

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 8

This chapter gives an account of the introduction of the ark into the temple, (^{<1081>}1 Kings 8:1-9) of the glory of the Lord filling it, (^{<1080>}1 Kings 8:10,11) of a speech Solomon made to the people concerning the building of the temple, and how he came to be engaged in it, (^{<1082>}1 Kings 8:12-21), of a prayer of his he put up on this occasion, requesting, that what supplications soever were made at any time, or on any account, by Israelites or strangers, might be accepted by the Lord, (^{<1082>}1 Kings 8:22-53), and of his blessing the people of Israel at the close of it, with some useful exhortations, (^{<1084>}1 Kings 8:54-61), and of the great number of sacrifices offered up by him, and the feast he made for the people, upon which he dismissed them, (^{<1086>}1 Kings 8:62-66).

Ver. 1. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel*, etc.] The judges in the several cities, or senators of the great sanhedrim, as others; though it is a question whether as yet there was such a court:

and all the heads of the tribes; the princes of the twelve tribes:

the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel; the principal men of the ancient families in every tribe:

unto King Solomon in Jerusalem; these he summoned together to himself there where the temple was built:

that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion; whither David brought it, when he had taken that fort, so called, and dwelt in it; and from this mountain Solomon proposed to bring it up to the temple, on a higher mountain, Moriah, not far from one another.

Ver. 2. *And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast*, etc.] Not of tabernacles, as the Targum on (^{<1482>}2 Chronicles 5:3) and so Jarchi; though that was in the same month next mentioned, and began on the fifteenth of it, and held seven days; wherefore

this must be the feast of the dedication of the temple, and which was kept before that; since both lasted fourteen days, and the people were dismissed on the twenty third of the month; now not only the above principal persons convened, but a vast number of the common people came to see the solemnity of removing the ark, and of dedicating the temple, and to attend the feast of it, and the more, since in a few days was the time for all the males in Israel to appear there:

in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month; it was, as the Targum says, originally the first month; but upon the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in Ab or Nisan, that became the first month, and this was the seventh from that; and is the same with Tisri, which answers to part of September, and part of October, here called Ethanim; which some render the month of the ancients, others of strong ones; either because of the many feasts that were in it, as some say; or because it was the time of ingathering all the increase and fruits of the earth, which strengthen and support man's life; or rather of "never failing", i.e. waters, showers falling in this month, and the rivers full of water ^{f136}; so September is "septimus imber", according to Isidore ^{f137}, and the three following months are alike derived; this, by the Egyptians, was called Theuth, and was with them the first month in the year ^{f138}; so Porphyry says ^{f139}, with the Egyptians the beginning of the year was not Aquarius, as with the Romans, but Cancer; and so the month of September was the first with the Ethiopians ^{f140}, and with most people ^{f141}; though with the Chinese about the middle of Aquarius ^{f142}. Now, though the temple was finished in the eighth month, (~~1058~~ 1 Kings 6:38), it was not dedicated until the seventh in the following year; it required time to finish the utensils and vessels, and put them in their proper place, and for the drying of the walls, etc.

Ver. 3. *And all the elders of Israel came*, etc.] To Zion, the city of David:

and the priests took up the ark; from thence; in (~~1450~~ 2 Chronicles 5:4) it is said the Levites did it, whose business it was, (~~1525~~ Deuteronomy 31:25), and so the priests might be called; for every priest was a Levite, though every Levite was not a priest, and the priests did at all times bear the ark; (see ~~1685~~ Joshua 3:15 6:4 ~~1059~~ 2 Samuel 15:29).

Ver. 4. *And they brought up the ark of the Lord*, etc.] From the city of David to the temple:

and the tabernacle of the congregation; not the tent David made for the ark, though that might be brought also, but the tabernacle of Moses, which had been many years at Gibeon; but now removed to Zion, and from thence to the temple, where it was laid up, as having been a sacred thing; that it might not be put to common or superstitious uses, and to prevent the being of more places than one for worship:

and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle; as the candlestick, shewbread table, incense altar, etc.

even those did the priests and the Levites bring up; some brought one, and some another; the priests brought the ark, and the Levites the vessels.

Ver. 5. *And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled together*, etc.] On this solemn occasion:

were with him before the ark; while it was in the court of the priests, before it was carried into the most holy place:

sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude; the phrase seems to be hyperbolic, and designed to denote a great number.

Ver. 6. *And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place*, etc.] Destined for it, the like to which it had in the tabernacle:

into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place; that part of the house where the divine oracle was, the holy of holies; for though into it none but the high priest might enter, and he but once a year; yet in case of necessity, as for the repair of it, which the Jews ^{f143} gather from hence, other priests might enter, as was the case now; an high priest could not carry in the ark himself, and therefore it was necessary to employ others; and besides, as yet the divine Majesty had not taken up his residence in it:

even under the wings of the cherubim; the large ones which Solomon had made, (^{<1063>}1 Kings 6:23) not those of Moses.

