

important principle underlies David's resolve. It is this, that in proportion as we increase our expenditure for ourselves, we ought to increase our offerings to God for the carrying on of His work among our fellow men. This will not lead us to build costly churches, for although it is true there ought to be a just correspondence between the place of worship and the wealth of those who worship in it; yet we have set before us in the New Testament higher ends to which our churches are altogether subsidiary. God's temples in which He delights to dwell are the hearts of believing people; and it is in sending forth His Gospel and in ministering in love and mercy to men, that we are the best temple-builders. Another point is important here. Nathan spoke confidently in approval of the king's design. But his thoughts were not God's. A revelation was needed. And we must test our thoughts and purposes by the revelation given, by the Word of God.

II. THE REFUSAL: vers. 4-7.

God cannot accept David's proposal. But while He refuses His consent, He graciously accepts the intention and commends his motives. God honors him, as He had Moses and Joshua, with the specific title of Jehovah's Servant. Why did not God permit David to build the house? One reason is given in vers. 6 and 7. The word "whereas" is a mistranslation for "because." It expresses the reason why David was not to build the house. God's time was not come. The unsettled condition of the nation had hitherto made a fixed sanctuary impossible, and even now the time was not yet fully come. There had been no permanent building because it was not possible under the circumstances, and because it had never been divinely commanded.

A second reason is given in 1 Chron. xxii. 8; xxviii. 3. David had been a man of War. The House of God must be built by a man of peace. The temple as the symbol and type of the kingdom of God must in all respects correspond to that reality of which it was the picture and representation. It is a Kingdom of Peace; its Ruler is a Prince of Peace: Isai. ix. 6. Peace is the key-note of the Gospel: Acts x. 36; 2 Thess. iii. 16. We learn that we may have good intentions which God does not approve, things right and worthy in themselves, but not for us. We learn, too, that God has gracious plans and purposes, and adjusts the work to the different workers.

III. THE PROMISE: vers. 8-16.

God wonderfully compensates David for this disappointment. He withholds one blessing to give him a greater. The course of thought is deeply interesting and instructive—"Thou shalt not build an house for me (vers. 5-7), but I, who chose thee to be the ruler of my people, will build an house for thee (vers. 8-11), and thy son shall build an house for me (vers. 12, 13)." This then is the first compensation and promise set forth in vers. 8-11. Instead of David building an house for God, God is building an house for David, establishing for him a family and a kingdom. Moreover, God encourages him by reminding him that his life was a plan of God hitherto ("I took thee," etc., ver. 8), and from the past David was to learn lessons of trust for the future. How humble, too, had been David's origin ("from the sheepcote"), and to what high honors he had been promoted ("to be ruler," etc.). The wars he had waged were the Lord's wars; the rest he now enjoyed was God's gift; the people he had led were God's people; the plan, so far worked out, was God's, and He would complete it.

The second part of the promise is this: David's son Solomon, the man of peace, will accomplish what David had in his heart to do, and build the house. Here is a promise of perpetuity to David's house and David's throne. Here is a completion assured of what David left undone. But observe, all that David did and all that Solomon was to do were simply preparatory and typical. Hence something more must be assured.

It is the third and essential part of the promise:—"Thy throne shall be established forever." Now this could only be in a king who should live and reign forever, the Messiah, great David's greater Son. It is to Him that the promise distinctly looks. Luke i. 31-33. Compare Ps. lxxxix. 29, 36, 37; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Isai. ix. 6, 7; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 14-21; Ezek. xxxiv. 24; Zech. xii. 7, 8; Hos. iii. 5.

How much better was God's plan than David's. How fully did God's promise meet all the wants of David and of men. Let us learn that all our plans are subordinate to God's, and that God's place for us is best. Learn, too, that all plans must centre in Christ. In Him God provides for all the needs of our poverty and all the needs of His glory. Do we desire to offer to God and to build Him an house? Find in John vi. 29 the first work to be done, and in John xvi. 27 God's approval of it. Thus we shall be co-workers with God

in the erection of that great temple in which He shall dwell forever. For that temple is the blessed company of all who love Christ. See Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2; lvii. 15; 2 Cor. vi. 16-18; Rev. xxi. 3.

CATECHISM LESSON.

The Fourth Commandment.

We pass from the consecration of our worship to the consecration of our time: Eccles. iii. 1; John ix. 4; and it is very important that we should clearly understand the exact nature of the precept: Isa. lviii. 13, 14, for many are seeking to set aside its obligation: Ezek. xxii. 8. Some would have us believe that the Sabbath is only a Jewish institution, given to that people at Sinai, and not binding upon Christians: Gal. iv. 9, 10; Col. ii. 16. Others would boldly secularize the day, and turn it from God's use to what is worldly and unspiritual: Lam. i. 7. It is for us to ascertain the mind of the Lord: Jer. xxiii. 35; and then simply to act as He would have us to do: 1 John ii. 5.

Now, in certain respects, the fourth commandment differs from the others; the rest are either positive or negative—they tell us to do or not to do certain things—but this is both. "Remember to keep the Sabbath-day holy," and "In it thou shalt not do any work." Its observance, therefore, is thus doubly enforced: Deut. v. 12-14.

