

THE TEMPLE DEDICATED.

– NOVEMBER 8. – 1 KINGS 8:54-63. –

THE first verse of this lesson draws our attention to the prayer of Solomon in connection with the dedicating of the temple to God and his worship. Not only does the construction of the temple give evidence of Solomon's earnestness toward God and his desire to walk in the ways of wisdom, but now that its construction is finished his prayer and its dedication bear testimony to the same. His faith toward God and his humility of heart are everywhere manifested, not only in the words of his address in prayer, but also in his attitude upon his knees before the Lord, and in the sight of the people, with his hands spread up to heaven. It is a beautiful picture, and suggests to us the importance of not only having good desires, but also of permitting those desires to occupy our time, thoughts and attention fully; for during all the period of the construction of this great temple for the Lord, we may suppose that Solomon was kept very actively engaged as the chief supervisor of its construction; and we may reasonably suppose that during this time he was a most model ruler, walking in the reverence of the Lord. Well would it have been for him had his time always been similarly well filled with works for the glory of God, or for the good of God's people. It was after this great work had been accomplished, that he began selfishly to turn his thoughts to self-gratification, which ultimately led him into devious paths, which were far from wise, according to the expression of his own proverbs.

Verses 55-61 give Solomon's address to the people – a benediction and exhortation combined. In this, as in his prayer, Solomon shows great modesty, as well as zeal for the Lord and for righteousness; for he included himself as well as all the people in the exhortation, "Let him not leave us nor forsake us."

Verses 62 and 63 give some conception of the importance of this occasion in the estimation of the whole nation – as indicated by the enormous sacrifice offered.

It was following the dedicatory prayer and the offering of the sacrifices that God accepted the temple and manifested that acceptance by causing the shekinah glory to shine upon the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy, thus indicating a transfer of the Divine presence with Israel, from the Tabernacle (the temporary, movable place of worship) to this, as the permanent place for the manifestation of God's presence in the midst of the people. The typical features of this will be readily discerned by all. As the shekinah glory in the Tabernacle represented God's presence with Israel, accompanying their wilderness journey and difficulties, so now the anti-type of this is God's presence with the Church of the Gospel age in its present temporary or tabernacle condition; and so the coming of the divine glory upon the completed temple represented the future glory of the Church when its living stones shall have been brought together, when that which is perfect shall have come. The glory in the Tabernacle was merely a foretaste and illustration of the greater glory of the temple; and so in the Church's experience, the present indwelling of the Holy spirit in God's Church is only the "first fruits of the spirit," in comparison to the fullness of the spirit which will be ours when the temple of God shall have been completed, glorified, filled with his spirit.
