thereby made a combatant and liable for any kind of military duty.

Verse 40. Ahab still thought he was talking with a soldier who had neglected his duty. By his own confession he was liable for the punishment threatened by the superior. When the king expressed this conclusion his remark was in the same class as David's "shall surely die" 2 Sam. 12: 6.

Verse 41. The disguise was then removed and Ahab recognized the speaker as one of the prophets, and thus as an inspired man.

Verses 42, 43. The speech the prophet made corresponds with Samuel's "thou

art the man" in 2 Sam. 12: 7. The force of the lesson was made plain to Ahab while his mind was unprejudiced. After seeing it, and also being made aware of the authority of the speaker, he could say nothing against it. All he could do was to go home with a heavy heart. The prediction was fulfilled in Ch. 22: 34, 35.

1 KINGS 21

Verse 1. A Jezreelite was a citizen of Jezreel regardless of race. This man had a vineyard or garden, as such places were known also by that name. It lay near the palace of Ahab and would naturally be desirable to him because of its nearness to him.

Verse 2. Ahab was not thinking of commercial value or profit in his request. He offered to trade Naboth a better one for it, which would exclude the idea of profit, or to give him its worth in cash.

Verse 3. Naboth made no objection from the standpoint of the commercial value. He had sentimental reasons for retaining the garden, and rejected Ahab's request in memory of his ancestors, from whom he had inherited the property.

Verse 4. Ahab was so disappointed that he went into his house and sulked on his bed.

Verses 5, 6. Jezebel asked her husband for an explanation of his strange actions, and he related his disappointment at the hand of Naboth.

Verse 7. *Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?* This statement represents the sentiment prevailing in the minds of many persons in authority. Private property and rights mean nothing to them. To govern for the good of all concerned is not their aim; they assume the privilege of taking to themselves whatsoever they wish.

Verse 8. The abuse of power indicated in the preceding verse shows up in this. Jezebel forged the name of her husband, and the seal or stamp from his signet ring would be genuine, though used unlawfully. The effect, however, would be to mislead them into thinking the signature was genuine.

Verse 9. Regardless of what Jezebel would write in the letters, with the king's name and seal attached, it would be effective with the people. Formal facts were not required by the law of Moses, but were recognized and encouraged; they were also regulated when voluntarily observed. *On high*

means in the front rank or prominent place.

Verse 10. *Sons of Belial*. The last word is a descriptive one, not a proper name. It means an extremely wicked person. The first is from an original with wide extent of meaning, such as subject or associate. The whole term means persons associated with the most vile and wicked men who have no regard for the truth. *Set two men* means to place them near Naboth so as to be witnesses against him. Being the kind of men described, they would not hesitate to lie against the victim of Jezebel. The law required that one who blasphemed the Lord should be stoned. (Lev. 24: 16.) This wicked woman had this in mind when she gave these awful orders.

Verses 11-14. This paragraph reports the carrying out of Jezebel's orders, which have just been explained. The elders and nobles were "on the spot" since the strange orders were backed up by the name and seal of the king. Under such pressure they did as they were bidden, and Naboth was put to death.

Verses 15, 16. This whole proceeding was prompted more by the wickedness of Jezebel, than by her desire for the property. To have merely confiscated it directly would surely be as easy as to get it indirectly through murder. It is an instance where a wicked character not only plotted murder and robbery, but was low enough to do so under the guise of the Lord's name. Ahab, like a cowardly truckler, thought to enrich himself through the fiendishness of his wife. (2 Ki. 9: 25, 26.)

Verses 17, 18. Again the Lord used a prophet to communicate his word. (Heb. 1: 1.) Ahab had gone into the garden of Naboth and Elijah was told to meet him there.

Verse 19. The question Elijah asked Ahab was really an accusation of a two-fold crime; murder and seizure of another's property. It might be said that Ahab did not cause the death of Naboth. He did not directly cause it, but was responsible in the case. He should have been more careful of his official seals; especially when he must have known of the wickedness of his wife. Moreover, after he learned of the criminal tragedy, he should have refused to profit by it. It is as bad to take enjoyment out of another's sinful acts, as it is to commit them. See Rom. 1: 32. The prediction about the

blood of Ahab was fulfilled in Ch. 22: 38.

