

CHAPTER 8

In this chapter we are told,

- I.** What cities Solomon built (v. 1-6).
- II.** What workmen Solomon employed (v. 7-10).
- III.** What care he took about a proper settlement for his wife (v. 11).
- IV.** What a good method he put the temple-service into (v. 12-16).
- V.** What trading he had with foreign countries (v. 17, 18).

~~<400>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 8:1-11

SOLOMON'S BUILDINGS

This we had ~~<1000>~~ 1 Kings 9:10-24, and therefore shall only observe here,

I. Though Solomon was a man of great learning and knowledge, yet he spent his days, not in contemplation, but in action, not in his study, but in his country, in building cities and fortifying them, in a time of peace preparing for a time of war, which is as much a man's business as it is in summer to provide food for winter.

II. As he was a man of business himself, and did not consult his own ease, so he employed a great many hands, kept abundance of people to work. It is the interest of a state by all means possible to promote and encourage industry, and to keep its subjects from idleness. A great many strangers there were in Israel, many that remained of the Canaanites; and they were welcome to live there, but not to live and do nothing. The men of Laish, who had no business, were an easy prey to the invaders, ~~<0780>~~ Judges 18:7.

III. When Solomon had begun with building the house of God, and made good work and quick work of that, he prospered in all his undertakings, so that *he built all that he desired to build*, v. 6. Those who have a genius for

building find that one project draws on another, and the latter must amend and improve the former. Now observe,

1. How the divine providence gratified even Solomon's humour, and gave him success, not only in all that he needed to build and that it was for his advantage to build, but in all that he had a mind to build. So indulgent a Father God is sometimes to the innocent desires of his children that serve him. Thus he pleased Jacob with that promise, *Joseph shall put his hand on thy eyes.*

2. Solomon knew how to set bounds to his desires. He was not one of those that enlarge them endlessly, and can never be satisfied, but knew when to draw in; for he finished all he desired, and then he desired no more. He did not sit down and fret that he had not more cities to build, as Alexander did that he had not more worlds to conquer, ~~see~~ Habakkuk 2:5.

IV. That one reason why Solomon built a palace on purpose for the queen, and removed her and her court to it, was because he thought it by no means proper that she should *dwell in the house of David* (v. 11), considering that that had been a place of great piety, and perhaps her house was a place of great vanity. She was proselyted, it is likely, to the Jewish religion; but it is a question whether all her servants were. Perhaps they had among them the idols of Egypt, and a great deal of profaneness and debauchery. Now, though Solomon had not zeal and courage enough to suppress and punish what was amiss there, yet he so far consulted the honour of his father's memory that he would not suffer that place to be thus profaned where the ark of God had been and where holy David had prayed many a good prayer and sung many a sweet psalm. Not that all the places where the ark had been were so holy as never to be put to a common use; for then the houses of Abinadab and Obed-edom must have been so. But the place where it had been so long, and had been so publicly attended on, was so venerable that it was not fit to be the place of so much gaiety, not to say iniquity, as was to be found, I fear, in the court that Pharaoh's daughter kept. Note, Between things sacred and things common the ancient landmarks ought to be kept up. It was an outer-court of the temple that was the *court of the women.*

<482>2 CHRONICLES 8:12-18

SOLOMON'S DEVOTION

Here is,

I. Solomon's devotion. The building of the temple was in order to the service of the temple. Whatever cost he was at in rearing the structure, if he had neglected the worship that was to be performed there, it would all have been to no purpose. Assisting the devotion of others will not atone for our own neglects. When Solomon had built the temple,

1. He kept up the holy sacrifices there, according to the law of Moses, v. 12, 13. In vain had the altar been built, and in vain had fire come down from heaven, if sacrifices had not been constantly brought as the food of the altar and the fuel of that fire. There were daily sacrifices, *a certain rate every day*, as duly as the day came, weekly sacrifices on the sabbath, double to what was offered on other days, monthly sacrifices *on the new moons*, and yearly sacrifices at the three solemn feasts. Those are spiritual sacrifices that are now required of us, which we are to bring daily and weekly; and it is good to be in a settled method of devotion.

2. He kept up the holy songs there, according to the *law of David*, who is here called the *man of God*, as Moses was, because he was both instructed and authorised of God to make these establishments; and Solomon took care to see them observed *as the duty of every day required*, v. 14. Solomon, though a wise and great man and the builder of the temple, did not attempt to amend, alter, or add to what the man of God had, in God's name, commanded, but closely adhered to that, and used his authority to have that duly observed; and then *none departed from the commandment of the king concerning any matter*, v. 15. He observed God's laws, and then all obeyed his orders. When the service of the temple was put into this good order, then it is said, *The house of the Lord was perfected*, v. 16. The work was the main matter, not the place; the temple was unfinished till all this was done.

II. Solomon's merchandise. He did himself in person visit the sea-port towns of Eloth and Ezion-geber; for those that deal much in the world will find it their interest, as far as they can, to inspect their affairs themselves and to see with their own eyes, v. 17. Canaan was a rich country, and yet

must send to Ophir for gold; the Israelites were a wise and understanding people, and yet must be beholden to the king of Tyre for *men that had knowledge of the seas*, v. 18. Yet Canaan was God's peculiar land, and Israel God's peculiar people. This teaches us that grace, and not gold, is the best riches, and acquaintance with God and his law, not with arts and sciences, the best knowledge.