

Solomon and Christ

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"—Matt. 6:28-30.

WE know that Solomon was one of David's younger sons, born in Jerusalem, and that Bathsheba was his mother. He was anointed king at his father's command by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, to ensure his succession when Adonijah conspired with Joab, the captain of the host, and Abiathar the priest, to proclaim himself king.

For a short time, Solomon reigned jointly with David, during which time his father instructed him regarding the building of the Temple, and about the treatment of his enemies. Upon his father's death, he was again anointed king, as we read in 1 Chr. 29—

"They made Solomon the son of David king the second time and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest.

"So, Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord as king, instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.

"And all the princes and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of King David, submitted themselves unto Solomon, the king.

"And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel" (vs. 22-25).

Shortly after his anointing, he was compelled to deal, one by one, with his father's enemies. Worldly writers are loud in their condemnation of his judgments upon them. But had these enemies behaved wisely, and adhered to their agreements, they would have continued to live under the kingship of Solomon. They brought on themselves their own just punishment. It was Solomon's duty to enforce God's law and punish wickedness.

Shimei, the last of the men who conspired against David, lived up to his oath for 3 years before he disobeyed, and was put to death. So, the Lord gave Solomon rest from all his enemies.

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SOME time during this period, Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. It is evident that he feared God, and desired to please Him.

It was at Gibeon that the gift of great wisdom was bestowed on him (2 Chr. 1:11)—

"And God said to Solomon, because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, nor honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life;

"But hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king:

"Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

Solomon's wisdom should not be confused with the gift of the Holy Spirit that was given to prophets and other worthy men. The Holy Spirit is given to perform some definite work: in the case of prophets, it was to exhort, predict the future, or work miracles.

His wisdom, however, was God-given, and excelled the wisdom of the east country, and of the Egyptians. For he was wiser than all men; and his fame was in all nations round about.

In the 4th year of his reign, he started to build the Temple of God. The design of the building, however, was not left to Solomon's own judgment. The pattern for it had already been given to David through the Spirit of God, as we learn from I Chron. 28:11-18.

Here are enumerated the various buildings connected with the Temple, as well as the courses of the priests and the Levites in the service of the House of the Lord—

"All this, said David, the Lord made me to understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (v. 19).

The work took seven years to complete. All the chiselling of the stones, the cutting of the wood, the casting of the metals, and the fabrication of the furnishings for the Lord's House were done elsewhere, as in Lebanon and in the plain of Jordan, so that the house—

"When it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither.
"So, there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building."

In this, the type of the eternal spiritual House is clear, beautiful, and solemnly impressive. All will be ready beforehand, or it will not be used. The unwise virgins will seek in vain for oil for their lamps too late.

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SOLOMON'S prayer at the dedication of the Temple is very beautiful; and shows an understanding of the ways of God. He covered every type of circumstance that could befall the people of Israel—drought, pestilence, plagues of locusts, war and captivity—and asked God to hear their prayer, whatever their position, and have mercy upon them.

YET HE HIMSELF FAILED TO FOLLOW GOD'S LAW.

We cannot know the full reason for his failure, but it would seem that he began to rely more upon his own wisdom, than on the law of the Lord. He applied his knowledge to earthly things, and to the affairs of his kingdom.

He transgressed by making an alliance with Egypt, and by marrying Pharaoh's daughter. Against a direct command to refrain from multiplying horses, Solomon traded with Egypt until he had 40,000 stalls for horses and 1400 chariots.

He enlarged his boundaries from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates, and exacted tribute at the rate of 666 talents of gold per year. A rough estimate at our present rate of exchange is 60 million dollars. From Ophir came another 450 talents, or about 35-millions.

The king's navy visited Tarshish once in three years, bringing back gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

Visiting kings brought presents annually, of silver, gold, raiment, harness, armour, spices, horses, and mules. The Queen of Sheba offered precious stones, spices, and gold in abundance.

Wealth poured into Jerusalem until silver was as common as stones; and cedar trees as the sycamores in the vale for abundance.

Solomon's attention turned to great works. He built magnificent houses—his own palace had taken 13 years to complete. His ivory throne was unrivalled. He planted vineyards, gardens, and orchards. He made pools of water to irrigate them. He surrounded himself with every luxury, and—

"Whatsoever his eyes desired, he kept not from them . . . He withheld not his heart from any joy."

He spake 3000 proverbs, and 1005 songs. He talked of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He spake also of beasts, birds, creeping things, and of fish. Of all his writings, we possess only the Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes; but what a wealth of instruction they contain!

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SOLOMON'S glory tarnished. He married hundreds of wives from the surrounding nations, and these were idolaters. Instead of Solomon teaching **them** the way of Truth, they turned **his heart** from God—

"Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David, his father."

"For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom, of the Ammonites;

"And built high places for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab in the hill that is before Jerusalem;

"And for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon."

These religions were similar—they were all ruled by a corrupt priesthood, who offered human sacrifices. They worshipped the dead and offered them drink offerings. Their rituals were corrupt and debasing. These altars that Solomon built, were used throughout 11 successive generations, and were finally destroyed by king Josiah. What a long train of evil he set in motion and gave the prestige and glory of his name to!

