

# THE BIBLE HISTORY OF THE HOLY LAND

by

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Chapter III

SOLOMON

King Solomon succeeded his father David in the year 1030 B.C., when he was about twenty years of age. Never monarch ascended the throne with greater advantages, or knew better how to secure and improve them. Under David the kingdom had been much extended and brought under good regulations. The arms of the Hebrews had for so many years been feared by all the neighboring nations that the habit of respect and obedience on their part offered to the new king the reasonable prospect, confirmed by a Divine promise, that his reign should be one of peace.

Now the predominant tribe of Judah lay as a lion and as a lioness, which no nation ventured to rouse up.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrews were the ruling people and their empire the principal monarchy of Western Asia. From the Mediterranean Sea and the Phoenicians to the Euphrates, in its nearer and remoter bounds,--from the river of Egypt and the Elanitic Gulf to Berytus, Hamath, and Thapsacus, all were subject to the dominion of Solomon; nor were the tribes which wander in northern Arabia eastward to the Persian Gulf unconscious of his rule.

At home, the Canaanites had not, as we have seen, been either entirely expelled or annihilated; but they had become obedient and peaceable subjects, and, which was of importance to an eastern king, liable to services which no king dared to impose upon the Israelites themselves. Jahn calculates that their whole number may have been about 400,000 or 500,000, since ultimately 153,000 were able to render soccage<sup>2</sup> to the king. The warlike and civilized Philistines, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, the Syrians of Damascus, and some tribes of the nomadic Arabians of the desert, were all tributary to him. The revenues derived from the subject states were large, and the wealth in the royal treasures great beyond calculation; and the king had the enterprise and talent to open new sources through which riches were poured into the country from distant lands. Nor were the prospects and promises with which this reign opened frustrated in its continuance:

Peace gave to all his subjects prosperity; the trade which he introduced brought wealth into the country, and promoted the sciences and arts, which there found an active protector in the king, who was himself distinguished for his learning. The

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1 Gen. 49:9; Num. 23:24, 24:9.

2 "A tenure of land held by the tenant in performance of specified services or by payment of rent, and not requiring military service" (Dictionary.com).

building of the temple and of several palaces introduced foreign artists, by whom the Hebrews were instructed. Many foreigners, and even sovereign princes, were attracted to Jerusalem in order to see and converse with the prosperous royal sage. The regular progress of all business, the arrangements for security from foreign and domestic enemies, the army, the cavalry, the armories, the chariots, the palaces, the royal household, the good order in the administration and in the service of the court excited as much admiration as the wisdom and learning of the viceroy of Jehovah. So much was effected by the single influence of David, because he scrupulously conformed himself to the theocracy of the Hebrew state.<sup>3</sup>

Such is the *argument* to the history of Solomon's reign, to the details of which we now proceed.

Although Solomon was not the firstborn nor even the eldest living son of David, but succeeded to the throne through the special appointment of the Supreme King, Jehovah, there was one circumstance which, from the usual notions of the orientals, could not but be highly favorable to him even had *all* his elder brothers been alive. Amnon had been born before his father became king and Absalom and Adonijah while he was king of Judah only, while Solomon was born when his father was king over all Israel and lord over many neighboring states. And in the East there is a strong prejudice in favor of him who is the son of *the king* and of *the kingdom*, that is, who is born while his father actually *reigns* over the states which he leaves at his death.

Thus, therefore, if Amnon and Absalom had been alive as well as Adonijah and Solomon at the death of David, there might have been a contest among them on these grounds: Amnon would have claimed [the throne] as the eldest son of David; Absalom would probably have disputed this claim on the ground, first, that he was the firstborn *after David became a king*, and, secondly, on the ground that his mother was of a royal house.<sup>4</sup> This claim could not have been disputed by Adonijah, but he would have considered his own claim good as against Amnon, on the one hand, and as against Solomon on the other. But Solomon might have claimed on the same ground as the others against Amnon, and against Absalom and Adonijah on the ground that their father was only king of Judah when they were born, but at the time of his own birth [David] was king of all Israel. And this claim [of Solomon's] would in fact have been but a carrying out of the principle on which Absalom and Adonijah are supposed to oppose Amnon; and in this claim there would have seemed so much reason to an oriental, that apart from all other considerations we doubt not it would have found many adherents in Israel; and we have no doubt that it did operate in producing a more cheerful acquiescence in the preference given to Solomon.

[After removing those men who were dangers to him],<sup>5</sup> Solomon then sought an alliance worthy of the rank to which his kingdom had attained. The nearest power from an alliance with which even he might derive honor was that of Egypt. He therefore demanded and

3 Jahn, b, iv. sect. 33.

4 2 Sam. 3:3: ". . . the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur."

5 I have omitted the section Kitto has on the removal of Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab, and Shimei.

received the daughter of the reigning Pharaoh in marriage. His new spouse was received by the king of Israel with great magnificence and was lodged in "the city of David" until the new and splendid palace, which he had already commenced, should be completed. That Solomon should thus contract an alliance, on equal terms, with the reigning family of that great nation which had formerly held the Israelites in bondage was, in the ordinary point of view, a great thing for him, and shows the relative importance into which the Hebrew kingdom had now risen.

The king is in no part of Scripture blamed for this alliance, even in places where it seems unlikely that blame would have been spared had he been considered blameworthy; and as we know that the Egyptians were idolaters, this absence of blame may intimate that Solomon stipulated that the Egyptian princess should abandon the worship of her own gods and conform to the Jewish law. This at least was what would be required by the law of Moses, which the king was not likely (at least at this time of his life) to neglect. Nor need we suppose that the royal family of Egypt would make much difficulty in this, for, *except among the Israelites*, the religion of a woman has never in the East been considered of much consequence.

Soon after, Solomon sought by his example to restore the proper order of public worship. At Gibeon was the tabernacle and altar of Moses, and there, notwithstanding the absence of the ark, the symbol of the Divine presence--the Shechinah--still abode. This therefore was, according to the law, the only proper seat of public worship and the place to which the tribes should resort to render homage to the Great King. Therefore, at one of the religious festivals the king repaired [made his way] to Gibeon accompanied by all his court, the officers of his army, and the chiefs and elders of his people with a vast multitude of the people. There, in the midst of all the state and ceremony of the holy solemnities, the king presented a thousand beasts to be offered on the brazen altar as a holocaust [burnt offering].

