

And the world that hears nothing thinks that nothing is being done.

But the temple is rising all the same, each one of our scholars is building, what? A temple for God.

The building is for eternity, let them see that it is founded upon the Rock of Ages, and that it is built after God's model, the man Christ Jesus.

Main Lesson.—The spiritual temple—1 Cor. 3: 16, 7; 6: 19-20; 2 Cor. 6: 16; Eph 2: 20-22; 1: 12; Heb. 3: 6; 1 Peter 2: 5.

LESSON 5.

Nov 3, 1894 | **THE TEMPLE DEDICATED.** | 1 Kings 8: 22-36.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee."—Vs. 27.

TIME.—B. C. 1005.

PLACE.—The Temple at Jerusalem.

PARALLEL.—2 Chron. chaps. 5-7.

Introduction.—The Temple was built and ready for the sacred purposes to which it was to be dedicated. For months before, the day had been eagerly expected and discussed, as in anticipation it was to be the greatest day the Israelitish nation had ever seen. Grandly broke the bright October morning, while the thousands and hundreds of thousands who had come up from every part of the land, from the southern boundary at the River of Egypt, to Hamath, far north on the Orontes (for at that time the boundaries of the nation were more widely extended than in its later history) were all gathered on the streets of the city and on the mountains round about Jerusalem, to see and take part in the magnificent and joyful ceremonies of the day. Very early two processions were seen approaching the Temple from different points, one from Gibeon bearing the Tabernacle of the Wilderness, venerable with its more than four hundred years of service; faded and worn with long exposure, perhaps often repaired; but sacred from all its associations with the early history of the people. Then from Mount Zion, from the temporary resting place prepared for it by David, came the Ark of God, still more sacred and awful, for above it had rested the symbol of the presence of Jehovah, and in recent years its sanctity had been attested by God himself in his visitation of the sin of Uzzah. Into the Temple enclosure came Solomon in all his glory, the most magnificent prince of his race. Sacrifices, so vast that they could not be numbered, of sheep and oxen were offered by Solomon and all the congregation. A full gathering of the Levite singers, under the leadership of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests bearing trumpets; then the trumpets and the singers "as one," broke forth into a mighty chorus "praising and thanking the Lord," and the refrain caught up by the vast mass in the Temple area spread as by a flash through the streets of the city, and was echoed back by a myriad voices from the hill-tops around, "Praise the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever," and as they sang the symbol of a gracious acceptance was manifested, "the house was filled with a cloud—so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud." The solemn silence which had fallen upon the worshippers, caused by the thick cloud, was broken by Solomon in the words of ver. 12; then he blessed the congregation, and in a few words told them of the desire of his father David to build the Temple, of God's choice of himself to do the work, and of his performing it by the good hand of God; then followed that wonderful prayer, the earlier portion of which, a type of it all, forms the subject of our lesson.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 22. "Solomon stood," at first, then knelt, see ver. 54; "spread forth his hands,"

lifted them up "toward heaven;" he was on the platform or "brazen scaffold" specially prepared for the occasion. All this, we must remember, took place outside the building, in the court of the Temple.

Vers. 23, 24. Solomon begins his prayer as ours should begin, with a remembrance of past mercies—"No God like Thee;" not to be understood as comparing Jehovah with the gods of the heathen, but he is described as the only true God. "Kepest covenant:" one of the attributes of the God of Israel was that he was a covenant-keeping God, see Lesson three of last quarter, and Lesson two of this quarter, those who are faithful will always find that his covenant of mercy is sure; "with thy servant David:"—the promise to whom was that he should have a Son who, in peaceful possession of the Kingdom, should build the house which David desired, but was not permitted to build; "fulfilled"—as it is this day.

Vers. 25, 26. He now prays that beyond himself the promise of God may be verified, that "there shall not fail a man—to sit on the throne of Israel," and as he coupled with it the condition God had given, a righteous walk before God, it is practically a prayer for his successors that they should "take heed to their way," and even if they sinned, that God would not withdraw his mercy quite from them.

Ver. 27. "Will God dwell on the earth?" Other thoughts come now to the mind of Solomon, he remembers the greatness of God, "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee;" with a firm belief of God's special presence in the Temple he yet would guard himself and the people against the narrow views or notions of the deity into which they were only too apt to fall: Jer. 7: 1; Mic. 3: 11. When we consider the ideas of a local god or gods as held by the heathen nations of the land, this conception of the infinity of God is very marked and striking.

Ver. 28. "Yet," notwithstanding that thou art so far removed, "have respect to the prayer," that I am now offering which has reference to blessings to be given from and through this house. "Prayer—supplication—cry," these words seem to indicate a general increase of intensity in the prayers of the people to God, beginning with ordinary requests for daily mercies, and continuing in the agonized "cry" for help and deliverance in times of peril.

Ver. 29. "Eyes may be open towards this house: that thou mayst hearken," see Psa. 31: 15—the eyes of the Lord upon, and the ears of the Lord open to the righteous; "the place of which thou hast said," to which a general reference had been made, but the exact locality of which has not been stated, see Dent. 12: 5, 11, 18; 14: 23; 15: 20; 16: 2, and elsewhere. And God was graciously pleased to tell Solomon that his prayer was heard: "Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." Ch. 9: 4.

Ver. 30. It had been a personal prayer hitherto; it is now enlarged and includes the whole nation: "hearken to Thy people Israel when they shall pray." And we find that thenceforth the Jews always worshipped toward the Temple: Dan 6: 10; Jonah 2: 4. "When thou hearest forgive;" hear the prayer and forgive the sin.

Ver. 31, 32. Solomon now proceeds in his prayer to make mention of special cases, in the which he besought God to hear and answer. The first has reference to the oaths sworn in the Temple, the sanctity of which he asks God to protect. Every oath is an appeal to the knowledge and justice of the Most High, and the prayer is that God will vindicate the truth by punishing the false-swearer. "Tresspass," as in the cases mentioned in Ex. 22: 7-12, an oath had to be taken by the accused person as to his innocence. "Judge thy servants:" because human judgments are fallible, he therefore prays that God would interpose, condemn the wicked and justify the righteous.

Ver. 33, 34. The next is a petition for the nation, when its sin—as sin the King knew too well it would—was pun-