

The Temple Dedicated.

DECEMBER 1 B.C. 1005. 1 KINGS 8: 54-63

Golden Text, Hab. 2: 20.

THE first great work of Solomon's reign was the building of the temple, thus fulfilling the prophecy in 2 Sam. 7: 12, 13. It took over eight years to complete it. It was erected on Mount Moriah, thought by some to be the place where Abraham intended to offer up his son Isaac, Gen. 22: 2. This temple, several times pillaged by the enemies of Israel, was utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, 415 years after its dedication, 2 Kings 25: 8, 9. The temple was dedicated in the month called "Ethanim," our September, ch. 8: 2. Solomon had assembled all the leading men of Israel and all the priests. An immense crowd gathered to witness the ceremonies vs. 1-4. The Ark was first carried from Zion, where David had placed it, 2 Sam. 8: 17, to the "Oracle," or most holy place, in the temple, v. 6. It contained only the tables of the law, v. 9, Exod. 40: 20. A cloud like one which had led Israel through the wilderness, called in v. 11, "the glory of the Lord," filled the house, striking the beholders with awe. Solomon solemnly blessed the people, and briefly addressed them, vs. 15-21. Then, kneeling before the altar, he spread forth his hands to heaven and offered the beautiful prayer of consecration recorded in vs. 22-53. V. 54. *Kneeling*—He had first stood, v. 22, but when he prayed, he knelt, 2 Chron. 6: 13, a noble example to the multitude when they saw their King thus humbling himself before the Lord. V. 56. *There has not failed one word*—God is ever mindful of his covenant, Ps. 111: 5; 2 Cor. 1: 20. Therefore his people can rest surely. V. 57. *God be with us*—to give us rest and peace, Exod. 33: 14-16. To be forsaken of God is the depth of misery, 2 Chron. 15: 2. V. 58. *Incline our hearts*—Without the help of God, our hearts would always incline to evil, Ezek. 11: 19-20; Phil. 2: 13. This help is obtained by prayer, Eph. 6: 18; Phil. 4: 6. V. 59. *That he maintain*—We pray for the same favour. Christ maintains the cause of his disciples against the adversary, Rev. 12: 10. *At all times*—So that our strength may be as our days, Deut. 33: 25. This will glorify God before all men, v. 60, and lead many to fear Him, Josh. 4: 24. V. 62. *Be perfect*—Let our piety be complete in all its parts, Matt. 5: 48. V. 63. *Sacrifices of peace offerings*, on an unprecedented scale, now concluded the solemn proceedings. Henceforth the house would be known as the "Temple of the Lord" Christians are temples of God, 1 Cor. 3: 16. They are also dedicated to him. Hence their duty to live to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10: 31. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, Phil. 3: 15.

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

DECEMBER 8. B.C. 993. 1. KINGS 10: 1-13.

Golden Text, Matt. 12: 42.

UNDER Solomon's wise rule, the commercial relations of Judæa with foreign lands were rapidly developed. He caused a navy to be built, ch. 9: 26, and sent it to distant ports, whence it brought back much wealth, ch. 10: 22, and his officers made known his wisdom and greatness. V. 1. *The Queen of Sheba*—heard thus of Solomon's fame. It is not certain where Sheba was situated. Some think it was in Ethiopia, others in South Arabia, where spices, gold and precious stones are still found, v. 2. *The Name of the Lord*—If he was the author of Solomon's wisdom, she wished to know more of him. She did not think that travelling from "the ends of the earth" was paying too high for the knowledge she sought. Hence, Jesus holds her up as an example to those men who, having the means of grace at their very doors remain indifferent, Matt. 12: 42. V. 2. *Gold*—Like the wise men of the East, she came not empty handed, Matt. 2: 11, Prov. 3: 13-15. V. 3. *Questions*—To all of these, whether important, frivolous, or captious, Solomon gave wise answers. V. 5. *His ascent*—She was deeply impressed with the magnificence of Solomon's court, but above all with the profound respect with which he approached the altar of the Lord. His devotion and earnestness were so different from the perfunctory way of the heathen priests in their official worship, that "there was no more spirit in her." She stood amazed, and owned, not only that all she had heard was true, but, v. 7, that *the half*—had not been told. Thus, when men, hearing of Christ's glory, and of his great salvation, come to him and get to know him, they find revelations of his love undreamt of before, 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10. And yet the graces that can be known now are not the half of those yet to be revealed, 1 Peter, 1: 4, 13; Rev. 7: 15-17. V. 9. *Blessed be*—the Lord, thy God! The Queen of Sheba became a royal convert to the God of Israel, for she acknowledged: 1st, his power, "he set thee;" 2nd, his love, "the Lord loved;" 3rd, his faithfulness, "forever;" and his righteousness, for he made Solomon king "to do judgment and justice" V. 10. *She gave*—proving that her faith was a living one, by her works, Jas. 2: 17. V. 10. *120 talents*—About three millions and a half of dollars. Truly, a royal gift! V. 11. *Almug-trees*—the black acacia, (calmet). V. 13. Although Solomon was rich enough not to need the Queen of Sheba's gifts, he accepted them graciously, and gave her "all she asked for," and more still, "of his royal bounty," a type of Christ, who accepts the little we can do for him, grants us our prayers, and gives us above all that we ask or think," Eph. 3: 20.