

# ***Contemporary Mystic Christianity*** **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

## **Solomon's Palace and Throne**

### **Hiram's Cities**

*I Kings 9:10-14*

*And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house. Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees, and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul until this day.*

When Solomon accepted help from King Hiram of Tyre in the building of the Temple, he had promised to give him in return certain important cities in the district of Galilee in the north of Palestine. But when after the conclusion of the work, Hiram came to Palestine to inspect the cities, he was dissatisfied, and felt that Solomon had not treated him fairly. (Here is a biblical hint of the Masonic legend that trouble sprang up between Solomon and his Tyrian helpers,

in which the Master Workman, Hiram of Tyre, was murdered with Solomon's tacit consent.)

Twenty, or Two, is the number of polarity, and Galilee means white and shining; it therefore signifies the place of transmutation. Hence the Supreme Teacher promised those who were sufficiently advanced to contact Him after His Resurrection, "Behold! I will meet you in Galilee." It was in this place of transmutation only that He could bestow the higher initiatory degrees upon them.

The development taught by the mystic (Solomon) is a difficult one for the occultist (Hiram). Many experiences encountered along this Path are counted as visionary and altogether unnecessary. "They please me not," the occultist declares, "they are nothing worth, they are empty of all value"; therefore "he called them Cabul unto this day." Cabul means "nothingness." Unto this day, head and heart are at variance in the majority. Much that the heart cherishes is counted as "nothingness" by the intellectually centered.

### **The Palace**

The Temple occupied seven years in building, the palace thirteen years. The palace contained the glorious room of Solomon's judgment Hall, made entirely of white stone, cedars of Lebanon, silver and gold. This house was

ornamented with precious stones and hewn stones, and bore a marked similarity to the Egyptian initiatory Temple of the Double Life. The judgment Hall is the hall of testing and illumination, symbolizing in man the heart wherein is hidden his own individual Book of the Recording Angels, a book which is concealed from human knowledge so long as the ego is centered primarily in the intellect, but which is self-revealed when the ego learns to "think with the heart." It may then take its place among the "redeemed." But if the ego refuses to accept the responsibility involved in the awakening of the great love power in the heart (visible to the clairvoyant vision as a glorious ruby), then he is among the "damned," and falls behind in his evolution; for the path of evolution is toward unity and not toward division, and unity is attained only through the experience of spiritual love.

## **The Throne**

Most brilliant of the furniture of the Palace was the throne of Solomon. The throne had lions adorning its arms supported on bulls, like those of Horus in Egypt and the Sun (Malkarth) at Tyre; these represent the Summer Solstice (Leo) and the Vernal Equinox (Taurus), respectively. The throne was fashioned of fine gold from Ophir, inlaid with marble (or ivory) and encrusted with rare jewels, and having an ascent of six steps, on each of which were two golden lions and two golden eagles standing face to face,

symbolic of the Leo-Aquarian Age when the pioneers shall have learned to build the glorious light body which this mystic Temple typifies.

An old Persian manuscript describes the throne thus:

The sides were of pure gold, the feet of emeralds and rubies intermingled with pearls, each of which was the size of an ostrich egg. The throne had seven steps, on each side were delineated orchards full of trees, the branches of which were of precious stones representing fruit ripe and unripe. On the tops of the trees were to be seen figures of plumage birds particularly the peacock, and kurges. All these birds were hollowed within, artificially so as occasionally to utter a thousand melodious sounds such as the ears of mortals never heard before. On the first step were delineated vine branches having bunches of grapes composed of various colors of purple, green and red so as to render the appearance of real fruit. On the second step on each side of the throne were two lions large as life and formed of cast gold.

The nature of this remarkable throne was such that when Solomon placed his foot on the first step, the birds spread forth their wings and made a fluttering noise in the air. On his touching the second step, the lions extended their claws. On reaching the third step the whole assemblage of demons, fairies and men repeated the praise of Deity. When

he arrived at the fourth step voices were heard addressing him: Son of David be thankful for the blessings which the Almighty has bestowed upon you. This was repeated on his reaching the fifth step. On his arrival at the seventh step, the throne and all the birds and animals became in motion and ceased not until he had placed himself in the royal seat, when. birds, lions, and other animals by secret springs discharged a shower of the most precious perfumes on Solomon, after which two of the kurges descended and placed the golden crown upon his head.