Ver. 7. *For the cherubim spread forth [their] two wings over the place of the ark*, etc.] The most holy place where the ark stood, even from wall to wall:

and the cherubim covered the ark, and the staves thereof above; so that neither could be seen.

Ver. 8. *And they drew out the staves*, etc.] Not made them larger, as Ben Gersom, than those in the tabernacle of Moses, this place being larger than that; nor did they draw them wholly out, and lay them up in the sanctuary, there being no further use for them, the ark having now a fixed place, and not to be removed; which would have been contrary to (⁴⁰²⁵¹⁵Exodus 25:15) but they drew them out some little way:

that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle; not in that part of the temple commonly called the holy place, in distinction from the most holy, for that seems to be denied in the next clause; nor could they be seen there, since there was a wall and a veil between them; though some think they might be seen when the door was opened, and the veil turned aside; and these also pushing against the veil, might be seen prominent, like the breasts of a woman under a covering, as the Jews express it; but the sense is, that the ends of these were seen out of the ark from under the wings of the cherubim, being a little drawn, in that part of the most holy place which is before the oracle or mercy seat:

and they were not seen without; neither quite out of the ark, nor without the most holy place, nor in the holy place; but were only seen by the high priest when he went in on the day of atonement, and served as a direction to him to go between them before the ark, and there perform his work ^{f144}; which, through the darkness of the place, and the ark being covered with the wings of the cherubim, he could not otherwise discern the exact place where it stood:

and there they are unto this day: when the writer of this book lived, even in the same situation.

Ver. 9. *There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb*, etc.] That is, there were no other writings; or, as Ben Gersom says, no other part of the law, but the decalogue otherwise he observes there were in it Aaron's rod and the pot of manna, according to (⁸⁰⁰⁴Hebrews 9:4) though the particle there may be rendered "at", or "with", or "by", (see Gill on "⁸⁰⁰⁴Hebrews 9:4") and so they might be not within it, but in some place on the sides of it, (see ⁴⁶¹²⁶Deuteronomy 31:26),

when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt; about two months after.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place*, etc.] The most holy place, having set up the ark of the Lord there,

who were all sanctified that were there, and did not wait by course as at other times, (see ^{<451>}2 Chronicles 5:11), where in (^{<452>}2 Chronicles 5:12,13) it is said, that at this time, the Levites, who were singers of the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, arrayed in fine linen, with their musical instruments in their hands, stood at the east end of the altar of burnt offering, and one hundred and twenty priests, blowing their trumpets, praised the Lord together with one sound, declaring his goodness and his mercy, which endure for ever: and then it was

that the cloud filled the house of the Lord; the whole temple, both the holy of holies and the holy place, and the court of the priests; so that it was visible to all, and was a token of the divine presence of God, of his taking possession of his house, and of his taking up his residence in it.

Ver. 11. *So that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud*, etc.] Either through the darkness it first caused, or through the light that broke out of it, which was dazzling to them, or through the terror it struck their minds with; they could neither minister in the holy place, by offering incense there; and as for the most holy place, none but the high priest could minister there, and that on one day only; nor in the court of the priests, at the altar of burnt offerings:

for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord; a bright and glorious stream came forth from the cloud, and spread itself all over the house, and then took up its abode in the most holy place as in the tabernacle, (^{<481>}Exodus 40:34 ^{<562>}Ezekiel 43:2,4,5).

Ver. 12. *And then spake Solomon*, etc.] Perceiving by this symbol that the Lord was come into his house, to take up his dwelling in it, and seeing the priests and people in consternation at it, spake the following words to their comfort:

the Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness; and now was fulfilling his promise, and therefore to be considered not as a token of his displeasure, but of his gracious presence; this was done for the greater awe of the divine Majesty, and to denote the darkness of the former dispensation; reference may be had to (^{<512>}Leviticus 16:2) or rather this was now said by the Lord, that is, it appeared to be his resolution and determination to dwell in this manner; the Targum is,

“the Lord is pleased to cause his Shechinah or divine Majesty to dwell in Jerusalem,”

in the temple there. This was imitated by the Heathens; hence the Lacedemonians had a temple dedicated to Jupiter Scotitas, or the dark, as Pausanias ^{f145} relates; and the Indian Pagans to this day affect darkness in their temples, and are very careful that no light enter into them but by the door, which is commonly strait and low, and by little crevices in the windows ^{f146}.