Verse 20. *Hast thou found me* is worded by Moffatt's version, "So you have found me out, O my enemy?" I believe this rendering is correct. It was an admission, mixed with a rather defiant resignation, that Elijah had again "caught up" with him. The use of "enemy" harks back to the previous contact with him. (Ch. 18.) One definition for *sold* is "surrender." Ahab had surrendered himself to the will of his vicious wife, with the understanding that she would require him to work evil.

Verse 21. See comments at 1 Sam. 25: 22 for the explanation of the obsolete word on the bodily discharges. If some of Ahab's posterity should escape the sword in active battle and be left alive in the city, God would even destroy them.

Verse 22. Ahab's conduct was likened to two other wicked men. Because of such likeness, his fate was to be like theirs. A factor in the case of Ahab that was also in the life of Jeroboam, was the sin in leading the nation after them.

Verse 23. Honorable burial has always been something to be desired by people of all classes. To be deprived of it at all was a misfortune. To have the body mangled and devoured by vicious animals, and especially by the dogs, was the extremity of humiliation. This was predicted of Jezebel and fulfilled in 2 Ki. 9: 33-36.

Verse 24. Ahab's body was to be given royal burial in the capital city of his kingdom. But his posterity was to suffer the same fate as Jezebel.

Verse 25. Ahab was not excused in his wickedness because of his wife; the subject is mentioned to explain why his life was worse than it would have been had it not been for her evil influence over him.

Verse 26. The *Amorites* were a distinct people and very evil. The name, however, came to be used as a symbol of wicked nations in general.

Verse 27. See the comments at verse 25. The actions of Ahab described in this place justifies those comments. Jezebel was never shown to have a penitent moment, while Ahab was. *Went softly* means he went gently or submissively. His arrogance was gone and he gave outward indications of repentance.

Verses 28, 29. The penitence of Ahab could not affect the evils predicted to come on his posterity. As a consideration, however, for his humility, he was to be spared the pain of seeing the calamity come.

1 KINGS 22

Verse 1. Ahab had released Benhadad (Ch. 20: 34), but he had such a close call that no attempt was made to make war with Israel for three years.

Verse 2. For some unrevealed reason, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah called on Ahab.

Verse 3. The presence of Jehoshaphat seemed to encourage Ahab to make a military venture, to repossess the city of Ramoth, which was located in Gilead, a district east of the Jordan. He made a proposition to that effect to his servants.

Verse 4. Ahab wished to have Jehoshaphat as an ally in the proposed attack on Ramoth, and asked him if he would go. The last sentence of the verse was Jehoshaphat's way of saying that they would merge their forces and use them as the forces of one man.

Verse 5. Jehoshaphat is classed among the good kings of Judah, although the project he agreed to with Ahab was ill-advised. However, his respect for God made him unwilling to make the venture without some instructions, and the method of obtaining such in those days was through the prophets. (Heb. 1: 1.)

Verses 6, 7. Ahab doubtless understood that the prophets were the means of hearing from the Lord. When Jehoshaphat asked him to enquire at the word of the Lord, he called for them. Prophets, like other teachers, sometimes give instructions they think will be relished by their hearers, whether such instructions are correct or not. Knowing such a fact, Jehoshaphat felt some misgiving at the advice of these 400 prophets, who were likely student prophets. So he asked for another prophet besides these.

Verse 8. It is significant that 400 prophets were acceptable to Ahab, while the one was not. The explanation is in the thoughts expressed in the preceding paragraph. When people do not want to hear unpleasant truth, they dislike the man who might give them such. Ahab made a rash statement about Micaiah and Jehoshaphat gave him a mild rebuke for it. But

he did not consent to discard the calling of the prophet.

Verse 9. On Jehoshaphat's insistence, Ahab sent an officer to bring Micaiah.

Verse 10. *Void* means an open, level place near the gate of the city. Two kings were to give a hearing as royal personages. As they could not each be on his own proper throne, they provided a temporary one for each, in a place accessible for the group to be present. The prophets referred to were the 400 we read about in V. 6.

