

I. WHAT THE QUEEN OF SHEBA HEARD.

The visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon was an event of very great significance. Other potentates sent embassies to congratulate him and solicit alliances for their mutual political and commercial benefit, but this noble minded woman came in person to hear with her own ears the wisdom of this gifted king and learn from him the solution of the great problems which divine revelation alone can explain. These, we take it, were the "hard questions" with which she wished to "prove" Solomon, not clever enigmas and puzzles befitting the hours of recreation.

1. *The fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the Lord.* It speaks well for Solomon that wherever his wisdom and wealth were renowned, men coupled his gifts and prosperity with the blessing of God. Courtiers take their cue from the king, and had Solomon been of like boastful mind with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4: 30) he could easily have put himself and not God in the foreground. He gave God the glory due unto his name and all the world looked with reverence towards His temple (ch. 8: 41, 42). As Christians it is our duty and privilege to hold up Christ as the author of all our blessings and so to use our gifts and opportunities that "men seeing our good works may glorify," not us, but "our Father which is in heaven." *She came to prove him with hard questions.* Long journeys have been undertaken for less worthy objects. For gold or silver or diamonds; for articles of commerce; in pursuit of scientific or geographical knowledge; or in the mere spirit of adventure, men have braved dangers and endured hardships in barbarous and inhospitable countries. Yet, there is a better motive still. The wise men came from the distant east in order to lay their offerings at the feet of Jesus, and missionaries travel further than either they, or Sheba's queen, to tell the story of that birth to nations that sit in moral darkness. We do not need to take long and expensive journeys to have our questions answered. We can bring them all to Jesus and his Word, and learn more than Solomon could ever teach. We may commune with Him of all that is in our hearts and He will leave no perplexity unsolved, no sorrow un comforted.

II. WHAT THE QUEEN OF SHEBA SAW.

Had she visited Jerusalem from mere motives

of curiosity she would doubtless have seen much to excite her admiration. Not even Egypt, or more ancient Assyria, could have rivalled the land of Israel in interesting evidences of progress. It was the most "modern" kingdom of the age. On one subject alone the queen's attention was concentrated,—the wonderful wisdom of the inspired monarch. This was shewn in:

4. *The house that he had built.* This was probably the royal palace at Jerusalem which occupied thirteen years in building. It stands for all Solomon's architectural wonders, his cool retreat at the foot of Mount Lebanon and his gardens at Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The temple itself is not mentioned but the palace was on the temple platform and the queen's admiration probably embraced the whole of the structures crowning the artificial area on the summit of Mt. Moriah.

5. *The meat of his table &c.* The arrangements of Solomon's household were on a scale of magnificence in keeping with the splendor of his palaces. Lavish abundance, enjoyed with dignity and decorum was characteristic of his banquets, in striking contrast with oriental customs as exhibited later at the court of Belshazzar. *His ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord.* "She could not indeed enter the courts of the temple, or examine its molten sea, and its carvings of palm, lotus and cherubim, for she was a heathen; but she saw the golden shields carried before him, as he went thither in state, and the mound across the valley, and the gilded sandal wood staircase by which he ascended to the house of the Lord." (Farrar). She observed with what gravity, and seriousness, and an air of devotion in his countenance, he appeared, when he went to the temple, to worship God, with as much humility there, as majesty at other times. She observed with what a generous bounty he brought his sacrifices, and with what a pious fervor he attended the offering of them. Never did she see so much goodness with so much greatness. (Com. Com). This was the combination which filled her with astonishment and admiration. Such a union is as beautiful to-day as when Solomon lived. Too often an accession of good fortune is followed by neglect of religious duties and conformity to the world, the Bible is less read, closer devotions are curtailed, the prayer meeting is