Ver. 13. *I have surely built thee an house to dwell in*, etc.] Turning himself from the priests and people, he quieted with a few words, he addressed the Lord; having built an house for him, for his worship and glory, with this view, that he might dwell in it, he was now, by the above token, fully assured it would be an habitation for him:

a settled place for thee to abide in for ever; which is observed in distinction from the tabernacle of Moses, which was often removed from place to place, otherwise this did not continue for ever; though Solomon might hope it would, at least unto the times of the Messiah; and indeed such a building on this spot, for such use, did continue so long, excepting the interval of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon.

Ver. 14. *And the king turned his face about*, etc.] He was before the altar, (~~1~~ 1 Kings 8:22), with his face to that first, and looking towards the holy and the most holy place, filled with the cloud and glory; and now he turned himself and stood with the altar behind him, and looking to the court of the people:

and blessed all the congregation of Israel; either blessed the Lord before them, or prayed for blessings for them, or congratulated them upon the Lord's taking up his residence in the temple, which was so great an honour and favour to them:

and all the congregation of Israel stood: ready to receive the king's blessing, and in honour of him, and reverence to the divine Being. The Jews say, none might sit in the court but the kings of the house of David.

Ver. 15. *And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Israel*, etc.] All praise and glory, honour and blessing, be ascribed to the Lord; who had afresh shown himself to be Israel's covenant God, by taking up his residence among them in the temple he had filled with his glory:

which spake with his mouth to David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it; who graciously promised him he should have a son that should

build an house for him, and which he had by his power and providence faithfully performed; or rather which spake concerning David, so Noldius ^{f147}; for God did not speak with his mouth to David, but to Nathan, of him: saying; as follows.

Ver. 16. *Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt,* etc.] Which was now about four hundred and eighty eight years ago; (see ^{<100>}1 Kings 6:1,38 8:2).

I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; he had chosen one in his mind from all eternity; but he had not made known this choice, nor the place he had chosen; he gave hints by Moses, that there was a place which he should choose, or declare he had chosen to put his name in, but did not express it, (^{<612>}Deuteronomy 12:5,11) but now it was a clear case that he had chosen Jerusalem, and that was the city he always had in view, (see ^{<406>}2 Chronicles 6:6),

but I chose David to be over my people Israel; to be their king, and to him he gave the first hint of the place where the temple was to be built, (^{<121>}1 Chronicles 22:1), and he chose no man, and his family with him, before him, to rule over Israel, and be concerned in such a work, (see ^{<406>}2 Chronicles 6:5).

Ver. 17. *And it was in the heart of David my father,* etc.] His mind was disposed to it, his heart was set upon it, he had taken up a resolution:

to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel; for his worship and service, for his honour and glory, (^{<107>}2 Samuel 7:3).

Ver. 18. *And the Lord said unto David my father,* etc.] By Nathan the prophet:

whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart; his design was good, and so far it was acceptable to the Lord, that he thought of such a thing, though it was not his pleasure that should do it, as follows.

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless, thou shall not build the house,* etc.] Which is implied in the question in (^{<107>}2 Samuel 7:5)

but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name; which is expressed in (^{<107>}2 Samuel 7:12-13).

Ver. 20. *And the Lord hath performed his word that he spake*, etc.] To David, concerning his son's building the temple:

and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; succeeded him in the kingdom:

and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel; the temple he had now finished; and thus the promise to David was punctually fulfilled, that he should have a son that should succeed him in the throne, and build the house of the Lord.

Ver. 21. *And I have set there a place for the ark*, etc.] The most holy place:

wherein is the covenant of the Lord; the two tables of stone, on which were the covenant of the Lord, as the Targum:

which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt; as in (^{1Kings}1 Kings 8:9).

Ver. 22. *And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord*, etc.] The altar of the burnt offering in the court of the priests, where he prayed the following prayer; and which altar was typical of Christ, who is always to be in sight in prayer, and through whom all sacrifices of prayer and praise become acceptable to God. In (^{2Chronicles}2 Chronicles 6:13) he is said to stand upon a scaffold of brass, five cubits long, five broad, and three high, which stood in the midst of the court; it was a sort of a pulpit, round, as a laver, for which the word is sometimes used, and on which he kneeled:

in the presence of all the congregation of Israel; who stood in the great court before him, called the court of Israel:

and spread forth his hands toward heaven; and hence it appears, that though Solomon stood before the altar, he did not lay hold on it with his hands, as the Heathens did when they prayed; for they say ^{f148}, that prayer alone does not appease the Deity, unless he that prays also lays hold on the altar with his hands; hence altars, at first, as we are told ^{f149}, were called "ansae"; and lifting up or spreading the hands towards heaven was a proper gesture with the Greeks and Romans ^{f150}.

