



LESSON,—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1908.

Solomon Dedicates the Temple

I. Kings viii., 1-11. Memory verses 10, 11. Read I. Kings v., 8.

Golden Text.

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Psa. cxxii., 1.

Home Readings.

Monday, December 7.—I. Ki. v., 1-18.
 Tuesday, December 8.—I. Ki. vi., 1-20.
 Wednesday, December 9.—I. Ki. vi., 21-33.
 Thursday, December 10.—I. Ki. vii., 1-14, 52.
 Friday, December 11.—I. Ki. viii., 1-21.
 Saturday, December 12.—I. Ki. viii., 22-43.
 Sunday, December 13.—I. Ki. viii., 44-64.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

How many of you like coming to Sunday School? Oh, that's good, so we can all say the golden text over together and mean it, 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord?' What makes you like to come to Sunday School? Perhaps some of you can hardly tell, but I'm sure that for one thing you like the singing of the hymns, don't you? Did you know that our golden text is part of an old hymn that people used to sing long, long ago, much longer ago than any of the hymns we sing? In our Bibles it is called a 'song of degrees.' That means that it was sung by the people as they went up the way to the temple of God in Jerusalem. This song of degrees or hymn was written by David about whom we have been studying. In our lesson to-day we are to study about the beautiful temple that was built by David's son, Solomon, who was a very rich king. This temple was nothing like our churches to-day; there were no seats or pews in it for the people to go and sit in; they didn't have any sermons; in fact, nobody actually went into the temple itself except the priests, for the people all had to stay outside in the outer courts. Let us see something of what the temple was like. (The teacher can easily draw a rough plan showing the oblong shape of the temple building with the perfect square of the Holy of Holies at one end, and the two courts surrounding the building, the inner court into which the Israelite might go, and outside that, the court of the Gentiles, beyond which no Gentile could penetrate, but don't spend too long a time on this.)

FOR THE SENIORS.

A good portion of the recorded history of Solomon's reign is taken up with the account of his building operations. He lived in the days when they built to last, and to this day there remain in Palestine some portions of the work done in Solomon's reign. More particularly of interest in connection with to-day's lesson is the fact that some of the temple masonry still exists. Not, of course, any portion of the temple itself; that was utterly destroyed as was its successor, but in order to extend the space for the temple building on the top of Mount Moriah where he desired to have it placed, it was necessary to build up massive masonry where the rock sloped too quickly away. Some of this still remains, and the Jews who to-day in Jerusalem, visit the Wailing Place to mourn for their nation's heart-glory and pray for its return, kiss these stones with loving reverence. The temple as described in Kings, will seem to some minds a vast piece of extravagance, its cost being computed at about \$100,000,000. The question may come up as to whether God wishes such vast sums spent upon mere buildings. The record of Solomon's other buildings and the account of the vast wealth of his reign (I. Kings x., 14-29) show that the temple was by no means an exceptional building considering his other expenditures. We may at all times give God's house at least the

beauty and honor that we give our own. The question of giving is seldom between God and our duty to others, but between God and our selfish desires, and we have the Biblical assurance that the consecration of this beautiful temple was accepted and acknowledged by God (verses 10, 11). Solomon's prayer at the dedication will bear a good deal of study for its beauty and thought. It is evident that he had a real understanding of God's nature (I. Kings viii., 27), and although the prayer may be offered in the earthly house, the petition always runs 'then hear thou in heaven.'

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

And what those people in that old time tried to do in their way, you and I and all of us should try to do in ours. We are not merely to build houses of worship for God. We are to build factories, and warehouses, and produce exchanges, and railways, and shops, and banks, for God. Or rather, we are to see and feel that these and the activities they represent, our industrial works and employment in connection with them, our social and professional engagements, our buying and selling of goods, our practising of medicine, our arguing of cases in court, our going out to parties and evening receptions, our meeting together in club-houses—to see and to feel that the whole of our complex and growing civilization, our diversified social life with all its varied equipment, is not 'our' temple merely—to contribute to our comfort and to minister to our pride—but something very much more. We should recognize the fact that our manifold civilization is chiefly the temple of God—that the purpose of God is in it, pervades it. Certainly we can not be wrong in thinking that it is God's purpose to make this world His dwelling place, and that it is His joy and should also be our task to help to make it such. That, it seems to me, is what you and I are here for.—David H. Greer, From Things to God.

Said a great king once, 'Where I sleep, there is the palace.' Each one of us may say, 'Where I am, there is God's temple.' 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount' were the words ringing in the ears of Moses as he came down Mount Sinai to become the architect of God's dwelling place, the tent of worship. We have had a pattern given us; if we model our lives upon Christ's life, God will dwell in us.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
 As the swift seasons roll!
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!
 Let each new temple nobler than the last
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more
 vast.—O. W. Holmes.