God's anger was kindled against Solomon for these sins, so that He determined to rend the kingdom from him and give it to his servant. He also stirred up Solomon's enemies, the kings of Edom and Syria, to rebellion, so that his peaceful reign ended in troubled times.

Solomon reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. Upon his death, his son Rehoboam ascended the throne; but when the people asked relief from the heavy burden of taxation that Solomon had put upon them, he gave them a misguided answer, and threatened to increase their load.

They immediately rebelled. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Solomon's servant, took possession of the 10 tribes; and only Judah and Benjamin were left to perpetuate the kingdom of David, of which God had said that—

"David would never lack a man to sit upon his throne for ever."

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Between our first and third readings (1 Chron. and John) there is a time period of 28 generations (Matt. 1:17).

As we turn our attention to Jesus, we learn that he, too, was descended from David—but not through Solomon. The genealogy of Mary, his mother (Luke 3), points out (v. 31) that Christ was born in the line of Nathan, son of David.

God arranged matters so that Joseph, who later became Mary's husband, was also descended from David, through Solomon (Matt. 1:7, 16).

Any close examination of Christ's descent would then show conclusively that he was the son of David.

But here a parallel between Solomon and Jesus ceases, and a contrast begins: for while Solomon was born in Jerusalem and brought up in the luxury of the king's palace, Jesus was born into poor circumstances in the town of Bethlehem, the birthplace of David, as had been foretold by the prophet.

Though Jesus was born in a manger, God did not allow his birth to go unnoticed. Angels appeared to shepherds, proclaiming the birth of the Saviour in the city of David, and they hastened to see him.

Wise men followed a star from the east and came to see "Him who had been born King of the Jews."

When Jesus was taken into the Temple to fulfil the Law of Moses, the Holy Spirit rested upon Simeon, a devout man, who proclaimed him to be "the Lord's salvation prepared before the face of all people."

The prophetess Anna, likewise gave thanks unto God that she had seen "Him who would bring redemption to Jerusalem."

Later, when Herod realized that the wise men had not returned to tell him where the king of Israel had been born, he ordered the death of all children under 2 years of age, as had been foretold by Jeremiah. Jesus escaped, because God had warned Joseph to take him down into Egypt to sojourn; thereby fulfilling the prophecy which said—

"Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

Upon the death of Herod, Joseph returned to Nazareth; and we next hear of Jesus as a twelve-year-old, sitting in the temple among the doctors of the Law, both hearing them, and asking them questions. All who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. So, Jesus—

"Increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man."
—until the time came for him to be revealed to Israel.

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JESUS was about 30 years of age when he was baptized by John in the river Jordan. The Spirit of God descended upon him, and God pronounced from heaven—

"Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Holy Spirit remained upon Jesus as he began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

We note that there is never any mention of claiming the throne of David. On the other hand, it is clear that Jesus dwelt as a stranger and pilgrim in the earth: sleeping and eating wherever he was invited to stay. On one occasion he said—

"Foxes have holes; and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

What a contrast with the mighty Solomon, who built magnificent houses, and indulged his every whim!

During the next 3 years, Jesus was never idle; for he taught the people by parable and in plain speech, the doctrine of God. His teaching was accompanied by miracles. He cleansed the lepers; opened the eyes of the blind; made the lame to walk; the dumb to speak; and the deaf to hear. Several times he raised the dead. He fed multitudes.

So, his fame spread throughout the land; and the people followed him. Discussions arose as to whether this man was really Christ. In the midst of this controversy, Jesus made his position clear, declaring—

"Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them"

(Matt. 13:17).

And in Matt. 12:42 he said—

"The Queen of the South came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

Add to these quotations, the numerous verses in John, where Jesus plainly states—

"I came, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

"I do always those things that please my Father."

"The words that I speak, I speak not of myself; the Father which dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

And to the woman of Samaria, when she spoke of the Messiah (John 4:25-26)—

"I that speak to thee am he."

Finally, even his enemies had to admit that—

"NEVER man spake like this man."

—for he taught them as one that had authority.

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THOUGH God had stirred up adversaries against Solomon in the last years of his reign, they did no bodily harm to him, and Solomon died in a good old age.

In contrast, his enemies prevailed against Jesus at the age of 33, and he died the horrible death of crucifixion. His experience at that time is best summed up in Isa. 53—

"He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

"He was oppressed, and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

"He was taken from prison, and from judgment; he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was he stricken.

"He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

"He poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors."

Though Jesus had prayed for the cup of this sorrow to pass, he added—

"Not my will, but Thine be done."

Because of his complete obedience, even unto death. God raised His son from the dead. He did not suffer His Holy One to see corruption but gave him eternal life. This was the fulfilment of that puzzling statement Jesus had made to the Jews—

"Destroy this temple, and in 3 days I will build it up."

They had thought that he referred to the literal Temple in Jerusalem. They had failed to see that Jesus spoke of the temple of his body.

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THE fact that we are gathered here this morning is proof that Jesus is still in heaven; where he has gone as a nobleman journeying to a far country, to stay for a time; then to return to receive for himself a kingdom, prepared by God for him.