Ver. 23. *And he said, Lord God of Israel*, etc.] Their covenant God and Father, whereby he was distinguished from all the gods of the Gentiles:

there is no god like thee; in heaven above or on earth beneath; none among the angels in heaven, nor among kings and civil magistrates on earth, who both are sometimes called “Elohim” gods; but only in a figurative sense, and not to be compared with the one only true God, for the perfection of his nature, or the works of his hands:

who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart; performs his promises, by which he both declares his mercy or goodness and his faithfulness to such who walk before him, in his ways, and according to his word, in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts.

Ver. 24. *Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him.* etc.] Concerning a son, his successor, and the builder of the temple:

thou, spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day; the temple being now finished by him, (see ^{<1085>}1 Kings 8:15).

Ver. 25. *Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him,* etc.] That as he had fulfilled one part of his promise respecting himself, his immediate successor, so that he would fulfil the other respecting his more remote offspring:

saying, there shall not fail thee a man in my sight, to sit on the throne of Israel; one of David’s posterity to inherit his throne and kingdom, but with this proviso:

so that thy children takes heed to their way; in what way they walk, and how they walk in it:

that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me; meaning as David walked, (see ^{<1021>}Psalm 132:11,12).

Ver. 26. *And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified,* etc.] Truly made good, and punctually performed:

which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father; the same request in other words, repeated to show his ardent and vehement desire to have it fulfilled.

Ver. 27. *But will God indeed dwell on the earth?* etc.] Is it true? Can any credit be given to it? Who could ever have thought it, that so great and

glorious a Being, who inhabits eternity, dwells in the highest heavens, should ever condescend to dwell on earth? Such was the amazing condescension of Christ, the Son of God, to tabernacle in human nature with men on earth, to which Solomon perhaps might have respect; his temple being the figure of his body, in which the Godhead dwells, (~~400~~ John 2:19 ~~500~~ Colossians 2:9 ~~4014~~ John 1:14)

behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; not, only the visible heavens, but the third heaven, where the throne of God is, and is the habitation of angels and saints; though there God makes the most glorious displays of himself yet he is so immense and infinite, that he is not to be comprehended and circumscribed in any place whatever:

how much less this house that I have builded? Though temples built for idols contain them, and are large enough, yet Solomon had no notion, when he built his temple, though it was for the name of God, that he was restrained to it, but dwelt everywhere, filling heaven and earth with his presence.

Ver. 28. *Yet have thou respect to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God,* etc.] Meaning himself, who, though a king acknowledged himself, and esteemed it an honour to be the servant of the Lord, and who was also an humble suppliant of his, and desired his prayers and supplications might be attended to:

to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day; the particulars of which follow.

Ver. 29. *That thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day,* etc.] That is, to the people that pray in it, as they are to his righteous ones, (~~4934~~ Psalm 33:14) even towards the place of which thou hast my name shall be there; there should be some displays of his presence, power, and providence, of goodness, grace, and mercy:

that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place; not only to what he should make in it, but to what he should make in his own house, with his face directed towards this, as would be, and was the practice of good people in later times, yea, even when the temple lay in ruins; (see ~~2760~~ Daniel 6:10) figuring the respect gracious souls have to Christ by faith in their prayers, in whom the Godhead dwells bodily, (see Jon 2:4) and it is observable, according to a Jewish canon ^{f151}, one at a distance, in another land, was not only to turn

his face to the land of Israel, but direct his heart to Jerusalem, and the temple, and the holy of holies; and if in the land, to Jerusalem, etc. and if in Jerusalem, not only to the temple, and holy of holies, but if behind the mercy seat, he was to turn his face to it; which was a symbol of Christ, the propitiatory and throne of grace, to be looked unto by faith, (^{}Romans 3:25 ^{<A>}1 John 2:2 ^{<S>}Hebrews 4:16).

Ver. 30. *And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place,* etc.] Not only he desires his prayers might be heard, but those of the people of Israel, then, and at all times in succeeding ages, whenever they should look towards the temple, and to him that was typified by it; to whose blood, righteousness, sacrifice and mediation, the acceptance of prayers with God is to be ascribed:

and hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace; for though he condescended to take up his residence in the temple, yet his more proper and more glorious dwelling was in heaven, and from whence, notwithstanding the distance of it, he could hear the prayers of his people, and does:

and when thou hearest, forgive; manifest and apply pardoning grace and mercy on account of sins confessed, and repented of; or remove calamities and distresses on account of sin, which sometimes is meant, and frequently in this prayer, by the forgiveness of sin.