This solemn act of homage from the young king was acceptable to God, who in the following night manifested himself to him in a dream and promised to satisfy whatever wish he might then form. Instead of expressing the usual desires which animate kings, as well as others, for wealth and glory and length of days, Solomon expressed his sense of the difficulties to one so young of the high station to which he had been called; and, humbly conscious of his lack of the experience required to conduct well the affairs of his large empire and numerous people, he prayed for wisdom--nothing but wisdom: *"I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in [conduct affairs]. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 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?"* (1 Kings 3:7-9).

This request which Solomon had made was highly pleasing to God. That which he *had* asked was promised to him in abounding measure--wisdom, such as none before him had ever possessed or should possess in future times. And since he had made so excellent a choice, that which he *had not* asked should also be given to him--riches and honors beyond all the kings of

his time, and besides this, length of days if he continued in obedience.

The preparations for the temple had from the first engaged the attention of Solomon. Among the first who sent to congratulate him on his succession was Hiram, king of Tyre, who has already been named as an attached friend and ally of David. The value of the friendship offered by this monarch was fully appreciated by Solomon, who returned the embassy with a letter in which he opened the noble design he entertained, and solicited the same sort of assistance in the furtherance of it as the same king had rendered to his father David when building his palace. Hiram assented with great willingness and performed the required services with such fidelity and zeal as laid the foundation of a lasting friendship between the kings, and to the formation of other mutually beneficial connections between them.

The forests of the Lebanon mountains only could supply the timber required for this great work. Such of these forests as lay nearest the sea were in the possession of the Phoenicians, among whom timber was in such constant demand that they had acquired great and acknowledged skill in the felling and transportation thereof. Hence it was of much importance that Hiram consented to employ large bodies of men in Lebanon to hew timber, as well as others to perform the service of bringing it down to the seaside from where it was to be taken along the coast in floats to the port of Joppa, from which place it could be easily taken across the country to Jerusalem.

Solomon also desired that Phoenician artificers of all descriptions should be sent to Jerusalem, particularly such as excelled in the arts of design and in the working of gold, silver, and other metals as well as precious stones. Nor was he insensible of the value and beauty of those scarlet, purple, and other fine dyes in the preparation and application of which the Tyrians excelled. Men skilled in all these branches of art were largely supplied by Hiram. He sent also a person of his own name, a Tyrian by birth who seems to have been a second Bezaleel, for his abilities were so great and his attainments so extensive and various that he was skilled not only in the working of metals but in all kinds of works in wood and stone, and even in embroidery, in tapestry, in dyes, and the manufacture of all sorts of fine cloth. And not only this, but his general attainments in art and his inventive powers enabled him to devise the means of executing, and to execute, whatever work in art might be proposed to him. This man was a treasure to Solomon, who made him overseer not only of the men whom the king of Tyre now sent but of his own workmen and those whom David had formerly engaged and retained in his employment.

In return for all these advantages, Solomon engaged on his part to furnish the king of Tyre yearly with 2500 quarters of wheat and 150,000 gallons of pure olive oil for his own use, besides furnishing the men employed in Lebanon with the same corn quantities, respectively, of wheat and barley, and the same liquid quantities of wine and oil.

Solomon, who certainly had a strong leaning towards arbitrary power, being still in want [need] of laborers, ventured to raise a levy of 30,000 Israelites whom he sent to assist the Phoenician

timber-cutters in Lebanon--but not all at once, but in alternate bands of 10,000 each so that each band returned home and rested two months out of three. This relief, and the sacred object of the service, probably prevented the opposition which the king might otherwise have experienced. For the more onerous labor in the quarries, Solomon called out the remnant of the Canaanites, probably with those foreigners (or their sons) who had been brought into the country as prisoners or slaves during the wars of David, who had indeed left an enumeration of all of them (adult males) for this very purpose. Their number was 153,600, and . . . no doubt labored in alternate bands.

Of these strangers, 70,000 were appointed to act as porters to the others and to the Phoenician artisans. They also probably had the heavy duty of transporting to Jerusalem the large stones, which 60,000 more of them were employed in hewing and squaring in the quarries. Of these, the stones intended for the foundation were in immense blocks, and were probably brought from no great distance, as quarries of very suitable stone are abundant in the neighborhood. The stones were squared in the quarry to facilitate their removal. The remaining 3300 of these strangers were employed as overseers of the rest and were, in their turn, accountable to superior Israelite officers.

Three years were spent in these preparations, but at last all was ready and the foundation of this famous temple was laid in the fourth year of Solomon's reign (1027 B.C.), in the second month, and finished in the eleventh year and eighth month, being a space of seven years and six months.<sup>6</sup>

The priests and Levites were immediately subjected to the regulations of David upon the completion of the temple. As a preliminary measure, David had caused the tribe of Levi to be numbered, and it was found to contain 38,000 males above thirty years of age. It seems that he designed their services to commence at that age when he ordered the census to be taken, but afterwards saw occasion to ordain that at least their easier services should commence at twenty. Of the 38,000, David directed that 24,000 should be assigned as assistants to the priests in the service of the temple--not, of course, all at once but in alternate weekly courses of 1000 each. Of these, some of the highest rank had charge of the sacred treasures. Others, apparently of lower rank, attended the priests in all their services at the altar, especially in preparing the victims designed for offerings, and some had special charge of preparing the shew-bread and unleavened cakes with the proper quantity of flour for the morning and evening service.

From the text (1 Chron. xxiii. 29), it is inferred that these had in their custody, within the sanctuary, the original standard for weights and measures, liquid and dry. Hence we often read in Scripture of the shekel of the sanctuary,--not that there were two sorts of shekels, one sacred and another civil, as some have supposed, but because weights and measures, being reckoned among the sacred

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6 Kitto devotes much time expounding upon the architecture of the temple and its adornings, which I have omitted here, for it is quite lengthy. But the reader certainly will be impressed with what was manifestly an incredibly beautiful temple.

things, were kept in the sanctuary, as they were in the temples of the pagans, and afterwards in Christian churches.<sup>7</sup>

Of the remaining 14,000, there were 4000 divided into twenty-four courses like the others, appointed to act as porters and guards of the temple. It seems that on this class devolved also the duty of seeing the buildings kept neat and clean.