In this we see the counterpart of the preparations made by David, of stones, which he stored in abundance to be used by his son in building the first temple.

Many of these items David had brought from other countries: and so, in each generation since Christ's ascension, God has been calling men and women from the highways and byways of the earth—which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt—to prepare them as living stones, to become part of a lively temple—fit for the Master's use in the day of his appearing.

These precious stones are hewn silently out of the mountain of humanity. The chiselling and shaping is accomplished through affliction and chastisement. Just as Jesus "learned obedience through the things which he suffered," in like manner all those who are to be associated with him in his Kingdom will have learned obedience and submission to God's will.

When all the rough edges are smoothed away, they will then be "fitly joined together," built upon the Stone which the builders rejected, which is now the chief Cornerstone of the spiritual Temple of God.

When the last stone has been chosen, cut, and made ready, the time will at last be ripe for the establishment of the Kingdom, and the "restitution of all things spoken of by all God's holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

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CHRIST'S literal, earthly kingdom will parallel Solomon's—for it will begin in Jerusalem, with Christ sitting upon the throne of his father David.

There will follow a period of war and trouble: for the majority of the nations will not accept him as their ruler. Christ will then go forth with his army of glorified saints (Rev. 19) to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Rev. 14). He will subdue nations and kingdoms until (Psa. 72)—

"All kings shall bow down before him."
—and he has—

"Dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

In contrast to Solomon who permitted idol-worship in his kingdom, Christ will abolish all idols, as seen in Isa. 2:18-20—

"The idols he shall utterly abolish.

"In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats."

Into this category are all who are partakers of the great religious systems in the earth today; and so, it is evident that the next war to be fought in the Kingdom is that of Christ against the power of Rome.

This will end in the full destruction of the city, and the Roman Catholic system. The Gospel will again be preached to the nations that are left with the results foretold (Jer. 16:19):

"The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say,
"Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein is no profit."

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ONE of Solomon's first acts was the building of the Temple for the worship of God. Christ, too, will build the wonderful Temple that we are reading about in Ezekiel's prophecy.

Not only will he institute the worship of God, he will also enforce it. This is plainly shown in Zech. 14:16-17—

"And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came up against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

Whether this punishment will need to be used or not, remains to be seen. But we do know that this "House of Prayer for all nations" will be well-used, for both Isaiah and Micah tell us that—

"All nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go and say,

"Come ye, and let us go up to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths:

"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

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ANOTHER contrast between Christ and Solomon is the fact that while Solomon reigned as King, Zadok was the High Priest and commanded the worship in the Temple.

Christ himself will be both King and Priest in the Age to Come; and will take part in the offerings of the Lord—

"And it shall be the Prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel:

"He shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel" (Ezek. 45:17).

In this work he will be assisted by the priests, the sons of Zadok (Ezek. 44:15) and their work is mentioned in v. 16—

"They shall enter into My sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table to minister unto Me, and they shall keep My charge."

The "sons of Zadok" in these verses are the ones referred to in Rev. 5:9-10, as—

"Redeemed to God by the blood of Christ out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God **KINGS AND PRIESTS**, and we shall reign on the earth."

They will do none of the menial work of the Temple: it will be performed by the Levites (Ezek. 44:10-13), because of their former unfaithfulness in departing from the law of God. They will not be allowed to do the office of a priest, but will slay the burnt offering and the sacrifices of the people—

"Because they ministered unto them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity."

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JUST as the Queen of Sheba and the kings of the earth came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, so the king of Tarshish and the great men of the earth will offer gifts to Christ. In Isa. 52:15, we learn their reaction—

"The kings of the earth shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

These visitors who behold the King in his beauty, will have much to marvel at: for the conditions during Christ's reign will be unlike the best this earth has ever seen.

With all his wisdom, there was still war, slavery, injustice, hardship, sickness, idolatry, and sin in Solomon's dominion. Look at the comparison in Isa. 11:2-4, speaking of the King who will reign in righteousness—

"The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

"He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:

"And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

Under such conditions, war will cease (Isa. 2:4). People will dwell in peaceful homes, with their own vines and fig trees (Mic. 4:4). The curse will be removed from the earth, until the desert

shall blossom as the rose, and bring forth abundantly (Isa. 35:1). The ground will yield her increase so that the plowman will overtake the reaper (Amos 9:13). Thorns and thistles will be replaced by the fir and myrtle trees (Isa. 55:13).

The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick (Isa. 33:24). Life expectancy will be increased, so that a child shall die at an hundred years (Isa. 65:20).

We have been called to a place in this glorious Kingdom—not as subjects—but as **fellow-heirs with Christ**.

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JUST as Solomon married many wives from other nations, so Christ will return as a Bridegroom to be united with his multitudinous Bride—the saints who have been called and found worthy, out of every kindred of the earth. In Christ's absence they are pictured as 10 virgins who wait his return.

The parable tells us that five were wise; and five were foolish. If we are among the five who are wise, then we will be partakers with the worthies of old in that Kingdom that is so wonderful that—

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man."
—*to conceive what God has prepared for those that love Him.*

—J. M.
