

himself to the Hebrew mind, and made the temple at Jerusalem the place of his actual residence; and in the nature of things there could only be one such place on earth. There were temples of Jupiter innumerable; for pagan temples were merely shrines, places of worship. There is no limit to the number of mosques and churches; for they are simply places for preaching and prayer and ritual service. But the temple at Jerusalem stood as God's abode.

7, 8. As for me. "If you ask why I did not do it myself." **It was in my mind.** Literally, "I, it was in my heart." **The word of the Lord came unto me.** This "word of the Lord" came doubtless in the necessities of the course of David's government, as well as by the voice of the prophet. When Nathan spoke he referred to David's wars only to emphasize God's assistance given to him; but the devout Hebrews regarded all providential leadership as the true command of God. **Hast shed blood abundantly.** Thoroughly justifiably, also, as David doubtless believed; nevertheless to his higher ethical sense these earlier duties unfitted him for the performance of this holy task, which he had hoped would glorify the closing years of his reign, and which he now passes over to his successor. Then, too, the empire must be thoroughly won and strengthened before the house of God could be safely founded. **Made great wars.** How "great" may be seen when we recall that in thirty years the domain of Israel had been increased from nine thousand to sixty thousand square miles, and that David bequeathed to Solomon authority over all the lands between the Nile and the Euphrates.

9. Behold, a son shall be born to thee. Better, "is born." **A man of rest.** Not, like David himself, a man who conquered peace, but a man who inherited peace. The fitness of his name, Solomon, *Peaceful*, is thus seen. Read 1 Kings 5, 4 and the verses following for a description of the profound peace which Israel enjoyed under Solomon's reign—a peace which was disturbed, indeed, during his closing years by revolts and conspiracies, but not until after his lapse into idolatry.

10. Compare 1 Chron. 17, 12 and the following verses. The lifework of Solomon was the erection of the temple on Mount Moriah. That building meant more to the world than any other edifice of human construction. No Christian or Mohammedan or pagan shrine, no matter how famous, ever kept any other such shrine from becoming famous; but, as we have seen, Solomon's temple was exclusive; there never could be another; there might be—there were later—many synagogues, but God could only have one house. **He shall be my son, and I will be his father.** Solomon was God's son in a peculiar sense. He was raised up for this one work, specially endowed to do it, and specially cared for till it was done. **I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.**

Like all God's promises this was conditioned on the faithfulness of those to whom it was made.

11. The Lord be with thee. A very definite prayer. Often we are told in the sacred record that "the Lord was with David;" repeatedly we are told that the Lord stood by Paul. Beside every faithful disciple stands his Lord. **Prosper thou.** Prosperity is measurably under the control of men. **Build the house of the Lord thy God, as he has said of thee.** As we have already seen, the erection of this house was Solomon's one great life-task.

12. Only. Also. The Lord give thee. Better, "The Lord will give thee." **Wisdom and understanding.** How well this promise was fulfilled is shown in the third chapter of First Kings. **Keep the law of the Lord.** As Solomon's temple stood for Jehovah's worship, Solomon himself must stand for Jehovah's law.

13. If thou takest heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments, etc. Instead of "to fulfill" read "to do." The language corresponds with many passages in Deuteronomy. (See Deut. 4, 1; 5, 1; 7, 4, 11; 11, 32; 31, 6, 8; Josh. 1, 7.) No injunction is needed by the ordinary Christian more frequently than that of the closing words of this verse. To everyone to-day comes the command, **Be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.** The besetting sin of Christendom is spiritual cowardice.

14. In my trouble. Glorious as had been David's career, it had brought also bitterness which his own heart only knew. But through all his anxieties and blunders and sins this one purpose had endured—to build a house for the Lord, and by straining every power he had prepared for it. **A hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver.** It is hard for us to understand for just how much wealth these figures stand. There were two sorts of "shekels"—the sacred and the secular; that is, the "Mosaic," and the "king's-weight;" and it has been assumed by some scholars that the "king's-weight" shekels were only half as weighty and half as valuable as the "Mosaic." If the talent of silver was valued at three thousand shekels of silver, as is commonly supposed, and if the "Mosaic" shekel of silver be taken, the entire sum of gold and silver gathered would amount to almost four billions of dollars. This would seem to be incredible. But the whole subject of Hebrew figures is wrapped in perplexity. We know something of the extent of David's conquests; and from other records we learn what enormous sums of gold and silver fell into the hands of the conquerors of royal cities. One can hardly follow the record of Alexander the Great and count the thousands of talents of precious metals he captured without becoming bewildered and dizzy; in Syria he found colossal idols of solid gold. Gold pins captured from temples and palaces were used as orna-