Verses 11, 12. When God needs to have some unfavorable work done, he uses an agency qualified for that purpose. In the present instance it was decided that Ahab be deceived, and the instruments by which it was to be done were the lying prophets. They were specifically qualified for such a work as we will see later in the chapter. The 400 prophets had a chief spokesman, named Zedekiah. He was led to do some acting (see comments at Ch. 20: 35) to impress Ahab, and a bright prospect was held out for the subjection of Syria. All the rest of the 400 were "yes men" and also encouraged Ahab to go on with the expedition against Syria.

Verses 13, 14. The messenger sent after Micaiah tried to prejudice him to join with the other prophets in encouraging the king to go on with his plans. He was told that what the Lord directed him to say was what they would hear.

Verse 15. We cannot hear the voice of Micaiah, and thus do not know the irony manifested in it. The circumstances, however, show that Ahab understood it as such.

Verse 16. *Adjure* means to swear, and Ahab meant to charge Micaiah to tell the truth, as if he were under oath.

Verse 17. The prophet abandoned his irony and spoke seriously. The illustration he used about the sheep without a shepherd was specific as to the fate of Ahab, for he was destined to be taken from his people. It will be fulfilled in this chapter.

Verse 18. This speech showed that Ahab understood the indirect prophecy of Micaiah to have reference to him; it also showed that he really anticipated such a prediction. It is a curious trait of the human mind to "put far the evil day" by trying to avoid hearing what is known to be the unpleasant news awaiting, just as if ignorance of

its actual form of speech would prevent its coming.

Verse 19. Micaiah is the speaker, reporting the vision he saw in connection with the present situation. *Host of heaven* means the soldiers in the services of heaven; specifically the angels. They were "standing by" in readiness for the Lord's services.

Verse 20. *Persuade* is from a word that is also defined "delude." The hard question is, why would the Lord be a party to deception? He has used agencies at various times to accomplish the results necessary to his plans. Some of the cases included pleasant, others unpleasant, experiences for the victims or recipients. When such results were to be brought about, the Lord called and qualified the agencies to be used. A few instances of these special services will be cited. Pharaoh oppressed the Israelites. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took the people into captivity. Cyrus freed the Israelites and helped reconstruct their city and temple. Judas betrayed Christ and thus helped in his crucifixion. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and dissolved the national unity of the Jews. It should be noted that in no one of these cases was the agency made better or worse. When God was through with that agency, he left it in exactly the same status it had when brought into that service. We should not be confused, therefore, by these strange performances of the Lord. Ahab is going to be misled by the Lord, but it will not affect his character. He has been a wicked man and will be left a wicked man. God called for volunteers among the host to go and delude Ahab.

Verse 21. *Came forth a spirit* does not mean the others who had spoken were not spirits. Heb. 1:14 says that the angels are spirits and no distinction is made. But our verse means that after the indefinite manner in which the other angels had spoken, at last came one offering to make a definite proposition.

Verse 22. This spirit was told to reveal his plan. He proposed to go into the world and inspire the 400 prophets to give a misleading prediction. Let the reader again carefully consider the comments on V. 20. The plan was approved by the Lord.

Verse 23. Having related the vision he saw and hearing what was said, Micaiah connected it with the occasion then being staged. It was his explana-

tion of the difference between the prediction of the 400, and the one made when Ahab placed him on oath.

Verse 24. Micaiah was absent when Zedekiah made the favorable, but false prediction for Ahab. He evidently knew of the program planned among the heavenly host, which was for a spirit to go from the Lord into the mind of the false prophet. Now when he heard Micaiah first make the same kind of false prediction that he had (though in irony on the part of Micaiah), then change it, after describing the scene in heaven—hearing all this speech, Zedekiah realized that the same (lying) spirit had spoken to each; first to him, then to Micaiah. That is what prompted the question he asked of Micaiah. *Which way* was about the same as if he sneeringly had asked, "How come the spirit of the Lord to go from me to thee?"

Verse 25. Zedekiah does not again appear in history, so we cannot cite the fulfillment of this humiliating prediction. Knowing, however, that the question was asked more from jesting curiosity than sincere interest, Micaiah predicted that the false prophet would some day try to hide from God. When that time comes, he will learn by humiliating experience, how the Spirit of God works when an evil man is sought.

