

Our Young Folks.

Only.

It was only a robin, With crimson breast, Singing gay songs To his wife on her nest; But a fatal stone, From a careless hand, Broke the fondest heart In robin-land.

—L. L. G. Atwood.

Letter to the Ashburn Sabbath School.

DEAR CHILDREN,—I have often thought of you, but up to this time, I have been prevented from writing to you; and now write, not from South Africa where I expected to go when I saw you, but from Manitoba, a distant part of the Dominion of Canada.

On going from you to Toronto I found that our Home Mission Board had honoured me by an appointment to Emerson, in Manitoba, and Pembina in Dakota, U. S.

Leaving Galt on the 16th of October, we got here on the 1st of November, and since then I have been much occupied in the Lord's blessed work in this part of the Red River Valley.

As to the country, dear children, you can form but a faint conception of it. Its immense plains stretch out for hundreds of miles, only broken by rivers, the banks of which are fringed with trees and shrubs such as aspens and roses.

In summer the plains are covered by grasses and flowers of a great many kinds. Above is the blue sky of heaven,—beneath is the green grass of the earth, waving in the wind like the waves of the sea.

As you journey over these plains called prairies, the distances are so great that you are reminded of eternity. The road going west from Emerson in a straight line towards the Rocky Mountains is above 600 miles long.

In another direction towards Peace River, the distance is 1000 miles. When looking above and below, I am often led to think of that Psalm: "God's mighty works who can express, Or show forth all his praise."

The prairies around were once covered by countless herds of buffaloes, but now we see only their bones lying white on the ground.

They have gone far west, and the Indians that hunted them are fast passing away. You see pictures of them in your geographies, and of the "Texes" or tents that they live in.

Borrowing a Dollar.

BY MRS. F. BUTTS.

It was mid August, and the city lay burning in the sun. The streets were like narrow strips of desert, so hot that they almost scorched the little bare feet of the newsboys, and made all weary pedestrians long for the fresh green fields and lanes of the blessed country.

In a tiny cottage a little girl looked wistfully out of the window, now and then getting impatient at the delay of some expected arrival. At last there was a step on the gravel walk, and the child ran eagerly to the door.

"Did you get it, mamma?" she said, lifting a very anxious face as near to the level of the lady's as she could. "No, dear; I didn't have money enough."

"Then I can't go," was the answer, in a tone of deep disappointment. "Not unless you can earn a dollar tomorrow, or are willing to wear your old hat."

"Oh mamma, I can't do that; all the girls will have lovely new hats, and my old one isn't fit to be seen. I wonder what I can do!"

Mrs. Eldridge went into the kitchen to see about dinner, and little May was left to her hopes and fears. This new hat was a very serious thing to the eager child. She had always lived in the city, and a visit to the country seemed to her about the same thing as a visit to heaven.

She had been invited by the teacher of the private school that she attended to spend the day with her at her private home. All the girls of her class were invited, and Mr. Green, the teacher's former brother, was to come for them early in the morning in his big farm wagon.

But May could not go without a new hat, and her mother hadn't money enough to buy one. Mrs. Eldridge was a widow, who supported herself by dress-making. She had just finished an elaborate dress, and hoped to save money enough to get the hat; but the lady paid her considerably less than she expected, and when the necessary expenses were met, the hat had to be left out.

May thought the situation all over a great many times. "If I can get one dollar," she said, "mamma can give me the rest; where can I get a dollar?"

At last a thought came to her suddenly. I ought to say that May blushed at it, but she did not put it out of her mind, as we ought to put out all thoughts that we are ashamed of.

May had a cousin, a boy about fourteen years old, who worked at a trade, and boarded with her mother. The little fellow, George by name, was very fond of the study of natural history, and was laying by small bits of money, as he could get them, to buy books for his favorite pursuit.

That very morning he had shown May a nice new dollar, saying to her joyfully, "I have just had all my script changed into a big bill, 'cause you see it is handier to keep. I've locked it up in this little box, and I wish you would put the key in the box where you keep your ring and locket."

"Of course I will," said May; "it will be safe there, for I'm ever so careful of my ornaments."

So it happened that May had had her cousin's dollar in trust, and this was the thought that came to her:

sat down by the window to wait. By and by there was heard the grating of wheels on the pavement, and the sound of many voices.

"They are coming," shouted May, springing to open the door. "Hurry," cried the girls from the big wagon. "I'm all ready! Come, mamma, and see me off."

May was at the side of the wagon, her mother was giving her some directions about keeping quiet in the middle of the day, when up ran George quite out of breath.

"Just in time," he gasped; "I thought you would be off May in spite of all I could do. Please give me the key of my strong box before you go; I have a chance to make a splendid bargain, the very book I want—to be sold at half-price—hurry, May!"