The same number (4000), similarly divided, were to act as musicians in the temple. This was quite a new part of the service, for previously there had been nothing of music in the Hebrew service save the occasional blowing of trumpets. We may well believe that this was a matter in which so eminent a musician and poet as David himself took much interest. In fact he had, on a smaller scale, already introduced a musical service at the tabernacle. He not only caused the musical instruments for this service to be made under his own cognizance, but collected and composed the psalms of thanksgiving and of prayer which were to be employed in this part of the temple worship. Part of this service was vocal. With respect to the musical instruments, all the various instruments which were in use among the Hebrews are, on different occasions, named in connection with the services of the temple.

As our attention is limited to the regulations made by David and enforced by Solomon, we abstain from any larger notice of the music and psalmody of the Levitical service. In this as in all the other divisions of service there were some who were chiefs or overseers. The persons of the musical order who, from their superior abilities, had the superintendence of all the others were Heman and Asaph of the line of Gershon, and Jeduthun of the line of Merari. Their names often occur in the titles of the Psalms, which were sent to them as composed by David for the musical service.

The remaining 6000 Levites were distributed throughout the country as judges and genealogists. They also appear to have instructed the people in the Law or Moses by expounding the several parts of it in the places where they resided; and that they kept the public records and genealogies of the respective tribes is generally understood by the Jews.

Doubtless, in apportioning to the Levites their lines of duty, regard was had to their various abilities and attainments. It will be observed that the distribution of this great body into bands, which performed duty in rotation, left by far the greater part of their time free from their proper Levitical duties. We find numerous instances in Scripture that this leisure was much employed in the service of the state. It was indeed obvious and natural that men of such superior education and attainments, and whose residences were dispersed over the country, should take an influential position in their respective localities, and that they should be much employed as the agents and officers of the general government in their own districts.

The priests, having increased in full proportion to the Levites, were in like manner divided into twenty-four classes, each of which officiated a week alternately. Sixteen of these classes were

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<sup>7</sup> Horne, iii. 273.

of the family of Eleazar and eight of the family of Ithamar. They succeeded one another on the Sabbath-day until they had all attended in their turn. Each class had its own chief or president, whom some writers suppose to be the same as "the chief-priests" so often mentioned in the New Testament and in the writings of Josephus. For although only four of the classes returned from the Babylonish captivity, these were subdivided into the original number of twenty-four, to which the original names were given. The chief person of each class appointed an entire family to offer the sacrifices, and at the close of their week they all joined together in sacrificing. As each family latterly contained a great number of priests, they drew lots for the different offices which they were to perform.<sup>8</sup>

The temple, with all things destined for its service and every arrangement connected with it, being completed in seven years, its dedication was celebrated the year after with a magnificence worthy of the object and the occasion. All the chief men in Israel were present--the heads of tribes and paternal chiefs together with multitudes of people from all parts of the land. The priests, if not the Levites, also attended in full force, the succession of the courses being *afterwards* to commence. God himself was pleased to manifest his presence and his complacency [pleasure] by two striking miracles.

At the moment when the ark of the covenant, having been brought in high procession from its former place in "the city of David," was deposited in the Holy of Holies, the numerous Levitical choirs thundered forth their well-known song, sent to the heavens by their united voices and by the harmonious concord of a thousand instruments--"Praise Jehovah! for he is good; for his mercy endures forever!" Suddenly, as at the consecration of the first tabernacle, the house of God was covered with a thick cloud which filled it and which enveloped all the assistants in such profound obscurity that the priests were unable to continue their services. This was a manifest symbol that God had accepted this as his house, his palace, and that his Presence had entered to inhabit there.

It was so understood by Solomon, whose voice rose amid the silence which ensued. "Jehovah said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever!" The king stood on a brazen platform which had been erected in front of the altar, and now turning to the people he explained the origin and object of this building, after which "he spread forth his hands" towards the heaven to address himself to God. The prayer he offered on this occasion is one of the noblest and most sublime compositions in the Bible. It exhibits the most exalted conceptions of the omnipresence of God and of his superintending providence, and dwells more especially on his peculiar protection of the Hebrew nation from the time of its departure from Egypt, and imploring pardon and forgiveness for all their sins and transgressions in the land and during those ensuing captivities which, in the same prophetic spirit that animated the last address of Moses, he appears to have foreseen.

Nothing can be finer than that part of his long and beautiful address in which, recurring to the

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8 This explains Luke 1:9.

idea of *inhabitanace* which had been so forcibly brought before his mind, he cries, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built!"

The king had no sooner concluded his prayer than a fire from the heavens descended upon the altar and consumed the burnt offerings. All the Israelites beheld this prodigy [wonder] and bent their faces towards the earth in adoration, and repeated with one voice the praise which was the most acceptable to Him, "He is good; His mercy endures forever!"

By these two signs the sanctuary and the altar received the same acceptance and consecration which had been granted in the wilderness to the tabernacle and the altar there.

Solomon, having thus worthily accomplished the obligation imposed upon him by his father, felt himself at liberty to build various sumptuous structures and undertake various works suited to the honor of his crown and the dignity of his great kingdom. All that can be said with reference to these will be little more than an amplification of his own statement on the subject:

I raised magnificent works; I built for myself houses; I planted for myself vineyards; I made for myself gardens and groves, and planted in them fruit-trees of every kind; I made also pools of water, to water therewith the growing plantations. I bought men-servants and women-servants, and had servants born in my house; I possessed also herds and flocks in abundance, more than any had before me in Jerusalem; I collected also silver and gold, and precious treasure from kings and provinces; I procured men-singers and women-singers, and the sweetest instruments of music, the delight of the children of men. Thus I became great, and possessed more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup>

With commendable zeal Solomon had hastened the completion of the temple, but he allowed nearly twice the time to be consumed on the palatial structures which have engaged our notice.<sup>10</sup>

As the theory and practice of the government, and, indeed, of most oriental governments, required the king as supreme magistrate to be accessible to the complaints of all his subjects, the place in which Solomon administered justice was in the open *porch* of his palace, therefrom

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9 Eccles. 2:3-9, Boothroyd's version.

