

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

- I Kings iii,9

I Kings iii,5-15

Luke xviii,9-22

Psalm 72

New Book of Worship, Psalm 89, p.68

The office of king represents the rule of truth. The first three kings of Israel, Saul, David, and Solomon, represent this rule in the three planes of the mind, the natural, the spiritual, and the celestial; and they represent also the order of our regeneration: the purification of our outward life, of our thoughts, and the cleansing of the heart. There are other trines in the Bible. We are especially familiar with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This order is the reverse of that of Saul, David, and Solomon. It is the order of the Incarnation, the Divine descent through the heavens, and the order of our first development from the innocence of infancy to the beginning of adult life. In men these planes are successively developed and then regenerated in the reverse order. And we should note that the personal character of Saul, David, and Solomon was quite different from what they represent. As persons they are not to be admired. We recall Saul's impatience and disobedience, David's crime in slaying Uriah the Hittite in order to get possession of Uriah's wife Bathsheba, and Solomon's final lapse into idolatry, which was worst of all.

But Solomon as a representative character pictures the celestial state, which is one of rest from warfare. His name means peace. Saul pictures a purified outward life, David a purified mind, and Solomon a purified will or heart. When this final state is attained, there is no more need of battling against evil, for the commandments are written on the heart and the powers of the hells can find no place of lodgment. And so there is peace; the wicked cease from troubling. Solomon's reign was literally one of peace. Under David the kingdom of Israel had been established even to its extreme borders, the Euphrates and the Nile, the limit which God had set in His promise to Abraham: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." The prophecy of Micah, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid," was fulfilled. It is the sabbath state, the state represented by the last of the series of names by which the child who was to be born should be called: "The Prince of Peace."

The fact that the kingdom of Israel had its widest extension in Solomon's day is significant. The government of the Divine love is a universal government, but its rule is secret, exerting its power over all things and bringing them

under control and subordination, while still preserving human freedom. Questions of right and wrong action and of right and wrong motive still remain, but they do not have to be separately considered. The laws of right are recognized as the laws of love without any reasoning process. According to the words of Jeremiah, "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," and one does not have to teach another to know the Lord, for He is instinctively known.

In his dream at Gibeon Solomon acknowledged that he was but a child, and asked for wisdom. The highest of the angels, who behold the Father's face, are the ones who care for the little children. This pictures the helplessness of man and his need to look constantly to Him who made him and upon whom he constantly depends for support, and the folly of thinking of ourselves as the source of what is really good and true.

The Lord can instruct and help no one who feels no need of instruction and help. An anonymous writer expresses this truth in lines which can be paralleled in the Gospel story:

"That God feeds none but the hungry;
Pardons none but the guilty;
Gives rest to none but the heavy laden;
Comforts none but the mourners;
Heals none but the sick;
Lifts up none but the lowly;
Strengthens none but the weak;
Gives sight to none but the blind;
Salvation to none but the lost;
Peace to none but the troubled;
Cleansing to none but the polluted;
And life to none but the dead."

Not until we acknowledge our need of the Lord can He lead us into that peace which He desires to give.

One of the chief pictures we form of Solomon's reign is that of his wealth and the splendor and lavishness of his court. The commodities of all lands were then found in Jerusalem. All the service of Solomon's table was of gold: "None were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." The Queen of Sheba came to behold his glory and to hear his wisdom, and found that the half had not been told her.

It is of what this represents that Isaiah writes: "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising... thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side... the abundance of

the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee... the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them... For brass will I bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver... I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness."

In these words is expressed the fullness of the mental blessings and possessions of those who have attained the state of love to the Lord. They have gold for silver because love is the ruling principle, and truth is no longer seen as a distinct or independent of ruling element.

The distinguishing feature of Solomon's reign was his building of the temple, where the Lord might dwell among men, so that at last the prayer of the ages, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down," might be answered and that God indeed might dwell with men. A heavy veil had separated the Lord from man, shutting Him from view. But it was promised that the veil that had been spread over all nations would in time be removed, and the Lord would become known to men. That time has now come.

Of the Lord's first coming it is written, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This is equally true today of the Second Coming. Even His own disciples know but little about Him. But the temple is open in the heavens.

From a just knowledge and acknowledgment of God come love and truth, humility and content, peace and inward joy of heart. It is life with an abundance of all that is needful to make life happy. For then love to the Lord and to the neighbor is put above the love of self and of the world, and there is no desire for the things that belong to another, no temptation to fraudulent dealing. Then there can be neither covetousness nor anxiety; for there is the sense of the goodness and omnipotence of the Lord, and a grateful content in His providence.

We are wise if, seeing this, we turn from any thought of self-sufficiency and strive to do those things which the Lord would have us do. Then all disturbing feelings and thoughts will vanish.

All true life is from the Lord, and though it is given freely, it cannot become ours unless we recognize its source. If we think that any goodness and truth which we may have is from ourselves, we are like one who makes for himself an idol to worship, even though we use in the making the gold and silver that the Lord has given. Our goodness and wisdom are living only so long as they are acknowledged as the Lord's in us. Separated from Him they are as a branch cut off from the vine.

As we keep His commandments He lives in us and we in Him. And those in whom He lives feel His love and life as their own, yet know it to be His.