

things: A building in a state of serious dilapidation; and the means by which it was restored.

A great building in partial ruin.

There is a fine old church on the east coast of England which has passed through some vicissitudes. It is one of those churches where Oliver Cromwell, in his Puritan zeal, once stabled his horses. Some thirty years ago, one service used to be held in it on Sunday afternoons, while morning and evening the people resorted to a more modern chapel. As years went on this service was given up, and the old building fell so completely into decay that the walls were unsafe, and some places actually in ruin. But an energetic minister who came to the place took the matter in hand, set to work, collected money, got the church restored, and on many a Sunday I have seen the beautiful building filled from end to end with attentive listeners while the Gospel was proclaimed.

Of still greater importance was the half-ruined temple in Jerusalem. It was not merely a place of worship, but the place chosen by God—the house built for his name, the token of his presence with his people. And for its splendor it was the pride of the nation, and its fame had spread into other countries. How came this glorious structure in such a deplorable condition? This was the work of enemies, as we are expressly told in 2 Chron. 24. It had not merely been neglected, but actually injured—probably to supply materials for the worship of Baal under Ahaziah and his mother Athaliah. For the Lord's house to be thus left was a shame to the whole nation, nor could they expect his favor and blessing as long as they were content to have it so.

And there is something far more important to Christians than the condition of any building for worship, however venerable or noticeable. The "temple" or "house" of the Lord now is composed of living souls. Eph. 2, 19-22. God dwells among his true worshippers. And the limits of this "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2, 5) are not narrower than the extent of the world in which we live. "The earth is the Lord's," and every-where there ought to be worship rising up to him. But the enemy has made havoc here. What ought to be the Lord's has been given to idols, to wild, strange, and degrading superstition, to the pride of man, to the pleasure of man, to the passions of man. In every city, and town, and village, you may see the ruins of the "temple of God," and in many foreign lands—in Africa, China, India—there are but few traces at all of such a building.

What is needed? Restoration. And remember that restoration will cost much.

How was the temple at Jerusalem restored?

When the young King Joash—the sole survivor of the royal family massacred by Athaliah—came of age, he applied himself to the matter. First, he commanded the priests to undertake it, but seeing that they were neglectful and backward, he took it into his own charge, and arranged that certain offerings should be applied to this purpose. What were these offerings? They were of three kinds.

1.) The "money of every one that passeth," lit-

erally, current money, or a fixed weight of silver (there being as yet no coinage). This was probably the half-shekel paid as redemption money by every Israelite. Exod. 20, 13. 2.) "The money that every man is set at." That is, the sum paid in accordance with certain vows, and estimated by the priest according to rules. Lev. 27, 1-8. 3.) The money that cometh into any man's heart to bring," that is, voluntary offerings made from time to time. There were other offerings commanded by the law, but only these three kinds were used for the repairing of the temple. See verse 16. And these sufficed. The money first collected in the "chest" was made up into bags of fixed weight, according to Eastern custom, which, when sealed, passed as coin.

We may learn from this

How the spiritual temple is to be restored and built up. The king himself, the Lord Jesus, takes this in hand, but it is to be done by means of his servants. And the offerings needed for this purpose must spring, like those we read of in this passage, from three different sources, or motives.

1. From the acknowledgment of absolute dependence upon God, and of his claims as Creator, Lord, and Redeemer. This claim, like the half-shekel of the Israelites, is the same for all Christians. Time, strength, money, talent, all should be at the disposal of Him who is the actual owner.

2. From the acknowledgment of special mercies. The vows of an Israelite were generally in commemoration of some deliverance or special benefit received. How many of these have we to return thanks for!

3. From love to the Lord and to his work—like the "free-will offerings" of Israel.

Duty, gratitude, love, are the sources which should supply the means for repairing the spiritual temple. And each should ask himself: How much duty, how much gratitude, how much love, do I owe to my Lord!

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.
The Temple Repaired. 2 Kings 12, 1-15.

1. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." The spirituality of a soul is shown by its relish for the services of God's house. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is." Heb. 10, 25; Ps. 87, 137, 5; Isa. 62, 6; Mal. 3, 16.

2. "Jehovah began to reign." These words serve to recall a most impressive mystery of providence. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." Rom. 11, 33; 2 Kings 11; 2 Chron. 23; 24; Ps. 77, 19.

3. "Jehoshaf did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." Owing to the presence of an admirable religious counselor, Jehoiada. "And Jehoiada made a covenant before the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people." 2 Kings 11, 17; 2 Chron. 24, 2, 15, 16; 1 Kings 12, 7; Job 12, 12.

4. "Wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him." Divine instruction through some consecrated instrumentality is necessary to stability in righteousness. "And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest." 2 Chron. 24, 2; 25, 1; Isa. 29, 13, 14; Gen. 41, 15, 38; Dan. 12, 3.

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