

# The Quiet Hour

(For Dominion Presbyterian.)  
Rebuilding the Temple.\*

The building of the sacred temple is an important event in Jewish history, and in the religious life of the world. It is one of the small things with a great meaning. It might seem a small thing that a few Jews should manifest great zeal in building a house of prayer, and that they should have many miserable squabbles with their Samaritan neighbors, but with the view we now possess of the history of Israel as a preparation for the coming of the Christ, we can see that this was an essential step, the restoration of the Jews to their own land, the re-creation of Jerusalem as a new religious centre, the compiling of the Hebrew hymn book and the careful collection and arrangement of their prophetic and historic books. The Jews henceforth became in a fuller sense people of the temple and of the book. They possessed a richer liturgy and a more perfect ritual. This seems to have been necessary if they were to preserve a separate existence and maintain a strong church life until the coming of the true Redeemer. We see here, then, the beginning of the new religious movement which follows upon the "Sacred exodus." For long the Jews had been cut off from their temple and ritualistic forms of worship. This deprivation, which they regarded as a curse, no doubt did them good in helping to wean them from idolatry. If they could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land they could ponder them and learn to appreciate their deep spiritual meaning, if prophets were scarce they could gather and treasure the words of prophets who had lived and died for Jerusalem. These things that drove them into themselves and back to the past were blessings in disguise. The time had not come when there could be "no more temple," but the time had arrived for building a temple which might have a purer worship and serve as a centre for the scattered Jews.

The foundation of the new house was laid with great rejoicing; great attention was paid to the service of praise. David was then looked back upon as the founder and patron Saint of psalmody. The name Moses meant to the Jews the law with its various teachings and commands, while David spoke not only of war and kingship, but also of the dedication of music in the service of the sanctuary. So now when there is to be a new house of prayer, the foundation is laid to this glorious strain, "For His mercy endureth forever toward Israel." This foundation is only a beginning of a work that is to be long and troublesome. Could the worshippers have foreseen all the worry and delay they would have been quite disheartened. It is good that we cannot see beforehand the toil and vexation of the weary way. It is sufficient to rejoice in the good beginning and to be glad that the word can be begun in the name of God with the assurance that work so begun must in spite of difficulties find its completion.

The people made a great noise as befitting a great occasion, but the shout was mingled

in its character, it was not all joyful. Old men who had seen the first house, and known its glories, wept when they saw the foundation of the new house. This was all very well, but it was not like the "good old days." But the younger people were glad and full of hope. The two cries blended and swallowed each other up; it was hard to say which was loudest, and afar off it was a strange noise that had had the joy taken out of it by the mingled lamentation. Is not this a picture of the sounds of human life, the sound which goes up from any home or society is not one of pure joy; with even our greatest festivals keen regrets and strange sorrows are mingled.

After the foundation is laid difficulty begins. The neighbors desire to help, but are told they can have no part or lot in the matter. To-day it is hard for us to sympathize with the stern separativeness of the Jewish leaders. We are inclined to regard it as fierce, selfish bigotry. It did become that afterwards, but some measure of exclusiveness seems to have been necessary if the Jews were to maintain their religious life at a high level and become freed from the old superstition. It was a question of war or of a hurtful peace. The Jews chose open war and fought the long battle relying upon their God. We are perhaps too much given to compromise and we may learn from them that we must not sacrifice principle for the sake of comfort.

W. G. J.

(For Dominion Presbyterian.)  
The Living Water.

By Nicol Moffatt.

Why think of the woman of Samaria and leave out her partners in shame? Let them all assemble together, since Jesus has called for them. "Go, call thy husband and come hither," is His commandment. They represent a large, sad class in society, and for their uplifting His disciples must ever strive and pray.

Notice the Saviour's method of reaching her. "Give me to drink," were words which instantly removed their differences. Both were agreed that on a hot, dusty noon hour a good drink of cool water was necessary. Both felt a debt of gratitude for the refreshing water of Jacob's well.

Take another step, however. They are to agree once more. "Living water" was spoken of thrice, and to "never thirst" become the hope and desire of both. Poor soul! thou hast hardly touched the wide sea of good. If left to thyself thou never canst. But the Saviour knew the keenness of hope. "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw," revealed a better self within her just awakening. What a quick wing hope has.

But there must first be a clearing away of obstacles. The conscience must be reached. Here again the Saviour shows his skill in discovering a breach in the soul's wall—go call thy husband. Now is the moment of all the ages to her. Is she to lie and kill the last root of that tender plant or God—conscience? It would have been the last and fatal leap into endless night. But it was the same gentle voice that appealed to her honor which

had previously driven away her fears and renewed her hopes. She therefore was enabled to save herself from that cruel fate.

Consider anew at this point the gift of God, referred to by Jesus, and also termed the "well of water springing up into everlasting life." In our solitudes we have all searched the hillside for the cool springs. We turned not at the bog or nettles; we were undeceived by the moss-covered stones or decaying stumps. A poor place this for anything good! But see the bubbling fountain! From afar, somewhere, the fresh, pure liquid has arisen, and here it overflows and puts to naught its rude surroundings.

Woman of Samaria! thy soul may be as rough as that wild mountain side, and seem unknown to any good. But receive the "gift of God," which will be a well of "living water." From thy soul will spring up a stream of pure rich thought and impulse.

Disciple of Christ! hasten to find these springs. It will cost thee something. But as the Master who had added to His physical exhaustion by this interview, said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," so verily thou wilt be fed. Thou too must sit at the well or beside to do this work. A smile is worth a dozen tracts and thy sympathy may be needed in the absence of the mother—probably dead, probably deceived. Thou art the living wire which with one hand thou dost raise the fallen and with the other hold to Christ. Thy meat will be to do His will and finish His work. Waver not at thy weakness—thou seest not the whole. Since love has emptied thy heart, thou hast given thy best. Since effort has exhausted thy soul thou hast done thy part. With Christ thou hast spent thyself, and with Him thou shalt wear the crown.

## A Song in the Night.

I woke in the night; the stars were hid,  
The skies were cold and gray,  
My soul grew sick with a nameless fear,  
And I scarce had faith to pray.

I thought of the day's mistakes with tears,  
Of wrong that outmeasured right,  
When lo, from a rain-washed tree near by,  
A bird sang in the night.

So soft and so low, so fearlessly,  
So full of a glad content,  
Of a faith that knew the day would break  
Though the wet boughs o'er her bent.

I said to my heart, "Behold, a sign,  
Heart, let us read aright,  
That faith is easy and hope is sure  
To him who sings in the night!"  
—British Weekly.

## A Governing God.

When things get beyond your control, when you face an unknown future, and when trying conditions confront you, remember that there is a governing God in Israel, and that it is His to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and hope out of despair. Be patient and acquiescent. Let the Ruler of the universe and the Lord of the individual manage affairs in His own way, and at His own time. Neither grow weary or become too anticipative. Roll upon a covenant-keeping God your cares, taking His dispensations as they come, and multiplying sorrow neither by distrust nor by foreboding. God unravels the future day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment, accompanying the distribution with His supporting and sanctifying grace.—The Presbyterian.

\*S. S. Lesson for September 3rd. Ezra, 3:10 to 4:5. Golden text, "The Temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3:17.