Before the throne was a column of burnished gold on top of which was a golden dove which held in its beak a volume bound in silver. In this book was written the Psalms of David and the dove having presented the book to the king, he read aloud a portion of it to the people. It is further related that on the approach of wicked persons to the throne the lions were wont to set up a terrible roaring and would lash their tails with violence; the birds would also begin to bristle up their feathers and the assembly of demons and genii to utter horrid cries, so for fear of them no one dared to be guilty of falsehood, but all confessed their crimes. Such was the throne of Solomon, the son of David.

It need scarcely be said that legends such as these are not to be taken literally. So far as the actual physical throne

of Solomon is concerned, it is plain that the Persian writer is trying to impress us with the life-like workmanship, displaying skill so great that when anyone gazed upon the sculptured creatures he could believe them to be alive. Hiram of Tyre, who executed the work on the throne as well as the Temple and Palace, was, by his king's own statement, a workman of superlative skill, able not only as an architect, but in every one of the arts and crafts. In European history only Count St. Germain, and to a lesser degree, Leonardo da Vinci, stand in a similar light. Such men, whose genius seems to pervade the entire sphere of their activity, are the forerunners of the "new race", in which what we now call genius will be the common heritage of all men, although there will naturally be leaders even among them whose creative powers, transcend the most brilliant present-day attainment.

The Throne of Solomon was an ingenious mechanism, as well as an artistic marvel, with many secret receptacles for the storing of precious manuscripts as, for example, the Psalms of David "bound in silver", and other treasured objects.

The vine branches with their beautifully worked bunches of grapes are symbolic of Israel; for in Scripture, Israel is called the Vine of the Lord, and the wrath of the Lord is described under the likeness of "treading out the

winepress," "the grapes of wrath," and similar expressions. Therefore, the Christ also likened himself to a vine, of which his disciples were the Branches.

Astrologically, we note that the seven steps have the same significance as the seven stages of the Chaldean pyramids, corresponding to the seven Heavens, and to the Seven Initiations as the Descent of Ishtar we learn of the initiatory descent into the "seven hells" which are the inverted correspondence of the Seven Heavens ruled by Sun, Moon and five planets. The hells are, as it were, the shadows cast by the Seven Heavens, for every divine power and virtue has its corresponding weakness and vice, and for every ascent heavenward there is a corresponding descent into hell where the Initiate must learn to recognize the bidden evil of his own nature and how to overcome it, so that the power of the evil is transmuted into good.

The "emeralds, rubies and pearls" refer to the soul jewels which are visible to the seer in the aura of the illumined Initiate, and the orchards full of trees represent the Tree of Life in Paradise, and the birds which sing among the branches of the trees are the souls of the redeemed. A similar representation has been found in the catacombs, wherein the Tree or Vine in which the birds flutter is the Christ, and the birds are the souls of Christians in Paradise,

The column of burnished gold with its gleaming dove has reference to the ascending golden fire. of the love of the Christ with its wing-like radiance above the bead where the "thousand-petalled Lotus" (as it is known in the Orient) is seen to bloom.

The uproar which the sculptured animals set up at the approach of the wicked shows us that the legend has esoteric reference to the soul development, and to the conquest of the animal qualities which face the candidate for Initiation when he approaches the threshold of the invisible worlds.

Brilliant as is this Persian account of the throne, the description given in the Second Targum on Esther far outrivals its splendor, although some of the details are not quite clear. Here we read:

*The throne was made for Solomon by Hiram, the artificer from Tyre. It was covered with gold from Ophir, set with marble, beryls, brinians, emeralds, carbuncles, diamonds, pearls and other precious stones. Twelve lions of gold stood upon it, and opposite them, twelve eagles of gold, so that the right, paw of each golden lion was toward the left wing, of each golden eagle. Altogether there were seventy-two golden lions and as many golden eagles upon various parts of the throne. Toward the top where the King", seat was the throne*



*was round. It had six steps of gold. Upon the first step lay a golden lion and opposite it a golden ox; upon the second step lay a golden bear and opposite it a golden lamb; upon the third step lay a golden panther and opposite it, a golden owl; upon the fourth step lay a golden eagle and opposite to it a golden peacock; and upon the fifth step lay a golden cat and opposite to it a golden hen; and upon the sixth step lay a golden hawk and opposite it a golden dove.*

*Upon the throne there stood also a golden dove holding in its claws a golden hawk; this signified that one day all nations would be delivered into the hands of the Messiah. Upon the top of the throne was placed a candlestick, having its proper lamps, snuffers and ash pans and the like. To one side of the shaft, were placed seven pipes on which were graven the names of the seven most pious men of the world, the patriarchs. On the other side of it were likewise seven pipes on which were graven the names of the seven pious men of the world. Upon the top of the candlestick stood a golden jar filled with the purest olive oil which supplied the lamps of the Temple and under it was a great golden vessel containing the purest olive oil which supplied the lamps of the candlesticks and upon it was portrayed the High Priest. From this vessel two branches proceeded on which were portrayed Hephni and Phineas; and out of*