Verses 26, 27. See the comments at V. 8, considering them in the light of this. *Bread and water of affliction* means the coarse fare served to prisoners. Ahab gave these orders in retaliation for the unfavorable prediction Micaiah had just made. *Until I come in peace* was a defiant way of saying, "You have predicted my defeat; but I will return in peace finally, and you will have to be a prisoner, and live on prisoner's rations until I do return."

Verse 28. Micaiah staked his reputation as a true prophet on the outcome of the venture that Ahab was about to make. He called attention of the people to it, so that when the affair was ended, they would remember the word spoken.

Verses 29, 30. The two allies prepared to go up to battle. Let it be borne in mind that the king of Syria did not know he was to meet the king of Judah. Ahab was thinking of that, and planned to elude the Syrian weapons by not appearing in the attire of a king. Jehoshaphat would be the only

one in such robes and hence would be the target for the foe. If this scheme could be carried out, Ahab hoped to frustrate the prediction of Micalah and so be able to return in peace, as he had boasted.

Verse 31. To take the king is about the same as taking the army. The Syrian king, thinking only of the king of Israel, gave the orders recorded in this verse.

Verse 32. The charioteers were not personally acquainted with the Israelite kings. Seeing one man in the royal robes, it was natural to conclude that he was the man they wanted, and were about to make their attack on Jehoshaphat, who made an outcry. Ordinarily that would not have availed to ward off the attack. 2 Chr. 18: 31 says "the Lord helped him," which accounts for his escape.

Verse 33. The Lord helped Jehoshaphat by revealing to the Syrian soldiers that he was not the man they wanted, which caused them to turn away.

Verse 34. *Venture* commonly means something uncertain; that the man just shot the arrow in a haphazard manner, that it was shot without any regard for its mark. The original will not allow that conclusion; it is defined "completeness." The statement means that the pulling of the bow and the aim of the arrow was a soldierly act and intended to find one of the men in the other army. What the "certain man" did not know was that he was actually directing his arrow toward the king of Israel. That is where the Lord again took a hand, by guiding the arrow so it would find the man destined to fall, and fulfill the prediction made by Micalah. The *harness* means the armor that Ahab wore under his ordinary clothing. The arrow found an opening in this armor and entered into his body, making a fatal wound. The marginal rendering is "made sick." It means that Ahab realized he was mortally wounded, and wanted to be taken to the rear.

Verse 35. The request of Ahab was not granted. He was held up by assistants through the day while the battle raged. His wound was bleeding all the while and covered the bottom of the chariot. In the evening he died, fulfilling Ch. 20: 42.

Verse 36. The death of the king discouraged his army and they dispersed.

Verse 37. In respect for the dignity

of his position, Ahab was buried in the capital city of his kingdom.

Verse 38. A servant washed the chariot *in the pool*. The first word is rendered "at" by Moffatt, and "by" in the Revised Version. That is a clearer form, and agrees with the idea of the blood's running out into a place where the dogs could reach it. When they licked up this blood they fulfilled Ch. 21: 19.

Verse 39. The mention of an ivory house would give a glimpse at the luxury indulged in by Ahab. For *chronicles* see comments at Ch. 14: 19.

Verse 40. *Slept* is explained at Ch. 2: 10. The successor to Ahab is named in connection with his death, but nothing further here. See comments at Ch. 12: 17.

Verse 41. Going back a number of years, to the 4th year of Ahab (whose death has just been reported), the writer takes up the reign of Jehoshaphat. We have already heard a considerable amount about him, but it was in connection with the reign of Ahab, king of Israel. Again, let the reader consult Ch. 12: 17. Now we will read about the conclusion of his own reign.

Verse 42. Jerusalem is generally named as the place where the kings of Judah reigned. That city was the capital of the two-tribe kingdom is the reason. *Mother's* name is explained at Ch. 14: 21.

Verse 43. Jehoshaphat was one of the good kings of Judah. The fairness of the Scriptures in reporting the conduct of God's people is seen in that the weaknesses of the best of them are pointed out. One of those weaknesses was the use of the *high places*. However, that was not the most grievous of the faults. See the comments at Ch. 3: 2 for explanation of these places of sacrifices.