10 I have omitted that lengthy section wherein Kitto describes Solomon's palace with its furnishings. He quotes Josephus as saying, "It would be an endless task to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of buildings; so many courts and other contrivances; such a variety of chambers and offices, great and small; long and large galleries; vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be with costly furniture and gildings; besides, that all the services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, the whole palace was, in a manner, made up from the base to the coping, of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver, with precious stones here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings."

call "the porch of judgment." . . . Here upon a raised platform, to which there was an ascent by steps, was placed the throne of Solomon. . . . The throne itself was of *ivory* (a material which appears to have been unknown in Palestine until the time of Solomon), studded and enriched with gold, and over it was a semi-spherical canopy. Besides the twelve lions on the six steps of ascent, there were two as "stays" on each side of the seat, the back of which appears to have been concave.

On the walls of the hall in which the throne was placed were probably hung the 300 shields of gold (or probably of wood or hide covered with gold) which the king caused to be made and which are mentioned among the proudest treasures of the kingdom. There were 200 other shields of the same costly material and twice as large which were for the use of the royal guard, for as we shall see presently, the state of the king in his court and in his going forth was fully commensurate to the magnificence of his palaces.

With commendable zeal Solomon had hastened the completion of the temple, but he allowed nearly twice the time to be consumed on the palatial structures which have engaged our notice. The temple was finished in seven years, but thirteen years were employed on the palaces, so that it was not until the twentieth year that the whole was completed. But for the erection of the temple, all the means had been provided by David, whereas Solomon had himself to provide for his own buildings. And this probably explains the difference, for that with all his resources the king's plans outran his means is evinced by the fact that besides assistance of the same sort which he had rendered towards the building of the temple, the king of Tyre had, by the time the works were completed, advanced to Solomon not less than 120 talents of gold, in recompense of which the king of Israel assigned to him twenty towns in the vicinity of the Tyrian territory.

He [Solomon] seems, however, to have made the mistake of considering that what was good in the eyes of the Hebrews must be equally good for the Tyrians, who would doubtless much have preferred an extension of their territory along the coast to this comparatively inland and agricultural district. Hiram, when he came to view the ground, saw at once the unsuitableness and indicated his dissatisfaction by the name of "Cabul," which he imposed upon it. Solomon therefore took back these towns and doubtless gave the king of Tyre some more satisfying equivalent, for the transaction was very far from interrupting the good understanding between the two kings.

It was doubtless from the considerations arising from his connection with king Hiram and from narrowly [closely] observing the sources of the extraordinary prosperity enjoyed by the Phoenician state, coupled with the want [lack] of adequate means for the execution of the magnificent plans which his mind had formed, that Solomon began to turn his own attention to foreign commerce as a source of wealth and aggrandizement. We are unacquainted with the particular inducements which Solomon was able to offer to the Phoenicians (who were in this matter proverbially a jealous people) to induce them to afford the benefit of their experience in this enterprise. But it is certain that they furnished the king with ships such as they employed

in their distant voyages westward, and therefore called "ships of Tarshish," and that these ships were manned by Phoenician mariners and voyaged in company with a fleet of ships belonging to the king of Tyre.

No one who is acquainted with the historical character of that people or with the commercial character in general will in the least degree doubt that they must have had very cogent reasons for this, [that is], for allowing themselves to be made the instruments of enriching the Hebrew king by traffic with foreign parts.

In seeking the motive by which their proceedings were determined, we must consider the direction of the voyage. In another work<sup>11</sup> we have exhibited our reasons for concluding that the regions of Tarshish and Ophir lay not in different directions but were visited in the same voyage, and further that this voyage embraced the southern shores of Arabia, the eastern shores of Africa, and possibly the idle of Ceylon, if not some points in the Indian peninsula. This being the case, we shall perceive that although the Phoenicians had the exclusive command of the *westward* traffic on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, they could have had no share in this *eastern* traffic but on such terms as Solomon might think proper to impose, for he was in possession of the ports of the Elanitic Gulf and of the intervening country whereby he held the key of the Red Sea, and could at his pleasure exclude them from that door of access to the Indian Ocean.

It is true that there was another door by the Gulf of Suez, but its ports were in the hands of the Egyptians, who were by no means likely to allow unobstructed access to it. And then as to the other channel, across the desert to the Euphrates and Persian Gulf, the key of this also was in the hand of Solomon by virtue of his military stations on the Euphrates and his complete command of the desert country west of that river.

It must thus appear that since the Phoenicians could have no access to the Indian Ocean but with the consent and by the assistance of the Hebrew king, he was in a condition to stipulate for a profitable partnership in the enterprise. Nor perhaps was Solomon so entirely dependent upon the Phoenicians for the execution of his plans as might at first sight appear; for although the Israelites knew little of maritime affairs, this was not the case with the Edomites, who were now the subjects of Solomon. They had been accustomed to navigate the Red Sea, and probably to some extent beyond. And although we know not that they reached the shores to which the fleets of Solomon penetrated under the abler guidance of the Phoenicians, they probably might have been made (with a little encouragement) the instruments of his designs.

In preferring the Phoenicians, Solomon was probably influenced not only by the knowledge of their greater experience in distant voyages but by political considerations. He could always control this trade as conducted by the Phoenicians; while to the Edomites, living on the borders of the Elanitic Gulf, it would give such advantages as might in time enable them to engross the whole trade and to shake off the yoke his father had imposed upon them.

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11 *Pictorial Bible*, Notes on 2 Chron. ix. 10, 21.

The interest which the king took in the matter may be judged of from the fact that he went in person to the port of Ezion-geber at the head of the gulf to superintend the preparations and to witness the departure of the fleet. A thirst for knowledge, which is one of the surest evidences of the "wisdom" with which this splendid monarch was gifted, may have had some share in promoting this design, for his agents were instructed not only to seek wealth but to bring back specimens of whatever was curious or instructive in the countries to which they came. We know they brought various foreign animals and birds; and since the king took much interest in botany, it is more than likely that they also brought the seeds of many plants which had engaged their attention by their use or beauty. We may consequently refer to this reign the introduction into Palestine of many plants which had not been known there in former times.

The fleet returned in the third year laden with the rich and curious treasures of the south and the remote east. There were vast quantities of gold and silver, while the bulk of the cargo was composed of elephants' teeth and various sorts of valuable woods and precious stones. Nor were the super-cargoes which the king sent in the ships unmindful of his peculiar tastes and probably his special orders, for they took pains to collect examples of the more curious animals and doubtless other products of the countries to which they came. Among these, monkeys and peacocks are particularly named, probably from their more singular difference from the forms of animal life with which the Hebrews were previously acquainted.