*these branches proceeded two pipes bearing representations of Nadab and Abihu. On the upper side of the throne were placed twenty-four vines of gold, giving a shade to the king.*

*When the king wished to ascend his throne and had set his foot on the first step, the golden ox raised him to the second and so on up to the sixth. Then the eagles took him and seated him on the throne. As often as he ascended it and sat down, the crown was placed upon his head, the lions and eagles arose and cast a shade over him, a golden dove descended from one pillar, opened a cabinet and took out the Book of the Law and placed it in his hands. Wherever he desired to go the throne moved with him upon wheels and there was a serpent of silver round about the wheels. Wherever he went upon the throne rivers of spices flowed.*

Here the symbolism is the same as in the Persian manuscript, but we note that "the throne moved with hint upon wheels," and these Nyheels had rims in the likeness of "serpents." This suggests that the "throne" was an auric formation, and that its sculptures and embellishments were archetypal patterns visible only to the spiritual sight. The "serpents" show that he was not without the "serpent wisdom" inherited from Egypt through Moses, as also from Chaldea through Abraham where the serpent was the

attribute of Bel and especially sacred to the Sun god. (The baals were usually — but not always — Sun gods and monotheism grew up around them, as around Bel in Babylon. Bel, like Baal, means "lord." Bel was a member of the Chaldean Trinity.) The "spices" which flowed forth represent the fragrances which are perceptible to the psycho-spiritual senses, for it is literally true that there is a "fragrance of holiness." In the spiritual worlds, flowers and trees represent spiritual qualities, or attributes of the ego; and the fragrances differ according to the individual temperament. Thus the cleansing, aromatic fragrance of myrrh was said to be the odor emanating from the garments of Jesus after the Resurrection.

An account similar to the Targums is given in another Jewish book, which in some respects agrees with this but varies in certain details. Its description of the steps to the throne and of their occupants is a little confused. It is stated that on the extremities of each step were two lions, and when the king set his foot on the first step to ascend the throne those on the right stretched out their paws, on which was engraved, "Thou shalt take no bribes." Before the king could pass to the next step he had to read these commandments and this happened on each step. All the steps were set with precious stones and pearls, red, white and green. Trees and various kinds of palms grew on each step and upon their branches rested eagles, peacocks and

other birds. In the highest step were two pillars of ivory borne on the heads of lions, and two golden vines hollow and fragrant with every kind of perfume which was exhaled from them as the king ascended the throne. Upon the steps approaching the throne (this must be an alternative account for they have already been described) there were placed as many unclean animals as clean, all face to face; thus on the first step the ox was opposite the lion. When the king set his foot upon the first step he turned himself around, the lion stretched out his paw on the right and the eagle his talon on the left. Upon these he leaned and they raised him to the next step. When he reached the top of the throne, the eagles screamed and all the birds began to chirp and sing and the trees gave forth their perfumes. A serpent of gold encircled his waist and having seated him, crept down between his feet. The eagles after wafting breezes of perfume with their wings set the crown upon his head; and this done, all the creatures of the throne cried out in one accord: Long may the kingdom of the house of David be established.

In the above we again observe the reference to the "serpent of gold" which encircled his waist and seated Solomon upon the throne, after which it crept down and lay between his feet; indicating that Solomon had attained "power over the Serpent" which was henceforth his servant

in all things material and spiritual. It was this development which enabled Solomon to collaborate with Hiram of Tyre.

Jewish commentators have been asked concerning the words in I Chron. 29:23, Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord the King: "Was it granted to any man to sit on the throne of God?" And they reply that as God's throne governs the whole universe, so Solomon bore rule over the whole world; and as the Holy One created six heavens and enthroned himself in the seventh, so the throne of Solomon had six steps and he himself was seated on the seventh."

It is stated in the Targum on Esther that when the Kingdom of the nations round about received the report of the existence of the throne, they gathered themselves together and came to Solomon to see with their own eyes the truth of the tales they heard. But they were dazzled by its glory and fell to the ground before him and cried aloud that there had been no such throne made for any king before him, nor its like been fashioned among any nation.

On either side of the throne the elders sat to judge the people; and when any man came before them who designed in his heart to bear false witness, says a legend, it was immediately known, for the wheels of the throne moved, the oxen lowed, the lions roared, the bears growled, the lambs bleated, the panthers yelled, the owls hooted, the cats mewed, the peacocks shrieked, the cocks

crowed, the hawks screamed and the birds chirped. Then those who came to bear false witness were afraid and said to themselves, "Let us speak the truth only, or the world will be destroyed because of us."

