

ished by defeat in battle and being carried away captive, then when the people prayed toward that house, his petition is that God would hear and forgive and bring them back to the land of their fathers. Doubtless Solomon had in mind the threats of Lev. 26: 11-17, and of Dent. 28: 15-25; "confess thy name;" acknowledging their sins, that they were justly punished, and making supplication, "in," rather "toward," as in the margin; they could not make supplication "in" the house when in a strange land. This, to a Jew, was one of the greatest calamities that could fall upon him and so it has a prominent place in the prayer.

Ver. 35, 36. Another petition based upon the moral certainty of the people sinning and of other threatened judgments coming upon them; "heaven is shut up—no rain;" this was also a threatened punishment for sin, see Lev. 26: 19; Dent. 11: 17; 28: 23-24; "hear—forgive—teach," not only does Solomon ask that God will hear the prayers of the people in their repentance and forgive their sins, but that he will "teach them the good way," that is, by their afflictions, by "the judgments Thou dost send upon them." Here we have the great New Testament principle, that the chastisements of the Lord are designed to bring His people back to Himself, are, in fact, for their eternal good. Note the order of Solomon's prayer: first, that they should pray, confessing their sins; then that God would forgive; that he would teach the right way, and last of all that the affliction should be removed. Is there not here a lesson for us, do we not sometimes want God to remove the affliction before we recognize his purpose in sending it and make confession of our sins before Him? Let us learn that this is God's way.

The teacher should read and note the rest of the petitions down to ver. 53.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Preliminary.—Although the title of our lesson is, "The Temple Dedicated," the select verses only contain a portion of Solomon's dedicatory prayer, the intention of the Lesson Committee being, doubtless, that those should serve as a centre around which teaching on the whole service should be grouped. We have dwelt somewhat at length on the more impressive portion of the ceremonies preceding this prayer, so shall confine our remarks now to the thoughts suggested by the selected verses. Will the teachers suffer us to caution them against spending too much time on the ceremonies alone, or any at all on the mystical lessons which some writers would associate with those dedicatory services; there are spiritual and practical lessons of great value in this portion; strive to teach those.

Topical Analysis.—(1) Praise and thanksgiving, 22-24. (2) Prayer for continued mercies, 25-28. (3) Prayer for special circumstances, 29-36.

On the first topic show how Solomon, following the constant example of his father, David, thankfully recognizes the "faithfulness and constant mercy of God." Ever before these men was the fact that their God was a covenant-keeping God, and they sought to set forth this truth in the public utterances especially; before Solomon prayed he blessed God; so should our prayers ever be mixed with thanksgiving; let us not be reaching forth the hand for blessings and forget those which have been so bountifully given to us in the past. Then the truth is repeated here that we have so often noticed in this quarter's lessons—the conditions of God's blessings. On this there can be no mistake, it was repeated again and again to, and by David, and now Solomon reiterates it: God's mercies are to those who walk before Him "with all their hearts." No half service is acceptable. He must have the supreme affection of the undivided heart. This truth set forth so unmistakably in the Old Testament was affirmed by our Saviour to be the foundation stone of the New Covenant, it was the "first and great Commandment;" Matt. 22: 37-38.

On the second topic we may teach that *past mercies should encourage continued prayer.* God is not angry at our continued or persistent prayers, even when sometimes we appear to be bold in our requests and would remind Him of His promises. Not that he needs reminding, but the pleading of the promises shows that they have a place in the hearts of His children even as he would have them. So as we stand in the present, looking backward over our mercy-strewn path, let us be encouraged to ask larger and greater things and believe that he is able to do for us "exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think" Eph. 3: 20.

On the third topic, there are one or two lessons not so common as preceding ones. We are taught to *make our petitions special and pointed.* There is a story of a good old man whose child was dying, and he with his wife knelt down to implore the mercy of God and healing of their loved one; the good man had a stereotyped prayer embracing the whole world, which he had often offered in the prayer-meeting, and so he went on in his regular rut until he came to pray for the Jews, when his wife could stand it no longer but burst out "Man, it's our child that's dying!" and forthwith prayed herself, earnestly, vehemently that God would have mercy upon their child. Just so, we may bring our special wants and needs before God; but we learn further, that we must get beyond ourselves and be *unselfish in our petitions*, we may, ought, to pray for ourselves and ours, but we must not rest on that—let our prayers be for any whom *we know need* God's mercy, blessing and guidance; there are the sick and weary; there are the tempted and tried; there are the anxious and worried; the prodigals far away from their father's home; the forgetters of God, and there are those who are seeking Him—we should pray for all these in our prayers before God and *we should pray for our country.* God has given us a fair and beautiful home, but how much we need the care and keeping of God—let us pray for our country with all its interests. The school with which the writer is connected sometimes sings:—

"Now pray we for our country,  
That Canada may be,  
The holy and the happy,  
And the gloriously free;  
That through her wide Dominion,  
Across from sea to sea,  
Her children may be blessed,  
The righteous and the free."

In this is the hope of a great future for our country.

#### INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

God will dwell in the midst of his true worshippers. Where there is sincere dedication to God, He will accept and give the true consecration.

The visible symbols of the Divine presence may be lacking but the Lord will really be in the midst of His people.

The teachings of the last lesson are suggested again—Our bodies living Temples of the living God and should be thoroughly dedicated to Him; see texts quoted there.

He who is filled with the highest wisdom will be foremost in humble prayer.

Prayer should be thankful, practical and large-hearted. The house of God is a blessing to a nation.

It is as the people walk with God, that the nation is prosperous and happy.

Main Lesson.—The dedication of ourselves—who then is willing? 1 Chron. 29: 2.

#### LESSON FOR OCTOBER 5TH.

Last line but one of Introduction, for "Barach" read "Baruch."

Ver. 32, etc. 6th line from bottom, for "Our Israel and our Judah" read "Over Israel and over Judah."