Without doubt, a large portion of the commodities thus obtained were sold at a great profit. And this explains that while in one place the yearly weight of gold brought to the king by his ships is stated at 480 talents, the yearly profit in gold derived both directly and indirectly from these voyages is counted at the weight of 666 talents,<sup>12</sup> which according to the lower computation would make not less than 3,646,350*l.*, while a higher scale would make it little short of 4,000,000*l.*

Of the precious woods, Solomon employed a considerable portion in making balustrades for the temple and in the fabrication of instruments of music. And of the gold, a large quantity was used in making various sorts of golden shields and the various vessels of the palace. In that palace *all* the vessels were of gold. Silver was not seen there, for under the influx of gold as well as of silver from various sources, the latter metal was much depreciated in value during this splendid reign: "It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon; . . . he made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones." And in like manner the rather poor wood of the cedar, which had previously acquired a high value in the want [lack] of large and good timber, sunk much in estimation through the large importations of the compact and beautiful eastern timbers, as well as through the profuse supply of cedar-wood itself from Lebanon.

Besides this maritime traffic, the caravan trade by land engaged a full share of Solomon's attention. Be the possession of a southern frontier stretching across from the Elanitic Gulf to the Mediterranean, the land traffic between Egypt and Syria lay completely at his mercy. He

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12 Compare 1 Kings 9:28 with 10:14.

felt this, and through some arrangement with his father-in-law the king of Egypt, he contrived to monopolize it entirely in his own hands.

It appears that what Syria chiefly required from Egypt were *linen fabrics* and *yarn*, for the manufacture of which that country had long been celebrated; also *chariots*, the extensive use of which in Egypt has already been pointed out; and *horses*, of which that country possessed a very excellent and superior breed, if we may judge from the numerous fine examples which the paintings and sculptures offer. All this trade Solomon appears to have intercepted and monopolized. He was supplied by contract, at a fixed price, with certain quantities adequate to the supply of the Syrian market which, after retaining what he required for himself, his factors [agents] sold of course at a high profit to the different kings of Syria. The price was doubtless arbitrary and dependent on times and circumstances. But the contract price at which the chariots and horses were supplied by the Egyptians to the Hebrew factors happens to be named--600 silver shekels for a chariot and one-fourth of that sum, or 150 shekels, for a horse.

This was not the only land traffic which engaged the notice of Solomon. His attention was attracted to the extensive and valuable caravan trade which, from very remote ages, came from the farther east and the Persian Gulf and from there proceeded to Egypt, Tyre, and other points on the Mediterranean by the Euphrates and across the great Syrian desert. The habitable points of that desert, even to the great river, were now under the dominion of the Hebrew king, and even the Bedouin tribes by whom it was chiefly inhabited were brought under tribute to him, and were kept in order by the dread of his great name. Under these circumstances Solomon was in nearly as favorable a position for taking a part in this trade as in the land traffic between Egypt and Syria.

But the measures which he took were different, and more specially adapted to the circumstances of the case. They were less coercive and dealt more in the offer of inducements and advantages. And the reason is obvious. For although the ordinary track of the great caravans lay through his territories, it was in the power of its conductors to alter that tract so as to pass northward beyond the limits of his dominion. But this would have produced such expense, trouble and delay, that it would have been preferable to maintain the old route even at the expense of some check and inconvenience. Whether the measures of Solomon were felt to be such we do not know, but they were possibly deemed by the caravan merchants and by the Hebrews as mutually advantageous, although the ultimate purchasers--who could be no parties in this arrangement--possibly regarded them in a different light.

The plan of Solomon was to erect in the very heart of the desert an emporium for this important trade. The route of a caravan is so directed as to include as many as possible of the places at which water may be found. At the most important of these stations, where water and by consequence palm-trees were found in the most abundance, the Hebrew king built a city and called it *Tadmor* (*a palm-tree*), whence its Greek name of Palmyra. But Greek and Roman names never fixed themselves in the soil of Syria, and the ruins of the city bear to this day among the natives the primitive name of *Tadmor*. Here the caravans not only found water as

before but every advantage of shelter and rest, while by this establishment Solomon was enabled more effectively to overawe the tribes and to afford protection to the caravans from the predatory attempts and exactions of the Bedouins.

Here the caravan merchants would soon find it convenient to dispose of their commodities and leave the further distribution of them to the nations west of the desert, either to the factors of Solomon or to private merchants, for we do not know to what extent the king found it advisable to leave this trade free to his own subjects. It may be that private persons among his subjects, or even foreigners from the west, were not prevented from here meeting and dealing with the eastern merchants. But it may be generally inferred (with our limited present light) that he monopolized such advantages in this trade as he deemed safe or prudent. At the least it must be presumed that he derived considerable revenue in the way of customs from such merchandise as did not pass into the hands of his own factors, and this, however advantageous to the king, may have been felt by the caravan merchants but as a reasonable equivalent for the protection they enjoyed and their freedom from the exactions of the Bedouins.

Much of this which we have stated as probably connected with the foundation of this city of the desert is not stated in Scripture. But it is deducible, [first], from the improbability that a city would have been founded in such a situation without strong inducements, and, [second], from the fact that the wealth and glory in which the Palmyra of a later day appears was due entirely to the circumstance that its position made it an emporium for the caravan trade of the desert. In fact, that it was such [an emporium] at a long subsequent date and that its very existence depended on its being such, illustrates and justifies that intention in its foundation which, on the strongest circumstantial evidence, we have ventured to ascribe to Solomon.

Besides these branches of commerce, "the traffic of the *spice* merchants" is mentioned<sup>13</sup> as among the sources from which wealth accrued to Solomon. In what form this profit was derived is not distinctly intimated. From the analogy of his other operations, we might conclude that he bought up the costly spices and aromatics brought by the spice caravans of southernmost Arabia, which must needs pass through his territories; and that, after deducting what sufficed for the large consumption of his own nation, he sold the residue at an enhanced price to the neighboring nations. As it is certain that an act of trade must have taken place between him and these caravans merely from his own needs, this seems the more obvious conclusion, although without this he may have derived an important item of profit from this trade by levying customs upon it in its passage through his dominions.