Ver. 31. *If any man trespass against his neighbour,* etc.] By being unfaithful in a trust committed to him, or the like:

and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear; he denying that ever anything was committed to his trust, and there being no witnesses of it, the judge obliges him to take an oath he never had any:

and the oath come before thine altar in this house; where it was taken, as in the presence of God, and as appealing to him: hence in corrupt times they came to swear by the altar, (^{<A>}Matthew 23:20) and so the Heathens used to take their oaths in the temples of their gods, and at their altars, as the instances of Callicrates^{f152} and Hannibal^{f153} show, and others Grotius refers to; yea, they also laid hold on the altar, at least touched it when they swore^{f154} to give the greater sanction to the oath.

Ver. 32. *Then hear thou in heaven,* etc.] When the injured person makes supplication to have justice done him:

and do, and judge thy servants; contending with one another, the one affirming, the other denying

condemning the wicked, by bringing his way upon his head: inflicting upon him the punishment imprecated by him in his oath:

and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness; by making it appear that his cause is just.

Ver. 33. *When thy people Israel shall be smitten down before the enemy*, etc.] Beaten and routed, many slain, and others carried captive; which had been their case, and might be again, and was, though now a time of peace:

because they have sinned against thee; which always was the reason of their being given up into the hands of their enemies:

and shall turn again to thee; to thy worship, as the Targum, having fallen into idolatry, which was generally the case when they fell before their enemies:

and confess thy name; own him to be the true God, acknowledge his justice in their punishment, confess their sin, repent of it, and give him glory:

and pray and make supplication unto thee in this house; not the captives, unless it should be rendered, as it may, “toward this house”^{f155}; but those that escaped, or their brethren that went not out to battle, who should pray for them here.

Ver. 34. *Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel*, etc.] It being not personal, but public sins, which would be the cause of such a calamity:

and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers; as had been often their case in the time of the judges.

Ver. 35. *When heaven is shut up*, etc.] As it may be said to be when the air is quite serene, and not a cloud in it:

and there is no rain; in its season, neither the former nor the latter, as it was in the times of Elijah:

because they have sinned against thee; want of rain was threatened in case of sin, and was always the effect of it, (^{<1339>}Leviticus 26:19,20 ^{<1323>}Deuteronomy 28:23,24),

if they pray towards this place; in any part of the country where they were; for it sometimes rained on one city, and not on another, (^{<1047>}Amos 4:7)

and confess thy name; own his power and his providence, and the justness of his dealings with them:

and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them; their affliction being made useful, to bring them to a sense of their sin, and to repentance for it, and reformation from it; or, “when thou hearest” or “answerest them”, ^{f156}; so the Targum, receives their prayer; thus the goodness of God leads to repentance.

Ver. 36. *Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel*, etc.] By removing the judgment of drought upon them:

that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk; the way of worship and duty prescribed by the Lord which was good in itself, and good for them, good things being enjoyed by them that walk therein; and this the Lord sometimes teaches by afflictions, as well as by his word; but whenever he does it, it is by his Spirit, and then afflictions are blessings, (^{<1349>}Psalm 104:19 ^{<1467>}2 Chronicles 6:27) where the same phrase is differently rendered:

and give rain upon the land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance; as he did at the prayer of Elijah, (^{<1018>}James 5:18).

Ver. 37 *If there be in the land famine*, etc.] Through want of rain, or any other cause, as there had been a three years’ famine in the time of David, and it is supposed it might be again, though Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey:

if there be pestilence; as there had been, for David’s numbering the people:

blasting; or blights, occasioned by the east wind:

mildew; a kind of clammy dew, which falling on plants, corn, etc. corrupts and destroys them, (see ^{<1049>}Amos 4:9),

locust, or

if there be caterpillar; creatures very pernicious to the fruits of the earth, and cause a scarcity of them, (see ~~<3004>~~ Joel 1:4),

if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; so that they cannot go out to gather the increase of the earth, or till their land:

whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; whatever stroke from the hand of God, or what judgment or calamity soever befalls.

Ver. 38. *What prayer and supplication soever*, etc.] On account of any of the above things, or any other:

be [made] by any man, or by all the people Israel; by a private man, for such an one might go to the temple and pray by himself; (see ~~<2830>~~ Luke 18:10,11) or by the public congregation:

which shall know every man the plague of his own heart; be sensible of his sin as the cause of his distress, and own it, though ever so privately committed, which none knows but God and his own heart; and which may be only an heart sin, not actually committed; as all sin is originally in the heart, and springs from it, that is the source of all wickedness; it may respect the corruption of nature, indwelling sin, which truly deserves this name, and which every good man is led to observe, confess, and bewail, (~~<15104>~~ Psalm 51:4,5). In (~~<1463>~~ 2 Chronicles 6:29) it is,

shall know his own sore and his own grief; what particularly affects him, and gives him pain and sorrow, as every man best knows his own affliction and trouble, and so can best represent his own case to the Lord:

and spread forth his hands towards this house; pray with his face towards it, and his hands spread out, a prayer gesture, and what was now used by Solomon, (~~<1082>~~ 1 Kings 8:22).

