

and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee *in* this house :

m Deut. 28. 25. — *n* Lev. 26. 39. — *f* Or, toward.
34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

35 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee ; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them :

36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach *o* them the *p* good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

o Ps. 5. 8 ; 25. 4, 5 ; 27. 11 ; 86. 11 ; 94. 12 ; 119. 133 ; 143. 8 ; Isa. 35. 8 ; Hos. 2. 21. — *p* 1 Sam. 12. 23 ; Jer. 6. 16.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The most magnificent celebration in all Jewish history was that when the temple was consecrated to the worship of Jehovah. Upon that day Solomon stood, indeed, in all his glory, a glory too soon to be obscured. The outer court of the temple was thronged with representatives of the people from every part of the empire, from the borders of the Nile to those of the Euphrates. Within stood the robed priests and chanting choirs of Levites, upon the elevated square, from which rose on one side the smoking altar, and on the other the brazen sea, glittering in the sun. A procession came from the old tabernacle at Gibeon, and another from the new tent on Zion, bearing the sacred furniture and the holy ark, which was placed in its final resting-place within the holy of holies, from whence a dark cloud arose, overshadowing the house, and proclaiming that God had taken possession of his home. In front of the altar, and before the door of the house, stood a platform of brass, reserved for the king, who as a consecrated person stood within the court of priests. King Solomon rose, stretched out his arms, lifted up his hands, and fell upon his knees in prayer, while the vast congregation stood silent, joining in spirit with the offered supplication. In this prayer the king rose to the height of the old covenant conception of God, as a Being who was at once the Lord of all the universe, dwelling in the heavens, and yet manifesting his presence among men.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 22. And Solomon stood. Rather, "took his stand." It does not refer to his attitude, but to the place. He was in a kneeling posture during prayer. Ver 54, Before the altar. In the court of priests, which the king entered as a sacred personage, a platform of brass had been erected in front of the altar, and upon this Solomon knelt. Notice that the king, and not the high-priest, conducted the services, offered the prayer, and blessed the people. All the congregation.

The priests were in the inner court and the people filled the outer. Spread forth his hands. A posture appropriate for supplication. 1. God can hear our prayers, whatever may be our bodily attitude.

23. And he said. The prayer begins appropriately with praise. There is no God like thee. He meant that the God of Israel stands alone, as the only God in the universe. Who keepest covenant and mercy. Fulfilling his promises in keeping covenant, and doing more in showing mercy. That walk before thee. The covenant implies fidelity on the side of man as well as of God. 2. God has done great things for us and expects great things of us. With all their heart. That is, with all the power and fullness of the nature.

24. 25. Who hast kept. God had promised to David that his son should inherit his throne and should build the temple. This promise had now been fulfilled. Therefore now . . . keep. He now prays that the rest of the promise may be realized in the permanence of his family and his throne. So that thy children take heed. Here, again, is the condition of the promise, depending upon the fidelity of his descendants.

26. And now. This verse has been considered by some commentators as referring to the same subject as the preceding ; by others as connected with the following verse, and a prayer that God will verify his promise to make the temple his dwelling-place. This promise is contained in Psa. 132. 13, 14.

27. But will God indeed dwell. Solomon holds the true conception of Deity, that he is no local being, confined to a land or a place, (as was the idea of the ancients,) but omnipresent and universal. Heaven of heavens. The most exalted and extended idea of infinity. How much less this house. He meant that God could not be shut up in a house ; yet that there was a manifestation of divine presence in the temple. 3. Though God is everywhere, yet he has his home in the hearts of his people.

28. Yet have thou respect. The especial petition of Solomon was, that God would hear his prayer *thou*, which was that he would always hear prayer directed towards his house. Thy servant. Solomon was a great king, but his highest title was "servant of Jehovah," and of it he was scarcely worthy. 4. Before God's altar all kings are servants, and even servants are princes.

29. That thine eyes may be open towards this house. Not to protect the building, but to look upon all who should pray there. Of which thou hast said. Not given in any recorded revelation, but indicated by the current of prophecy and history. My name shall be there. God's name means his presence, his glory, and his favor. Toward this place. Wherever the Israelite might dwell in the land or wander afar he turned his face toward the temple when he prayed,