Afterward, the throne formed part of the plunder that Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem. He desired to seat himself upon it but he did not know that it could only be ascended in a particular manner, so when he set his foot upon the first step the golden lion stretched forth its paw, and smote him upon the left foot, and he was lame to the day of his death. And after him Alexander the Great took the throne and brought it to Egypt. Shishak, king of Egypt, saw its beauty and desired to seat himself upon it, but he too was wounded by the paw of the lion and was called "the lame Pharaoh" until he died. Then Antiochus Epiphanes took it and put it on board ship, where a leg of it was broken nor could any man repair it though all the artists and goldsmiths of the world were brought together — truly a tribute to the — unusual skill of its maker, Hiram Abiff! After the fall of the Kingdom of Antiochus, it came into the hands of Cyrus the Persian, who, because he had rebuilt the Temple, was granted to ascend the throne and seat himself thereon. Thereafter it is said by some to have been in the possession of King Ahaseurus.

This was the throne of his kingdom which was Shushan (Esther 1:2) and on which he sat when Queen Vashti refused to come before him. But a certain Jew of the second century, who says that he saw the fragments of the throne in Rome, denies that King Ahaseurus used it, since none but a Kosmocrator had the right to sit upon it.

It is said that when Solomon was young he practiced a trade. He was wise in the art of kneading and molding stone into various shapes, as a pastry cook or baker kneads dough. Some colonettes with curiously twisted rope-like marble shafts in the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem are shown as his handiwork. It is interesting to know that the peoples of the world in which Solomon lived think of him not only as a wise man but as a sculptor of genius. He was therefore a man of many accomplishments as well as much learning, and able to enter into the spirit of the common people whose interests he had at heart.

### **The Rod and the Bell**

"This was the manner in which Solomon, while he was still young, was made judge and did more wisely than David his father," runs another legend. "After the death of Uriah, the Archangels Gabriel and Michael appeared before David, who was acting as judge, and caused him to give judgment against himself. Therefore he refrained from judging and appointed a Cadi to act for him. Said the Archangels: 'God

is well pleased with the humility that thou hast shown and therefore he sends thee this rod and bell; with the help of these thou wilt be able to dispense justice in Israel and thou wilt never fall into the error of false judgment. Hang up the bell in the judgment hall, and lay the rod beside it; set the plaintiff on one side and the accused on the other and give judgment for him who makes the bell tinkle when he puts his hand on the rod.' David was pleased with the gift for now the right was always known and no man dared commit any injustice. But one day two men came for judgment; the one claimed he had entrusted a pearl to the care of the other but the latter affirmed that he had given it back. David caused them one after the other to touch the rod but the bell gave no sound for either. He made them do this several times but the bell still remained silent and he considered whether it had lost its power. But in the end he saw that when the accused man prepared to touch the rod he gave his staff into the hands of the man who demanded back the pearl. Accordingly, he took this staff and found that it was hollow and that the pearl was concealed within it. As a punishment for doubting, the virtue of the bell was taken away from him; so that David erred often in giving judgment until Solomon came to help him. And at an early age his wisdom and cunning were made manifest to all the people who sought for judgment."



In the above legend it is evident that reference is being made to some ancient method of divination, which was later lost; for all such methods are dependent upon the clairvoyant ability of the diviner. A method of divination will work for a clairvoyant, but will not work for one whose spiritual vision is completely closed by materialistic thought with its consequent involvement in the sense life. Thus David, who was a man of war, but who was nevertheless spiritually sensitive, was able to use the divining power until "doubt" — a materialized consciousness — caused the "virtue of the bell" to depart. Solomon, however, was able to give judgment because he had "the virtue of the bell" within himself, and needed no assistance of diviner's rods and bells as used in older times and by less highly gifted individuals.

"Astral bells" are a commonplace in the traditions of occultism. If we touch the rod of spiritual power, the "bell" chimes in the spiritual world. Chinese esotericism mentions the "universal Tone" which is the keynote of God sounding through all creation. This is the Great Bell, whose earthly counterpart was represented under the likeness of the diviner's bell in the legend. The rod of power is the raised and spiritualized consciousness of the Initiate, by which this Tone is heard. It comprises within itself all the music known to man, because it is the ONE TONE; just as white light includes within itself all the colors of the spectrum. GOD IS

LIGHT: God is also TONE. And that soul who hears the Tone is incapable of injustice, for God is justice.

— ***Corinne Heline***