

CHAPTER 9

Solomon here continues to appear great both at home and abroad. We had this account of his grandeur, 1 Kings 10. Nothing is here added; but his defection towards his latter end, which we have there (2 Chronicles 11), is here omitted, and the close of this chapter brings him to the grave with an unstained reputation. Perhaps none of the chapters in the Chronicles agree so much with a chapter in the Kings as this does with 1 Kings 10 verse for verse, only that the first two verses there are put into one here, and verse 25 here is taken from ~~<1006>~~1 Kings 4:26, and the last three verses here from ~~<1114>~~1 Kings 11:41-43. Here is,

- I.** The honour which the queen of Sheba did to Solomon, in the visit she made him to hear his wisdom (v. 1-12).
- II.** Many instances given of the riches and splendour of Solomon's court (v. 13-28).
- III.** The conclusion of his reign (v. 29-31).

~~<400>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 9:1-12

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

This passage of story had been largely considered in the Kings; yet, because our Saviour has proposed it as an example to us in our enquiries after him (~~<402>~~Matthew 12:42), we must not pass it over without observing briefly,

- 1.** *Those who honour God he will honour,* ~~<021>~~1 Samuel 2:30. Solomon had greatly honoured God, in building, beautifying, and dedicating the temple; all his wisdom and all his wealth were employed for the making of that a consummate piece: and now God made his wisdom and wealth to redound greatly to his reputation. The way to have both the credit and comfort of all our endowments and all our enjoyments is to consecrate them to God and use them for him.
- 2.** Those who know the worth of true wisdom will grudge no pains nor cost to obtain it. The queen of Sheba put herself to a great deal of trouble

and expense to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and yet, learning from him to serve God and do her duty, she thought herself well paid for her pains. Heavenly wisdom is that *pearl of great price* which is a good bargain to purchase by parting with all that we have.

3. As every man has received the gift so he ought to minister the same for the edification of others, as he has opportunity. Solomon was communicative of his wisdom and willing to teach others what he knew himself. Being taught of God, freely he had received, and freely he gave. Let those that are rich in wisdom, as well as wealth, learn *to do good and be ready to distribute. Give to every one that asketh.*

4. Good order in a family, a great family, especially in the things of God, and a regular discharge of the duties of religious worship, are highly expedient, and to be much admired wherever found. The queen of Sheba was exceedingly affected to see the propriety with which Solomon's servants attended him and with which both he and they attended in the house of God. David's ascent to the house of the Lord was also pleasant and interesting, ^{<1904>}Psalm 42:4.

5. Those are happy who have the opportunity of a constant converse with such as are knowing, wise, and good. The queen of Sheba thought Solomon's servants happy who continually *heard his wisdom*; for, it seems, even to them he was communicative. And it is observable that the posterity of those who had places in his court were willing to have the names of their ancestors forgotten, and thought themselves sufficiently distinguished and dignified when they were called the *children of Solomon's servants* (^{<1925>}Ezra 2:55; ^{<1075>}Nehemiah 7:57); so eminent were they that it was honour enough to be named from them.

6. We ought to rejoice and give God thanks for the gifts, graces, and usefulness, of others. The queen of Sheba blessed God for the honour he put upon Solomon, and the favour he did to Israel, in advancing him to the throne, v. 8. By giving God the praise of the prosperity of others, we share in the comfort of it; whereas, by envying the prosperity of others, we lose the comfort even of our own. The happiness of both king and kingdom she traces up to the fountain of all bliss, the divine favour: it was because *thy God delighted in thee* and because he *loved Israel*. Those mercies are doubly sweet in which we can taste the kindness and good will of God as our God.

7. It becomes those that are wise and good to be generous according to their place and power. The queen of Sheba was so to Solomon, Solomon was so to her, v. 9, 12. They both knew how to value wisdom, and therefore were neither of them covetous of their money, but cultivated the acquaintance and confirmed the friendship they had contracted by mutual presents. Our Lord Jesus has promised to give us all our desire: *Ask, and it shall be given you.* Let us study what we shall render to him, and not think any thing too much to do, or suffer, or part with, for him.