Such, as far as they can be traced, were the commercial operations of Solomon. It is quite easy *now*, and in a commercial country like our own, to see that these operations were for the most part based on wrong views and principles inasmuch as however they might tend to the aggrandizement of *the king*, they could confer little solid and enduring benefit on *the nation*. But in the East, where the king is the state and becomes himself the center of most public acts, he is seldom found to take interest in commerce but from regarding it as a source of emolument

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13 1 Kings 10:15.

to the state by his direct and personal concern therein. The king himself is a trader, with such advantages resulting from his position as inevitably exclude the private merchant from the field in which he appears. He is inevitably a monopolist; and a sovereign monopoly is, if not an evil, at least not a benefit to the people, whatever wealth it may seem to bring into the country.

Solomon, in his Book of Ecclesiastes, acquaints us with many "vanities" and "sore evils" which he saw "under the sun." But from this statement we do not learn that he ever became conscious of the very great vanity and most sore evil of a rich king over a poor people, or of the system which makes the king rich while the people remain comparatively poor.<sup>14</sup>

Traffic and imposts [taxes/duties] on traffic were not, however, the only sources from which Solomon obtained his wealth. Large revenues were derived from the annual tributes of the foreign states which were now subject to the Hebrew scepter, or over which it exercised a more or less stringent influence. The kings and princes of such states appear to have sent their tribute in the form of quantities of the principal articles which their country produced or was able to procure, as did also the governors of the provinces not left under the native princes. Besides the regular tax or tribute derived from countries more or less closely annexed to the Hebrew kingdom, there were more distant states which found it good policy to conciliate the favor of Solomon or to avert his hostility by annual offerings, which under the soft names of "presents" formed no contemptible item of the royal revenue.

Of that revenue one item is mentioned in rather singular terms: "All the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his *present*, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, horses and mules, *a rate year by year*."

Here the terms "presents" and "a rate year by year" have a degree of opposition at the first view, which seems to require us to suppose either that those great men who had once resorted to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of Solomon and to behold the manifestation of it in the ordering of his court and kingdom, not only brought with them the presents which the usages of the East rendered the necessary accompaniments of such visits, but that they continued to send from their several lands yearly gifts of compliments to him; or else that the desire of thus complimenting the monarch whom God had so eminently gifted furnished a decent pretense to those who had other reasons for rendering a real tribute to him.

The latter interpretation is that which we prefer. And it is certain that in the case of the only

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14 Kitto continues this thought in a lengthy section, which I have omitted, and in it he refers to observations made by M. Salvador. I will include just this one: "The success of these expeditions introduced a disproportionate luxury into Jerusalem, replacing there the rich simplicity of life which had previously characterized the Hebrew nation. A court, organized on the most splendid oriental models--a vast seraglio, a sumptuous table, officers without number, and hosts of avidious concubines, afflicted a country in which the balance of conditions and property, as established by Moses, ought to have been maintained with the most jealous exactitude."

royal visit which is particularly described--that of the Queen of Sheba--only such presents as she brought with her are named, and no "rate year by year" is intimated. Ethiopia was too remote to be within reach of the influences which may have determined the monarchs of nearer nations to make their "presents" to Solomon a yearly payment.<sup>15</sup>

The wealth which flowed into the royal treasury from these various sources appears to have been freely disbursed by Solomon in enriching his buildings, in extending their number, and in the ordering of his court and kingdom. Besides the buildings which have already been pointed out, various public structures were built by him in Jerusalem, which city he also enclosed by new walls fortified with strong towers. Other important towns (as Gaza) were fortified and new ones built in different parts of the country.

The account which is given of the internal organization of Solomon's kingdom [1 Kings 4] occurs prior even to that which describes the building of the Temple. But there is reason to think that these arrangements did not assume the completed form in which they are there exhibited until a later date.<sup>16</sup>

The names of the "Managers of the Crown Property" do not occur in the list of Solomon's officers, but we find them in the time of David. They were doubtless preserved in that of his son who had, in fact, more need of them. The list is valuable and interesting as it affords information concerning what may be called the private property of the crown, as distinguished from the revenues of the state. It is as follows:

And Azmaveth the son of Adiel was over the king's treasuries; and Jehonathan the son of Uzziah was over the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses. Ezri the son of Chelub was over those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground. And Shimei the Ramathite was over the vineyards, and Zabdi the Shiphmite was over the produce of the vineyards for the supply of wine. Baal-Hanan the Gederite was over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the lowlands, and Joash was over the store of oil. And Shitrai the Sharonite was over the herds that fed in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds that were in the valleys. Obil the Ishmaelite was over the camels, Jehdeiah the Meronothite was over the donkeys, and Jaziz the Hagrite was over the flocks. All these were the officials over King David's property. (1 Chr. 27:25-31, NKJV)

It is obvious that even as early as David's reign there was an extensive and valuable property in land attached to the crown, consisting of arable lands, vineyards, plantations of the olive and

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15 Kitto continues here with a lengthy description of these tributes and how they were presented to the kingly court.

16 This long and detailed section of these offices and the men who filled them I have omitted, with the exception of the "Managers of the Crown Property" and the group of twelve men who presided over collections.

sycamore, etc. And the question is how such a possession could be collected in a country where the land was strictly entailed upon the descendants of the original possessors and could not in perpetuity be sold. How this law might be infringed it is unnecessary to indicate, but it is of importance to see that a royal demesne [domain] might be formed without any interference with its operation.

In the first place, there was land in the hands of the descendants of the Canaanites which had not been included in the original distributions of the soil as made by Joshua, and which might be acquired by purchase from the owners. In fact, the site of the temple was thus purchased by David from Araunah the Jebusite. It also appears that in practice (although we apprehend that the strict principle of the law would scarcely justify it) the lands of persons executed for offenses against the state were estreated [reverted back] to the crown; and this, as the only means by which the king could with any show of legal pretense acquire property already in the hands of an Israelite, led to grievous injustice and oppression on the part of unscrupulous kings.