Ver. 39. *Then hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace*, etc.] Which was more properly so than this Solomon had built, and the Lord had taken possession of:

and forgive; remove the calamity and distress, be it what it may:

and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest: that his prayer is cordial and sincere, his confession and repentance genuine, and that he is truly sensible of his sin, and sorry for it,

and is pure in his intentions and resolutions, through divine grace, to depart from it for the future:

(for thou, [even] thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) he knows all men, the hearts of them all, what is in them, what comes out of them, and is according to them; omniscience belongs only to God; it is his prerogative to know the heart and search the reins, (see ^{<217D>}Jeremiah 17:9,10).

Ver. 40. *That they may fear thee*, etc.] For his goodness sake in hearing their prayer, removing their affliction, and bestowing his blessings on them, particularly in forgiving their sins, (see ^{<1D0D>}Psalm 130:4 ^{<280B>}Hosea 3:5)

all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers; not only for the present, while the mercy is fresh, but all the days of their lives; to which they were the more obliged by the good land they possessed as a divine gift, and which they held by the tenure of their obedience, (^{<2019>}Isaiah 1:19).

Ver. 41. *Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel*, etc.] One of another country, not belonging to any of the tribes of Israel, yet having some knowledge of, and disposition to, the true worship of God:

but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; as the Ethiopian eunuch did, to pray to him, worship him, and offer such sacrifices as were allowed a Gentile to do, (^{<1D2B>}Leviticus 22:18) led thereunto by the fame of him, as follows.

Ver. 42. *(For they shall hear of thy great name*, etc.] Of his great name, Jehovah; of him as the eternal, immutable, and self-existent Being; of the perfections of his nature, as displayed in his mighty works:

and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm; which had done formerly such mighty works in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan, in the times of David, and still under the reign of Solomon, and even in future ages, besides the works of creation and providence in general:

when he shall come and pray towards this house; not being admitted into it, only into a court, which in later times was called the court of the Gentiles, (see ^{<4219>}Acts 21:19).

Ver. 43. *Hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace*, etc.] The prayer of the stranger:

and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; which were consistent with the will of God and his glory, and for the good of the stranger; this is more absolutely and unconditionally expressed than the requests for the Israelites; it is not desired that he would do by them according to their ways, and if they turned from their sins, or knew the plague of their hearts; the reason of which is supposed to be, because the Israelites knew the will of God, when the strangers did not; and therefore it is desired that, notwithstanding their ignorance, and their non-compliance with the divine will, through that, they might be heard and answered:

that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; might know him to be a God, hearing and answering prayer, forgiving sin, and bestowing favours, which might lead them to fear him and his goodness, as Israel did:

and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name; that he dwelt in it, granted his presence, heard and received the supplications of men, answered their requests, and accepted of their sacrifices here. Solomon seems to have had knowledge of the calling of the Gentiles, and to desire it.

Ver. 44. *If thy people go out to battle against their enemy*, etc.] In a foreign country, threatening to invade them, or having trespassed on their borders, or some way or other infringed on their liberties and privileges, and so given them just occasion to go to war with them:

whithersoever thou shalt send them; this case supposes their asking counsel of God, or having a direction and commission from him by a prophet, or some other way, to engage in war with the enemy:

and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house I have built for thy name: for, notwithstanding the justness of their cause, and having a warrant from God to go to war, yet they were to pray to him for success when at a distance, even in a foreign land, and about to engage the enemy; and this they were to do, turning their faces towards the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there; declaring thereby that their dependence was upon the Lord that dwelt there, and their expectation of victory was only from him.

Ver. 45. *Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication,* etc.] For success:

and maintain their cause; do them justice, and avenge their injuries, as the Targum; let it appear that their cause is right, by giving them victory.

Ver. 46. *If they sin against thee,* etc.] The same persons when they were gone forth to battle, not observing the divine commands as they should:

for there is no man that sinneth not; such are the depravity of human nature, the treachery of the heart, and the temptations of Satan, of which Solomon had early notice, and was afterwards still more confirmed in the truth of, (²⁰⁷²Ecclesiastes 7:20)

and thou be angry with them; for their sins, and resent their conduct:

so as to deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far or near; as into Assyria or Babylon, whither they were carried.

Ver. 47. *Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives,* etc.] Or, “return to their heart”^{f157}; remember their sins, the cause of their captivity, and reflect upon them:

and repent of them, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives; though and while they are in such a state:

saying, we have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; which phrases include all their sins, with all the aggravated circumstances of them, and their sense of them, and contrition for them.