"Poor, poor May; she stood as if paralyzed by the side of her happy young friends. "What is the matter, dear, why don't you go after the key," said Mrs. Eldridge, "don't you see that George is in a hurry?"

May turned suddenly, and threw herself into her mother's arms. Her face was ghastly pale. "O, mother," she said, in a low frightened tone, "I took George's dollar. What shall I do?"

Mrs. Eldridge hesitated an instant, then she said to the impatient boys and girls, "You must go without May; don't wait any longer." Then she took her daughter's hand, and beckoning to George, went into the house.

No words could describe the girl's humiliation. What a price she had paid for a new hat; how hateful to her was the poor little piece of brown straw for which she had sold truth and honor. George suffered keenly when he heard the story.

"I don't care a cent for the money, Aunt," he said. "Please forgive May. She thought she could return it before I should want it."

"Indeed I did mother. You will never love me any more now that I am a thief," and May broke out into loud sobs and cries. A week passed away, the saddest week of May's life. Her mother had forgiven her, and she had asked God to forgive her, but she could not easily forget the sin that she had committed.

At last there came a time when she could make atonement for her wrong. There had been another expedition planned for the country of much more importance than the visit at the teacher's home. All winter May had talked about going to her grandmother's in the August vacation.

Mrs. Eldridge had set aside a certain bill for her daughter's expenses. One day she came in and said, "May, Mrs. Grey has paid me, and I think you can set about getting ready to go to grandma's."

"I am not going, mamma." "Not going! I thought you were very anxious to go." "I did want to go, but—O mamma, will you do me a great favor?"

"Certainly, my child, if it is in my power." "Let me take the money that you have saved for me, and buy some books for George."

"And you will stay at home all summer?" "Yes, if you are willing."

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXXI.

July 30. SOLOMON'S PRAYER. {1 Kings vii. 1-30.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 27-30. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Isa. lxxvi. 1; 2 Chron. ii. 6. SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 22, read Isa. i. 15; with v. 23, read Ex. xv. 11; with v. 24, read Ps. lxxxix. 33, 34; with v. 25, read 2 Chron. xli. 7; with v. 26, compare Luke i. 32, 33; with v. 27, read Acts vii. 48, 49, with v. 28, compare Neh. i. 6; with v. 29, read Dan. vi. 10; with vs. 30, read 2 Chron. xx. 9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou, and the ark of thy strength.—Ps. cxxvii. 5. CENTRAL TRUTH.—"God's throne is a throne of grace."

Israel had but one temple made with hands. The New Testament church has many. While there are many differences there is much in common. The building of a "church" is too often vulgarized by accompanying circumstances, merely human feelings, plans for raising money, &c.

It would be a good thing if we could get one solid and Scriptural conviction into the mind as to the real and lofty end in view in the erection of a house for God. May this lesson serve this purpose!

The wealth stored up by David, and contributed by the people (1 Chron. xxix. 2, 3-9), had been laid out by Solomon in building the temple. Seven and a half years it was in hand. The structure was complete. Its costly furniture was in its place. A solemn assembly of the elders, heads of tribes, and chief of the fathers of the people, was convened at Jerusalem to place the ark of God with befitting solemnity in the temple. It had to be brought by the priests (v. 8) out of the city of David (v. 1).

It was the solemn dedication-day. Costly sacrifices were offered (v. 5). The ark was set in its place, and nothing untoward occurred (as in 2 Sam. vi. 6-8. "The cloud filled the house" (v. 10). There could be no doubt as to the presence and favor of the God of Israel. The king uttered some fitting words of dedication and blessed the people, after the example of David (2 Sam. vi. 18). So a king is "the father of his people." Then came the prayer of dedication, of which we study a part.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE KING (v. 22), standing while blessing the people, kneeling with hands spread forth toward heaven while praying (see v. 51)—the oriental way of expressing desire and appeal to God (see 1 Tim. ii. 8). The attitude of prayer may vary with custom, convenience, fitness, but it should always express reverence. He stood before the altar on a scaffold prepared (2 Chron. vi. 13). The people assembled in front and around. This was probably the best day in all Solomon's reign.

HE EXPRESSES ADORATION (v. 23), a most solemn part of prayer, and which is flippantly censured, at times, by the ignorant, as "telling God what he knows already." If we are only to tell Him what he does not know, there is an end of praying! The supremacy of the one God is dwelt upon. It was part of Israel's mission to witness to this against the "lords many" of heathenism. The nations had gods of the earth, like Baal, Jupiter, Apollo, &c., and of the earth, like Neptune and the local demigods. The words do not refer to the persons in the godhead, but to the one Jehovah as against these false deities.