~~<49B>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 9:13-31

THE DEATH OF SOLOMON

We have here Solomon in his throne, and Solomon in his grave; for the throne would not secure him from the grave. *Mors scepra ligonibus aequat* — *Death wrenches from the hand the sceptre as well as the spade.*

I. Here is Solomon reigning in wealth and power, in ease and fulness, such as, for aught I know, could never since be paralleled by any king whatsoever. In cannot pretend to be critical in comparing the grandeur of Solomon with that of some of the great princes of the earth. But I may observe that the most illustrious of them were famed for their wars, whereas Solomon reigned forty years in profound peace. Some of those that might be thought to vie with Solomon affected retirement, kept people in awe by keeping them at a great distance; nobody must see them, or come near him, upon pain of death: but Solomon went much abroad, and appeared in public business. So that, all things considered, the promise was fulfilled, that God would give him riches, and wealth, and honour, such as no kings *have had, or shall have,* ~~<40I2>~~ 2 Chronicles 1:12.

1. Never any prince appeared in public with great splendour than Solomon did, which to those that judge by the sight of the eye, as most people do, would very much recommend him. He had 200 targets and 300 shields, all of beaten gold, carried before him (v. 15, 16), and sat upon a most stately throne, v. 17-19. *There was not the like in any kingdom.* The lustre wherein he appeared was typical of the spiritual glory of the kingdom of the Messiah and but a faint representation of his throne, which is above every throne. Solomon's pomp was all artificial; and therefore our Saviour

prefers the natural beauty of the *lilies of the field* before it. ^{<1069>}Matthew 6:29, *Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.*

2. Never any prince had greater plenty of gold and silver, though there were no gold or silver mines in his own kingdom. Either he made himself master of the mines in other countries, and, having a populous country, sent hands to dig out those rich metals, or, having a fruitful country, he exported the commodities of it and with them fetched home all this gold that is here spoken of, v. 13, 14-21.

3. Never any prince had such presents brought him by all his neighbours as Solomon had: *All the kings of Arabia, and governors of the country, brought him gold and silver* (v. 14), not as tribute which he extorted from them, but as freewill offerings to procure his favour, or in a way of exchange for some of the productions of his husbandry, corn or cattle. All the kings of the earth brought him presents, that is, all in those parts of the world (v. 24, 28), because they coveted his acquaintance and friendship. Herein he was a type of Christ, to whom, as soon as he was born, the wise men of the east brought presents, *gold, frankincense, and myrrh* (^{<4013>}Matthew 2:11), and to whom all that are about him must bring presents, ^{<9761>}Psalms 76:11; ^{<5111>}Romans 12:1.

4. Never any prince was so renowned for wisdom, so courted, so consulted, so admired (v. 23): *The kings of the earth* (for it was too great a favour for common persons to pretend to) *sought to hear his wisdom* — his natural philosophy, or his skill in physic, or his state policy, or his rules of prudence for the conduct of human life, or perhaps the principles of his religion, and the reasons of it. The application which they then made to Solomon to hear his wisdom will aggravate, shame, and condemn, men's general contempt of Christ and his gospel. Though in them are *hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yet none of the princes of this world* desire to know them, for they are foolishness to them, ^{<4018>}1 Corinthians 2:8, 14.

II. Here is Solomon dying, stripped of his pomp, and leaving all his wealth and power, not to one concerning whom he knew not *whether he would be a wise man or a fool* (^{<2129>}Ecclesiastes 2:19), but who he knew would be a fool. This was not only vanity but vexation of spirit, v. 29-31. It is very observable that no mention is here made of Solomon's departure from God in his latter days, not the least hint given of it,

1. Because the Holy Ghost would teach us not to take delight in repeating the faults and follies of others. If those that have been in reputation for wisdom and honour misbehave, though it may be of use to take notice of their misconduct for warning to ourselves and others, yet we must not be forward to mention it, once the speaking of it is enough; why should that unpleasing string be again struck upon? Why can we not do as the sacred historian here does, speak largely of that in others which is praise-worthy, without saying any thing of their blemishes, yea, though they have been gross and obvious? This is but doing as we would be done by.

2. Because, though he fell, yet he was not utterly cast down. His sin is not again recorded, because it was repented of, and pardoned, and became as if it had never been. Scripture-silence sometimes speaks. I am willing to believe that its silence here concerning the sin of Solomon is an intimation that none of the sins he committed were mentioned against him, ^{<5316}Ezekiel 33:16. When God pardons sin he *casts it behind his back and remembers it no more.*