Ver. 48. *And so return unto thee, with all their heart, and with all their soul,* etc.] In the most sincere and cordial manner, with great ingenuity and uprightness; the Targum is,

“return unto thy worship;”

relinquishing false worship they had given into, and serve the Lord in the best manner they could:

in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive; and so at a distance from that temple, and the service of it, which

Ver. 49. *Then hear thou their prayers, and their supplication, in heaven thy dwellingplace,* etc.] For their deliverance out of captivity: and maintain

their cause; plead it, and do them justice, avenge their injuries, and deliver them.

Ver. 50. *And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee*, etc.] By returning them to their own land; by which it would appear that the Lord had forgiven their trespasses, as well as by what follows:

and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them; for it is in the power of God to work upon the affections of men, and dispose their minds to use his people well, and to pity them under their distresses, as the Chaldeans did the Jews in Babylon, (^{<JAG66>}Psalm 106:46).

Ver. 51. *For they be thy people, and thine inheritance*, etc.] Whom the Lord had chosen above all people, to be a special people to him, and to be his portion and possession; (see ^{<RUB6>}Deuteronomy 7:6 32:9)

which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron; hard and cruel bondage in Egypt: (see Gill on “^{<RUB6>}Deuteronomy 4:20”).

Ver. 52. *That thine eyes may be open to the supplication of thy servant*, etc.] That is, attentive to it, meaning himself and his present supplication; or any other he should hereafter put up in this place:

and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call unto thee: at any time, and upon any account; so far as may be agreeable to his will, make for his glory, and their good; (see ^{<RUB6>}Deuteronomy 4:7).

Ver. 53. *For thou didst separate them from among all people of the earth to be thine inheritance*, etc.] By his choice of them in his own mind, by the redemption of them out of Egypt, by the peculiar laws he gave them, and by the special blessings he conferred upon them:

as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord our God; it was he that spake this to Moses, and by him to the people, (^{<RUB6>}Exodus 19:5,6) and it was he that did it, namely, separate them from all nations, to be his people and peculiar treasure: in this and the two preceding verses Solomon makes use of arguments taken from what the people of Israel were to the Lord, and he

had done for them, to engage him to hearken to their supplications, and here ends his long prayer; in (^{<44B>}2 Chronicles 6:1) some things are added at the close of it, and some omitted.

Ver. 54. *And it was so, that, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord,* etc.] In which he was a type of Christ, praying and interceding for his people before the golden altar, (^{<68B>}Revelation 8:3,4),

he arose from before the altar of the Lord; the altar of burnt offering, over against which he was:

from kneeling on his knees; upon the brasen scaffold; (see ^{<44B>}2 Chronicles 6:13), in which posture he was during this long prayer:

with his hands spread up to heaven; which gesture he had used in his prayer, and now continued in blessing the people.

Ver. 55. *And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice,* etc.] Turning himself the altar, and his face to the people, giving them his benediction, not only as the father of his people, but as preacher in Jerusalem, closing it with a word of exhortation to them:

saying: as follows.

Ver. 56. *Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according, to all that he promised* etc.] A land of rest, and rest in the land from all enemies; (see ^{<61B>}Deuteronomy 12:9,10),

there hath not failed one word of all his good promises, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant: so Joshua observed a little before his death, (^{<62B>}Joshua 23:14) to which Solomon seems to have respect; and who lived to see a greater accomplishment of the gracious promises of God, and his faithfulness therein, both in the times of his father David, and his own.

Ver. 57. *The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers,* etc.] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and those that came out of Egypt, and especially that entered into the land of Canaan under Joshua, and subdued it; as the Lord had been with them to guide and direct them, protect and defend them, succeed and prosper them, so Solomon desires he might be with them: nothing is more desirable than the presence of God; Solomon

could not have prayed for a greater blessing for himself and his people; the Targum is,

“let the Word of the Lord our God be for our help, as he was for the help of our fathers:”

let him not leave us, nor forsake us: this was no doubt a prayer of faith, founded upon a divine promise, (^{<BOOK>}Joshua 1:5).

Ver. 58. *That he may incline our hearts unto him,* etc.] By his Spirit, to love, fear, and serve him; to attend to his worship, word, and ordinances:

to walk in all his ways; he has prescribed and directed to:

and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers; all his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 59. *And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord,* etc.] At this time:

be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night; be continually remembered and regarded by him, that so gracious answers might always be returned to those who supplicated in this place:

that he maintain the cause of his servant; of himself and his successors in the throne, that they may continue to possess it in peace, to the glory of God, and the good of the people:

and the cause of his people Israel at all times: that their rights and privileges might be continued, and they supported in them; and both his cause and theirs be regarded:

as the matter shall require; as they should stand in need of assistance, direction, and protection.

