

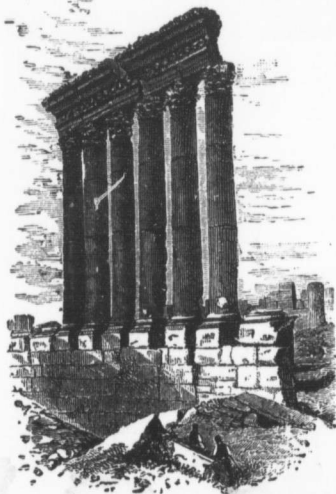
SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XXVI.]

JULY, 1892.

[No. 7.



REMAINING COLUMNS OF TEMPLE OF THE SUN,
BAALBEC.

Temple of the Sun, Baalbec.

BY THE REV. GEO. J. BOND, B.A.

BAALBEC is by some supposed to be the Baal-Gad mentioned in the Book of Joshua, as the limit of the conquests of that great leader, and there is a prophecy of Amos denouncing and predicting the overthrow of Bikath Aven, the plain of Aven, which is also believed to apply to it.

The great ruins crown an Acropolis, raised some fifty feet above the plain, and completely

isolated from all other buildings. We entered by a long, dark vaulted passage, from the sides of which issued chambers once used apparently for storehouses, and entered upon a court hexagonal in shape, and measuring some seventy yards in length by eighty-five in width, and thence into the Great Court, as it is called, which is a hundred and fifty yards long by a hundred and twenty-five wide. Here we found the rest of our party, who had preceded us, sitting at lunch in the shadow of the great columns of the Temple of the Sun. This mightiest of the temples of Baalbec, and perhaps mightiest of all heathen temples, consisted of a cella or rectangular building, surrounded by peristyle, a portico of lofty columns, and was originally some two hundred and ninety feet long by a hundred and sixty broad. Of the cella nothing remains, but of the peristyle there still stand these six magnificent columns, with part of the entablature which they formerly carried. They are between sixty and seventy feet high, and seven feet three inches in diameter at the base, each consisting of three stones. The carving of the entablature on one side, the north, is gone, but on the south it is almost perfect. Originally there were fifty-eight of these columns, nineteen on each side of the cella, and ten at each end, and as they stand in solitary grandeur, rearing seventy feet above the wall the massive fragment of entablature, they convey some idea of the magnificence of the edifice of which they formed a part. The temple seems to have been a sort of pantheon, in which Baal was prominent, and an inscription still to be seen on the base of one of the pillars reads as follows, "To the great gods of Heliopolis. For the safety of the lord Antoninus Aug. and of Julia Aug. the mother of our lord of the Castra (and) Senate. A devoted (subject) of the sovereigns (caused) the capitals of the columns of Antoninus whilst in the air (to be) embossed with gold at her own expense."

In confused heaps in the neighborhood of the columns lie the remains of those which have fallen. It is difficult to realize how vast are