There is one temple whereof I am custodian
 and votress; of its services, devotions, worship,
 I alone shall have to render an account.
 —Christina Rossetti.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

We will better understand the power of the temple in the religious development of the Israelites, if we in imagination go through the temple and notice the progression of its teaching.

The temple and all connected with it had a religious teaching for the people, most of whom could not read, but could understand symbols and visible expressions of great truths. St. Mark's at Venice was built and decorated on the same principle. The stories of the Old and New Testaments are expressed in carvings and paintings; and the order of these teaches the religious progress of the soul. The temple taught the presence of God, and made it real. The arrangement of courts and rooms expressed the progress of the religious life, from the outer world into the court of general worship, then into the more sacred court, the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies.

1. We enter into the court of the Gentiles through one of the gates which lead into it from the outer world. Men of every kind, from every race, could enter, and come within the influence of the true religion.

2. Entering the inner court is coming into the church and under its influences. It means a decision to begin the new Christian life.

3. We first come to the great altar of burnt offerings, made of brass, thirty feet square and fifteen feet high. It symbolized sacrifice for sin, some atoning power, expressing our need of forgiveness and God's willingness to forgive. It also expresses consecration to

God, giving ourselves to Him and to his service.

4. Next we come to the great brazen sea fifteen feet in diameter and seven and one-half feet high, placed on twelve brass oxen. This with ten lavers were for cleansing, symbolizing the 'washing of regeneration,' the cleansing of heart and life from sin, as does Christian Baptism.

5. Thus cleansed and forgiven we enter the Holy Place, expressing the holy and useful life of the people of God. Here we find the golden candlestick, signifying the light from heaven by which the Christian walks; the table of shewbread symbolizing the bread of life, and the altar of incense symbolizing the life of prayer.

6. We look through the hangings into the Holy of Holies, the presence of God himself, the perfected life of heaven, toward which every true child of God is moving all his life, his ideal, his hope, his joy, his eternal home.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, December 13.—Topic—Books that delight and strengthen. Prov. iv., 1-9.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Monday, December 7.—Christ's prayer for His enemies. Luke xxiii., 34.

Tuesday, December 8.—His words to the thief. Luke xxiii., 39-43.

Wednesday, December 9.—His words to His mother. John xix., 26, 27.

Thursday, December 10.—His cry to God. Mark xv., 34.

Friday, December 11.—His cry of suffering. John xix., 28-30.

Saturday, December 12.—His last words. Luke xxiii., 46.

Sunday, December 13.—Topic—Christ on the cross. Matt. xxvii., 33-38.

Religious News.

The Press of the European Turkey Mission, stationed at Samokov, Bulgaria, under the superintendence of the Rev. Robert Thomson, is almost the only source of religious and other standard literature for the six million Bulgarians, and its output should be largely increased, in order to offset in more adequate measure the flood of translations of trashy French and Russian novels and skeptical and infidel books in the country. Some wise-hearted man or woman may render an inestimable service to the Bulgarian nation by helping to extend the usefulness of this Press.

The Government recently introduced English as an optional study in the national schools, yet there is no English-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-English dictionary, the one published 47 years since having long been exhausted. New missionaries are studying Bulgarian, and Bulgarians are studying English, by all sorts of make-shifts.

These needs of the field make their own appeal. Five thousand dollars are needed to do the present work effectively.

The revolution in Turkey had an effect in Jerusalem, when the unexpected and amazing news of the change in affairs reached that city, reports of which read like the fulfilment of the prophecies of the latter chapters of Isaiah. The Mohammedans held a thanksgiving service with a sermon in a mosque within the Temple area. Armenian Christian monks entertained Mohammedans at a garden party on Mt. Zion, serving them with lemonade, coffee and cigarettes. Jews were entertained at the Orthodox Greek Christian Convent by the Patriarch of the Greek Church, were sprinkled with rose water and fed with sweets. Many of them expressed their joy by processions, with speeches thanking the Sultan for liberty. There was a procession of Protestants headed by the Turkish military band, an address was delivered by the native Lutheran minister of Bethlehem, after which the whole company were received by the acting governor, when a speech was made by a native minister of the Church Missionary Society. Religious bodies which had antagonized one another for hundreds of years exchanged friendly greetings. Jews shook hands with Greeks, Moslems embraced Armenians, Catholics and Protestants of various sects walked side by side under the Turkish flag. A newspaper, printed in Hebrew and Arabic, began to be published August 17.—'Congregationalist.'