Verse 44. Peace is desirable and required by the Lord when it can be obtained properly. Peace through improper association, however, was not sanctioned by Him. 2 Chr. 18: 1, 19: 1 indicates the Lord was not pleased with the friendship of Jehoshaphat for Ahab. That was not because the latter was the king of Israel, for God had placed his blessing on that kingdom as a whole. (Ch. 12: 24.) The objection to this affinity was because Ahab was a wicked man and not worthy the friendship of a good one.

Verse 45. See Ch. 14: 19 for comments on *chronicles*.

Verse 46. The *sodomites* are described at Ch. 14: 24.

Verses 47-49. This paragraph is parenthetical in thought, specifying some of the "acts" of Jehoshaphat. *No king in Edom* means no man there was ruling in his own right. 2 Sam. 8: 14 shows the subjection of the land of Edom to the children of Israel. This *deputy* was appointed by Jehoshaphat, and served in the enterprise connected with the plan to go after the gold, which failed. A son of Ahab had offered to furnish servants to go on the expedition, but the offer was refused. We are not told whether that fact had anything to do with the failure of the venture, or not.

Verse 50. Chronologically, this verse belongs immediately after V. 46. *Slept* is explained at Ch. 2: 10. The successor to Jehoshaphat is named in connection with his death, which is the usual form of report. The incidents of Jehoram's own reign, however, will not begin until several chapters in the next book have been reached.

Verse 51. The reign of Ahab's son is dated from a certain year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. See Ch. 12: 17 for comments on this point.

Verses 52, 53. These verses are concise and sum up the accounting for the wicked reign of this son of Ahab. It was because he followed in the counsel of his parents, both of whom were wicked, and of Jeroboam the first king of Israel. Many of the personal acts of Ahaziah are recorded in the book of 2 Kings which will immediately follow.

2 KINGS 1

Verse 1. David had brought the Moabites under tribute to the children of Israel. (2 Sam. 8: 2.) They continued in that relation until after the death of Ahab, at which time they rebelled and made war. This verse barely introduces the subject of the situation, then the writer drops it to insert certain other happenings among noted individuals. It will be taken up again at Ch. 3: 4, 5.

Verse 2. The injury that Ahaziah received by his fall was very severe. It was not immediately fatal, however, and the outcome was uncertain. In other words, the condition was apparently such that superhuman information was thought necessary to deter-

mine it. Baal was the general name of an idolatrous deity, and zebub was a special one located at Ekron, a Philistine city. To this place the wounded man ordered his messengers to go for the information on his case.

Verse 3. Had there been no man of God available, it would still have been an insult to God for one of his professed servants to recognize an idol god. The prophet Elijah was told by the angel to intercept the messengers of Ahaziah. *Is it not because*, etc., is in the form of a question. The meaning of it is an accusation of ignoring the true God of Israel, which was a deep offense to Him.

Verse 4. We do not know whether Ahaziah's injury was necessarily fatal; it might have been. But in whatever case the victim was involved, the outcome was as yet hidden from his knowledge. The information was thus given him by the prophet that he would die.

Verses 5, 6. The early return of his messengers caused Ahaziah to ask why. They gave a true account of their meeting with a man.

Verses 7, 8. *An hairy man* does not mean merely that he had a thick growth of hair, but the lexicon describes it as meaning it was in a ruffled and unkempt condition. Being apart from society much of the time, Elijah took this habit. Ahaziah had evidently seen him and recognized the description.

Verse 9. The king had previously known of Elijah's authority, else he would not have sent to him for assistance in this predicament of his. But the whole procedure indicated he appealed to the true God as a last resort only. We are not told just what form of speech the captain had been instructed to use in his request. He used the wrong one, however, as we can see; one of arrogance instead of humility. The words *man of God* acknowledge Elijah to be a servant of the true God, hence there was no excuse for the disrespectful demand expressed. *Come down* was a dictatorial expression, which did not recognize their master as being the one in need of aid, but rather, that Elijah was the one to be benefited by the occasion. The information had already been given Ahaziah from Elijah that the injury was to end fatally. It means, therefore, that Ahaziah thought to influence the prophet to reverse the decision and cause his recovery.