Also in the East, waste uncultivated lands are considered to belong to no one in particular. They are called "God's lands," and become the particular property of the persons who first bring them into cultivation. Now the superior command of capital and labor enjoyed by the kings must have given them peculiar advantages in forming a demesne from this source, and considering how they were restricted in other respects, we cannot suppose they were backward in availing themselves of this advantage. It appears that the lands belonging to the crown were for the most part cultivated by bondsmen, and perhaps also by the people of conquered countries.<sup>17</sup> Yet it also seems that the royal vineyards, etc., were in some instances rented out to tenants by whom they were cultivated, and who in turn rendered to the proprietor a certain proportion of the produce or its estimated value in money.

Another body of officers was introduced into the state by Solomon, which we may readily believe to have been far from popular in the nation. They were twelve in number with a president, who was Azariah a son of the prophet Nathan. These twelve were appointed to preside over the collections of provisions in as many districts into which the land of Israel was divided. Every one was charged with the duty of collecting in his district, within the year, provisions enough to support the court for one month, following each other in rotation. It appears likely that the produce thus collected formed the kingly *tenth*, the exaction of which had been foretold by Samuel and of which the present seems the first intimation. The comparative simplicity of the court of Saul and the great spoil obtained by David in his wars without any corresponding expenditure had probably rendered this imposition previously unnecessary.

This imposition must have been felt in a peculiar degree onerous to the Hebrew people on the ground that they *already* paid the sovereign tithe to the *true* king of the Hebrew nation, Jehovah. And although they had been forewarned that this additional charge upon them would follow as a necessary consequence of their unauthorized choice of a *human* king, we may be

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<sup>17</sup> 2 Chron. 26:10.

sure that the first to impose it would greatly compromise his popularity with the people. That Solomon actually did so, that he imposed upon the people unaccustomed burdens which they felt to be very grievous, are facts which we know, and [they] seem to point to him as the one who first demanded the obnoxious tenth which, as we have intimated, was probably paid in the form of the produce which these twelve officers were appointed to collect.

The "store cities" and granaries which Solomon is said to have erected in different parts of the country were doubtless the places in each district to which the produce of that district was brought, and in which it was deposited until required for the use of the court. Supplying the court merely with provisions might seem to the English reader no very heavy task to a nation. But a different notion will be formed by reference to the large numbers of persons who are fed from what may be considered as the provision supplied to an eastern court: vast numbers of persons who acted in some capacity or other as the servants of the numerous officers of the king; the officers and servants of the great personages who were constantly visiting the court of Solomon and the numerous servants of those officers and royal servants; the harem, which alone contained a thousand women with a great number of servants and eunuchs; and probably the rations of the royal guards and of all dependent upon them. All these were to be supplied from the court, being considered as members or guests of the royal household.

This explains the prodigious quantities of victuals which were *daily* required for the use of the court, of which the account is: "Solomon's provision for one day was thirty cores (750 bushels) of fine flour, and threescore cores (1500 bushels) of meal; ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl" (1 Kings 4:22,23). As a matter of form and arrangement for a specific purpose, there was much to admire in the orderly supply of provisions to the court; and it was probably not less this than the vast quantities brought in and consumed, together with the manner in which it was prepared and distributed, which engaged the admiring notice of the Queen of Sheba, although the arrangements connected with the dignified attendance and the splendid display at Solomon's own table is mentioned as the chief matter of her wonder.

We doubt that the charge of supplying the extravagant consumption of the court was the only burden which Solomon ventured to impose on the Israelites. There are indications that there was also a tax in money, but whether to complete the kingly *tenth* or as additional thereto it may not be easy to determine. The reason for this conclusion is chiefly that this provision for the court is not called a "tribute" or "tax" and was managed by distinct officers under a distinct chief from any other. And yet it appears that a tribute was collected from the people by the separate officer who was "over the tribute." One of the first transactions of the succeeding reign put this beyond a doubt.

And besides this, it would seem that the people had the charge of supporting the numerous *horses* kept by Solomon. Unmindful of the law by which the kings were expressly forbidden "to multiply horses unto themselves," Solomon formed a numerous body of cavalry. He had 1400 chariots, which being Egyptian chariots doubtless had two horses to each, and not fewer

than 12,000 horsemen. A portion of these he kept in Jerusalem and the rest were distributed through the land in what were called from this circumstance the "chariot-cities." This distribution was doubtless made for the purpose of equally distributing the charge of their subsistence.<sup>18</sup>

The women of the king's harem are to be considered as making a part of his retinue or equipage, since generally speaking they were merely designed to augment the pomp which belonged to his character and his situation. The multiplication of women in the character of wives and concubines was indeed forbidden in the strongest manner by the law of Moses [Deut. 17:17], but Solomon, and though in a less extent several other Hebrew kings, paid little heed to this admonition and too readily and wickedly exposed themselves to the dangers which Moses had anticipated as the result of pursuing the course which he had interdicted [forbidden].

The kings willingly submitted to any expense which might be deemed necessary in ornamenting the persons of their women and of the eunuchs who guarded them. The women in the harem of Solomon were not fewer than one thousand, of whom the Scripture counts seven hundred as wives and three hundred as concubines. That a large proportion of the whole were foreigners and idolaters is certain.<sup>19</sup>

King Solomon was unquestionably wise, but from this and other matters we may suspect the practical character of his wisdom. We may doubt whether it were not rather "the wisdom of words," or of ideas, or even of knowledge, than that wisdom of conduct--or more properly, wisdom manifested in conduct, which is worth more than all.

But aware of the imputations to which his conduct had laid him open, and how little he might seem to thoughtful men to have honored the precious gifts which God had given to him, he has been careful to leave his own apology on record.<sup>20</sup> In this he exhibits himself as testing all the "vanities" of life to realize the *practical* conviction of their emptiness, and to rest the more assuredly in the conclusion that wisdom is the only real good for man under the sun. He

18 Kitto continues this section with a description of the chariots, the horses, and the attire of the riders as well as the litter upon which kings were carried.

19 I have omitted that lengthy section of Kitto which describes the roles of the various "wives," their dress, etc., and the attitude toward women in general such a harem bequeathed to Solomon himself: "One [*wise* or *good*] man among a thousand I have found, *but a woman among all those have I not found.*" Kitto continues: "But a man much less wise than Solomon may discover "the reason" which eluded his research. He had placed both them and himself in a false position:-- *them*, by bringing them into a condition, and under the operation of a system, which might seem as if ingeniously contrived for the very purpose of precluding the development and exercise of the peculiar energies and virtues for which woman, in her true place, is distinguished; and *himself*, by rendering it impossible that he should ever witness those true feelings and small nobilities of character, which, even in this position, she might manifest among her own companions, although they expand only to perfection and bear good fruit under the genial warmth of domestic life.