Ver. 60. *That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God,* etc.] By chastising the people of Israel when they sinned; by bearing and answering their prayers when they prayed unto him; by forgiving their sins, and delivering them out of their troubles; by maintaining their cause, and protecting them in the enjoyment of their blessings: and that there is “none else”; no God besides him; all being else fictitious deities, or nominal ones; he only is the one living and true God.

Ver. 61. *Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord your God,* etc.] Sincere in their love to him, united in their worship of him, and constant in their obedience to him:

to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day: as they did that day, neither king nor people having as yet fallen into idolatry, but showing by their then present appearance a zeal for God, his house, and worship.

Ver. 62. *And the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord.*] For burnt offerings, which having been laid upon the altar, as soon as the king had done praying to God, and blessing the people, and exhorting them, fire came down from heaven, and consumed them; which showed the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifices, and was another confirmation, besides the cloud, of the Lord's well pleasedness with the temple, and of his taking possession of it to reside in it; upon which the people bowed and worshipped, and praised the Lord for his goodness and mercy, (~~400~~2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

Ver. 63. *And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord,* etc.] Part of which belonged to the offerer, and with those Solomon feasted the people all the days of the feast of the dedication, if not of tabernacles also; for the number was exceeding large, as follows:

22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep; which, as suggested, might be the number for all the fourteen days; nor need it seem incredible, since, as Josephus^{f158} says, at a passover celebrated in the times of Cestius the Roman governor, at the evening of the passover, in two hours time 256,500 lambs were slain; however, this was a very munificent sacrifice of Solomon's, in which he greatly exceeded the Heathens, whose highest number of sacrifices were hecatombs, or by hundreds, but his by thousands:

so the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord; devoted it to divine and religious worship by these sacrifices: hence in imitation of this sprung the dedication of temples with the Heathens; the first of which among the Romans was that in the capitol at Rome^{f159} by Romulus; the rites and ceremonies used therein by them may be read in Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and others^{f160}.

Ver. 64. *The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord,* etc.] The court of the priests that was before the holy place, adjoining to it, in which was the altar of burnt offering; this, or, however, the middle part of it, he sanctified for present use, to offer sacrifices on, for a reason hereafter given:

for there he offered burnt offerings and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings; which was the reason why the middle of the great court was for this time set apart for this service.

Ver. 65. *And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him,* etc.] Partaking of the parts of the peace offerings which belonged to him, and were offered by way of thanksgiving on the occasion, together with whatsoever he might as a liberal prince provide for this entertainment:

for it was for a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt; consisting of a number of people, gathered together from Hamath, which was on the northern border of the land of Israel, to the river of Egypt; either the Nile, or Rhinoculura, a branch of it, which lay on the southern border of the land: and this was kept

before the Lord; as in his presence, with thankfulness to him, and with a view to his glory:

seven days and seven days, even fourteen days; seven days for the dedication of the house, and seven days for the feast of tabernacles, as the Targum; which agrees with (^{<4470>}2 Chronicles 7:9), the feast of dedication was first, and began perhaps on the seventh day of the month, as the feast of tabernacles did on the fifteenth: within this time, namely, on the tenth, was a fast day, the day of atonement; which was either observed between the two feasts, or was omitted, which is not likely; or they did not eat and drink until the evening of that day. The Septuagint version, according to the Vatican copy, reads “seven days” only once; (see ^{<4478>}2 Chronicles 7:8).

Ver. 66. *On the eighth day he sent the people away,* etc.] That is, of the feast of tabernacles, the eighth from the first of that, which was a solemn day, and fell on the twenty second of the month; at the close of which the dismissal was made, or they had leave to go, but they did not until the twenty third, according to (^{<4470>}2 Chronicles 7:10)

and they blessed the king; returned him thanks for his care, and charge, and pains, in building the temple; for prayers for them, and the feast he had now made, and wished all health and happiness to him:

and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart; or to their cities, as the Targum, to their several habitations; being greatly delighted with what they had seen and heard, and partook of especially:

for all the goodness the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people; in (~~4170~~2 Chronicles 7:10), it is added, “unto Solomon”; for David, in giving him such a son and successor, who according to promise had built the house of the Lord; and for Solomon, in raising him up to such dignity, and enabling him to build such a temple for the worship of God and his glory; and for the people of Israel, in giving them such a king to rule over them, under whom they enjoyed so much peace and prosperity, and the full and free exercise of the true religion, with such accommodations, and in such a splendid manner as now.