There is also a grateful record of His promise kept. Men rarely give thanks as earnestly as they ask. Solomon recalls the divine faithfulness. Our hope is exactly his, in mercy—covenant mercy. We sinners, can appeal only to mercy. God promises it, shows it in Christ, binds Himself by His own promise, and after the manner of men and to assure us, calls it his "covenant." It is a good work to study through the Scriptures (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Ps. xxv. 14; Ps. cxi. 9; Eph. ii. 12; Luke i. 72). Solomon had no trouble of mind, philosopher as he was, as to God hearing prayer. When God commands his covenant, they who accept it pledge themselves to fidelity to God's service (Ps. xxv. 10; Dan. ix. 4), and the extent and quality of the service is "with all their heart."

A PROMISE FULFILLED. David had been promised that his son on his throne should build the temple. That had been made good (v. 24). What the mouth of the Lord says the hand of the Lord does (Num. xxiii. 16). A promise fulfilled is an encouragement to believe, ask and expect more. So Solomon prays (v. 25) (a) that there might always be a man to sit on his throne, and (b) as a thing necessary thereto, that each generation should walk in God's way.

Sense might say—if God has promised, why ask? Faith pleads because there is a promise. If we would pray well we should know the word, and special requests should rest on special words. Solomon's idea of the Divine majesty is put with great force in v. 27, as a part of his adoration. "But will God indeed dwell," &c. Do I suppose that this house is worthy of Thee? or that Thou wilt be confined to it, as a man to the house, so that when there he is nowhere else? No, no. Pile up words, "heaven and heaven of heavens"—all the expanse above cannot contain Thee—how much less this house! No one can, in view of these words, allege that the Jews thought of God as a local and limited being; nor that they deemed He was confined to the temple or the tabernacle.

But inadequate as the gift, and poor as was the shrine, in the light of Divine greatness and glory, He is implored to accept it, and to hear the prayer in which it was now tendered to Him. But further, it was to be a place of prayer (v. 29), a place in view of which prayer would be made continually. Did not the glory appear between the cherubim? Did not the blood of atonement flow there? Was not the high priest there the type of another? Did not God set up all this costly and varied service that men might see how he is to be approached? Was not the meaning of all this—God is to be reached through priest, sacrifice, bloodshed-

ding? Hence the devout Jew in any part of the world prayed towards Jerusalem. So we offer praises, prayers, services, with our eyes directed to the cross. It is as if we said—Lord, we can only be heard and blessed through Him who died for us. As far back as Deut. xii. 11, this sacred and central "place" was predicted for this very thing. Now it had been realized. So as far back as Eden, the seed of the woman was promised (Gen. iii. 15). He has come, and through Him we have boldness of access (Eph. ii. 18).

Solomon assumes that the people would continue to pray, and asks that the Lord would hear (v. 30); that they would have sin to confess—of which specimens are given in vs. 33, 40, 47; and he begs forgiveness. The same thing is true of us. Though we be children of God by His saving and adopting grace, we are yet wayward children. Though we be pardoned, we are pardoned sinners, and our sanctification is imperfect. Hence believers confess sin; come, though they believe Christ to be their righteousness, and ask atherly forgiveness. The idea that men "in Christ" have no confession to make, and no pardon to ask, is a "fond and foolish fancy," bred of ignorance of the place and proportion of truth, and tending only to pride and vanity (1 John i. 8-10).

We may learn from all this— (1) That buildings can be connected with God's glory, made helps to his service, and filled with displays of his power (2 Chron. vii. 1-5).

(2) That there is no peculiar piety in having them poor, mean and ugly, particularly if the worshippers live in nice houses (Hag. i. 3, 4).

(3) That the temple was typical, and our churches are not, is no degradation to the churches. God's presence is invoked there, and especially enjoyed there. He blesses "especially the preaching of the word." Saints rarely have such a solemn joy as at the Lord's table. Christ is more clearly set forth in a Christian church than in the temple. Neither temple nor church can be worthy of Him, but both should be the best the people have to give, that they be not unworthy of us.

(4) The temple is gone. A thick mass of ruin covers its foundations, but till the judgment day Christian churches shall be built and standing (Dan. ii. 44).

(5) There was but one temple: churches by millions shall yet stud the earth; "IN EVERY PLACE" (Mal. i. 11).

(6) But the building is nothing in comparison with the worshippers. This temple became "a den of thieves" (Matt. xxi. 13). Spiritual worship is the desired sacrifice (John iv. 23, 24).