There are therefore two requirements. It is to be a day of *worship* and a day of *rest*. This commandment also begins with the word "remember," which clearly points to something known and recognized long before. We can only remember that which we have known in the past.

It was on the seventh day that God the Father rested from creation: Gen. ii. 2. Of course He has continually worked since, but not in creation: John v. 17, 18; and He hallowed that day, and gave it as the Sabbath, the day of rest to man: Gen. ii. 3. Sabbath means rest: Heb. iv. 9 (margin). And thus a seventh portion of man's time was God's gift to him at creation: Exod. xvi. 29, for rest and refreshment from toil: Exod. xxiii. 12. Thus we find man's days divided into portions of seven: Gen. xxix. 27, 28. We find the Sabbath-day observed: Exod. xvi. 23; and when the moral law is written for His people by God Himself at Sinai, this is the subject of the fourth commandment: Exod. xx. 8-10.

It was on the first day that our blessed Lord rose from the dead and rested from His work of redemption: John xx. 19; see chap. xvii. 4; xix. 30. Of course He has continually worked since: 1 John ii. 1, 2, but not in redemption—that work is done—the price is paid: Heb. x. 12. Henceforth, therefore, we find the Christians observing the first day of the seven as their day of rest: John xx. 19, 26; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. We call it Sunday, and the Lord's day. There is no word in Scripture ordering the change, but the presence of the Lord: John xx. 19-26, gives it a blessed sanction. There is the recognition of the Sabbath principle which is enforced in the fourth commandment: "Remember the Sabbath-day:" Exod. xx. 8; a seventh portion of our time given for rest to God. The day is not of the same importance as the principle—this we recognize in setting apart the Lord's-day—and, as in the old dispensation, the seventh day was the Sabbath, because God rested from creation, in the Christian dispensation the first day is the day of rest, because on that day Jesus rose from the dead.

Children's Corner.

LADY TEMPLE'S GRANDCHILDREN.

CHAPTER III.

(Continued.)

The little girl felt very tender and motherly as she gently disengaged her hand from her sleeping brother's clasp, and stooped and kissed his forehead.

"Mamma always kissed him so every night," she said softly to herself, as she retraced her steps quietly to the nursery. "I will always kiss him too when he is asleep; perhaps he would miss the kiss in his dreams. But there will be no one now to kiss me in bed."

Again the little lips quivered and the soft voice broke. Dolly stood at the nursery window, through which the soft moonlight streamed in. There was no other light in the room, and out of doors the whole world seemed

transformed into a region of ebony and silver, but Dolly could see nothing distinctly, all danced in a haze before her eyes. She had tried hard to be brave all that long, long day, but the strain had been severe, and now the sense of loneliness and desolation was too much for her, the craving after a mother's love too strong.

"Mamma! mamma! I want you," and two little hands were stretched out to the moonlit world in a sort of dumb entreaty. "O mamma, I do want you so very much."

And with the mere utterance of that well-loved name, all power of self-control seemed to give way. Dolly sank upon the ground, a little heap of white and pink, with the moonlight shining softly upon it, and cried as though her heart would break—not loudly or vehemently like Duke; Dolly's sobbing was not at all like that, but was quiet and full of meaning, like all else that belonged to her. But there was no one to comfort the lonely child, and by and by the sobs died into silence, yet the little girl did not move, but sat very still, crouched up beside the window.

"Why, Miss Dorothy, where are you? All in the dark too! And I laid the candle and matches out for you. Whatever are you doing down there? You've never been crying?"

"Yes I have, a little, Parker," answered Dolly, as she rose slowly to her feet. "I did not mean to; but I could not help it. Everything is strange here, you know, and I miss my mamma; but I am very much obliged to grandmother and every one for being kind to us, and I hope you do not think I am naughty and ungrateful to cry."

"Why no, Miss Dorothy, it is but natural, I daresay," returned Parker, more compassionate than she would allow herself to appear. "And you are tired too, no doubt. I will have you into bed very soon now; and tomorrow everything will look brighter, and the strangeness will soon wear off."

"Yes, I know," answered Dolly steadily, "I think we shall like being here perhaps. I mean to try." But all the same she cried herself to sleep that night, missing so sadly in this new home the mother's love which had so surrounded her in the old one far away over the sea.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW HOME.

It was a strange awakening to Dolly, that next morning, the feeling that the long voyage and all the travelling was over, and that at last they were at home. At home! As that thought crossed her mind she sat up in bed and looked about her. Everything was very clean and bright and orderly; everything was quite new. I think it was the newness that impressed upon the child a painful sense of unfamiliarity. There could be nothing home-like in a place where every piece of furniture, every book, and every toy was new. It showed so very plainly how new the home was. She could not forget for a moment that she was in a strange place, amid strangers; and she felt it much more acutely on this morning, looking around and trying to find "home" in what she saw, than she had done on shipboard, where she knew she would have but a short while to live. She had kept up bravely all the past weeks, and she was determined to do so still; but it was with a very home-sick feeling that the child looked round her on that first morning.

Her mother had many times described the great, wainscoted, old-fashioned nursery in which she and her brothers and sisters had romped and shouted and played during their happy childhood; the cupboard full of battered toys, and the old hacked about chairs and