20 In the book of Ecclesiastes, the only book in the canonical Scriptures which lays claim to a *philosophical* character.

alleges that his wisdom remained with him all this while, by which he must mean his general intellectual wisdom, particularly as enabling him to detect the unsatisfying nature of all the vanities of life. But whether it were the part of a wise man to consume his energies and time in such experiments on life, and whether the resulting conviction to himself could counterbalance the grievous and irremediable wrong which these experiments inflicted on others, are questions which do not engage his notice.

The view which we take--that the proverbial wisdom of Solomon had nothing to do with his moral character or perceptions, and that although he *possessed* the most wisdom he was not in his *use* of it the wisest of men--appears to be precisely that which the Scriptural narrative intended to convey. Nor is the world without other eminent instances in which vast attainments and a strength and grasp of intellect before which the most hidden things of physical and moral nature lay open and bare, have been united with much weakness of heart and great deficiency in the moral sense. This view does not therefore in the least degree interfere with the conviction that,

God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart<sup>21</sup> like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men--than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon (1 Kings 4:29-34, NKJV).

Among these there is one whose visit is more particularly mentioned than any other. This was the Queen of Sheba. And the distinguished notice which her visit has obtained is probably on account of the greater distance from which she came and the greater glory which therefrom redounded to Solomon, the fame of whose wisdom brought her with royal offerings from her far distant land.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD [Yahweh], there was no more spirit in her. Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are

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21 *We* should say *head* or *intellect*. The Hebrews made the *heart* the seat of intellect and the *bowels* the seat of feeling.

these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be Yahweh your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because Yahweh has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness (1 Kings 10:4-9, NKJV).

The glory of Solomon's reign was grievously dimmed towards its conclusion. It will be observed that he had not only transgressed the law by "multiplying wives unto himself," but had taken a considerable proportion of them from the neighboring idolatrous and adverse nations, with whom the Israelites generally had been interdicted [prohibited] from contracting any alliance on the ground that such connections might turn their hearts to idols.

The case of Solomon evinced in the strongest manner the wisdom and foresight of this interdiction; for even he, in the doating attachment of his latter days to the "fair idolatresses" in his harem, not only tolerated the public exercise of their idolatrous worship, but himself erected high places for the worship of Ashtaroath, the goddess of the Sidonians; of Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and of Molech, the abominable idol of the Ammonites, on the hills opposite to and overlooking that splendid temple which he had commenced his reign by building to Jehovah.

The contrast of these two acts, at the opposite extremities of his reign, offers as striking a "vanity" as any of those on which he expatiates [expounds] in his book. In the end his fall was rendered complete by his own participation, by the act of sacrifice, in the worship of these idols. This great and astonishing offense is, with sufficient probability, reckoned by Abulfaragi to have taken place about the thirty-fourth year of Solomon's reign and the fifty-fourth of his age. By this fall he forfeited the benefits and privileges which had been promised on the condition of his obedience and rectitude.

It was not long before the doom which Solomon had so weakly and willfully incurred was made known to him--that the kingdom should be *rent* from him and given to his servant. Nevertheless the Lord, in judgment remembering mercy, said that this great evil should not occur during his time but under his son. This was for David's sake; and, for his sake also, who had derived so much satisfaction from the promised perpetuity of his race in the throne, his house should still reign over one tribe, that of Judah, with which Benjamin had now coalesced. How this intimation was received by Solomon and what effect it produced upon him we are not told.

Whether Solomon ultimately repented of his offenses and was reconciled to God is a question which is involved in some doubt. If he did repent, it is a matter of surprise that there is not the least intimation of so interesting and important a circumstance either in the books of Kings and Chronicles or in Josephus. Also, that none of the punishments of his crime were averted has been used as an argument against his repentance. But to this we are not disposed to allow much weight; for if the repentance of David for his acts of adultery and murder did not avert the punishments denounced against him, how much less might we expect it to do so in the case

of idolatry, which was in fact treason against the King Jehovah. Solomon's idolatry was a *public* crime. It was committed by a person whose example, both from his high station and his character for wisdom, was calculated to have the most dangerous [perilous] effect [on the nation], because that station and character [which he held] rendered it preeminently his duty to set the contrary example of fidelity to the Great King.

We therefore conclude that whatever benefit repentance might have brought to his own soul, we are not to suppose that it would have averted the public punishment of a public crime. If a man commits a murder and repents, his repentance creates the hope of future benefit to his own soul, but in this world his punishment from the law is the same as if he had not repented.

Nevertheless, it has been charitably concluded that Solomon did repent, and this conclusion is founded on the book of Ecclesiastes, which is supposed to have been written after that repentance. Yet whoever looks at that book dispassionately will see little to support that conclusion. There appears to us nothing in those views of life and of the dispensations of Providence that it contains which might not have occurred to his sagacious mind before as well as after his offense. All the *experience* to which he therein refers we *know* to have been obtainable by him *before* his fall; while it is equally true that the book itself contains not the slightest allusion to his offense or even to idolatry in general, although *that* "vanity of vanities" is the one to which he must have been the most acutely sensible had he been in the supposed state of repentance when that book was written. The result is that this appears to be a question on which we have no evidence on either side, and on which it is therefore best not to form *any* opinion.

Solomon died in the year 990 B.C., after he had reigned forty years and lived about sixty. With all his glory he was but little lamented by his subjects, for reasons which will now be obvious to the reader. Indeed, a great part of the nation may appear to have regarded his death with a secret satisfaction on account of the prospect which it offered of a release from the heavy imposts which the king had found it necessary to inflict for the support of his costly establishments.

The more the splendor of Solomon's reign is considered, the more its illusive and insubstantial character will appear, whether we inquire for its effect upon the real welfare of the nation or even upon the permanent grandeur of the crown. Its utter disproportion to the permanent means and resources of the state is strikingly and sufficiently evinced by the fact that so far from any of his successors supporting or restoring the magnificence of his court, the quantities of gold which he had lavished upon his various works and utensils gradually disappeared to the last fragment, and served but as a treasure on which succeeding kings drew until it was entirely exhausted.

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