(7) The Sabbath-school is the part of the church fitted to the children, in which they learn to worship and obey God, and to understand His blessed word. The teachers are building up the church.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.—Who built the temple—who provided the means—how long the work lasted—how dedicated—Solomon's greatest day—his attitude—position—gratitude—adoration—promise fulfilled—promise presented for fulfillment—the reason and warrant of faith—the condition of God's promise—the prayers of God's people—why toward the temple—why "forgive"—the lesson to the Hebrews—our high priest—to whom we look—the lessons to us of this temple.

Saving Faith. I know of a man who, being obliged to sleep in the upper story of a lofty building, keeps a fire-escape in his room, in the shape of a stout rope-ladder. He believes in that ladder. That is, he has perfect confidence in the stoutness of the hemp, the strength of the wooden "rounds," and the ability of that ladder to bear his weight.

But on some dark night let the cry of "fire" ring through that edifice, and let him put the grappling-irons fast to the window casement, and swing himself out into the air, and he will believe on rope-ladder. He will trust himself to it. When he has done that he will have exercised saving faith in his fire-escape. Not before.

Thousands keep Gospel truth coiled up in their memories as my friend kept that rope-ladder coiled up in one corner of his room. They have heard and read of Jesus, the Atoner for sin; they admire Him, they believe in His divine qualities, love, etc., and vaguely expect, at some future day, to get to heaven by Him. But they have never for one moment trusted their souls to Jesus. They never have even attempted to escape out of their guilt and danger, by resting their whole weight on what Jesus has done for the sinner, or on His omnipotent grace. Perish they must, if they remain where they are. Perish you will, my orthodox sinner! If you never have any other kind of faith than your mere assent to Gospel truth, and good opinion of Christ. You have got to leap out of that state of guilt, and foolhardy trespassing on God's forbearance, and have got to cling for dear life to Jesus Christ. Else you are lost. The act of resting on the crucified Jesus saves. That must be continued as long as you live. The moment you quit your hold you fall. Strength to hold on you will get from God, and as much as you require. That is the main thing to pray for, and your strength will come, "equal to the day." Faith, saving faith, is simply letting Christ save you by clinging to Him.—Rev. Theodore Cuyler.

A FEW missionary doctors would not be out of place amongst the Kafirs. Witchcraft is the great leading feature of the Kafir religion, and "witch-doctors" are its priests. In those places where British influence does not exist, a system is regularly carried out by means of which men with property are sacrificed to the rapacity of the chief. A witch doctor "smells out" some person who has caused or is causing sickness of some evil. Cruel tortures followed by death, are immediately applied to the unfortunate victim, and his wives and cattle taken from him. This is an everyday occurrence among the Kafirs, and urgent representations are very frequently made to the British colonial authorities upon the subject. The Kafirs believe in a Supreme Being, but most of their rites are connected with the worship of their deceased ancestors, whose ghosts they endeavor to propitiate.

Early Impressions.

A few years since, a gentleman from England brought a letter of introduction to a gentleman in America. The stranger was of accomplished mind and manners, but in sentiment an infidel. The gentleman to whom he brought the letter of introduction, and his lady, were active Christian philanthropists. They invited the stranger to make their house his home, and treated him with every possible attention. Upon the evening of his arrival, just before the usual hour for retiring, the gentleman, knowing the peculiarity of his guest's sentiments, observed to him that the hour had arrived in which they usually attended family prayers; that he should be happy to have him remain and unite with them; or, if he preferred, he could retire. The gentleman intimated that it would give him pleasure to remain. A chapter of the Bible was read, and the family all knelt in prayer, the stranger with the rest.

In a few days the stranger left this hospitable dwelling, and embarked on board a ship for a foreign land. In the course of three or four years, however, the providence of God again led that stranger to the same dwelling. But, oh, how changed! He came the happy Christian, the humble man of piety and prayer. In the course of the evening's conversation he remarked that when he, on the first evening of his previous visit, knelt with them in family prayer, it was the first time for many years that he had bowed to his Maker. This act brought to his mind such a crowd of recollections, it so vividly reminded him of a parent's prayers, which he had heard at home, that it completely absorbed his attention. His emotion was so great, that he did not hear one syllable of the prayer which was uttered from its commencement to its close. But God made this the instrument of leading him from the dreamy wild of infidelity to the peace and joy of piety. His parents had long before gone to their rest; but the prayers they had offered for and with their son had left an influence which could not die.

The day of the visit dawned fair and sweet. May was up early, and long before it was time to go she was dressed in her neat white frock with blue ribbons and pretty buttoned boots. She tried on her hat again and again, pulled her curls this way and that, tied the bow at her neck at least half a dozen times, and then, quite tired of "fussing," as her mother said, she

Yours very truly, JOHN SCOTT. Emerson, Manitoba, May 15th, 1876.

Do you ask me, beloved, what it is that chiefly strengthens faith? It is having much to do with Jesus.