

Sunday School.

The Dedication of the Temple. I Kings 8: 1-11, 62, 63.

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 13, 1905.

The idea of a temple which should take the place of the movable tabernacle when Israel had ceased to move was probably in the minds of the people long before David's time. Indeed there are indications (I Chron. 26: 25-28) that "a fund consecrated to the future temple had been accumulating since the days of Samuel." Practically, however, there was no real movement or clearly defined purpose until the idea found fitting soil in David's mind and grew up to master him. To prepare for the building of the house of the Lord, which was to be "exceeding magnificent," was the passion of David's latter years, and when Solomon came to the throne he found awaiting him the plans for the building, the treasure to build it and a solemn injunction from his father to undertake the work as a commission from the Lord. The best word to be spoken of Solomon is that he accepted the task as a religious duty, and that the temple was built not only in the name of religion, but in a religious manner.

As for the temple itself there is little to be added to the description furnished us by the inspired writers. It is useless to undertake to form any conception of its appearance. That the Scriptures do not give us the information needed to form a mental picture of it is evident from the fact that no two models that architects have made from the specifications furnished are alike. Opinions vary also as to the magnificence of the structure. By many it has been regarded as the most splendid edifice ever erected. Others have declared it unworthy of comparison with the magnificent temples of Assyria, Babylon or Egypt. Perhaps it is nearer the truth to say that for size the temple proper was insignificant, while for magnificence it was unequalled by any religious edifice in the world. As for its size it should be remembered that it was built for God alone and not for a worshipping congregation; the congregation stood without. There was no need that the building which contained the holy of holies should be large; though the buildings and courts around the temple proper necessarily covered a great space.

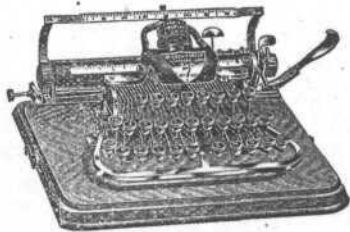
But whatever the critics may think of it Jehovah himself was pleased with it—as we shall learn from the story of the dedication which we are now to study.

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

Among the luminous days which came to the children of Israel in their long and somewhat somber life, none perhaps brought more joy than the day of the dedication of Solomon's temple. It was a day of high thoughts and thrilling experiences. Low indeed must have been the Israelite whose soul was not stirred to its depths, and who was not conscious of a great uplifting. As for Solomon, it was the high day of his life. The great work for which he had a divine commission was at last finished, and heaven was smiling upon him. He fairly trembled with pious emotion, and his joy could hardly have been greater if he had known that at that supreme moment, when he stood "before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands toward heaven," he was for once the true type of that greater Son of David who was yet to come.

It was something more than grand ceremony and dazzling display, and inspiring music that thrilled the hearts of the people as they were never thrilled before. At last the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had a house among them, and no longer sojourned in a tent. At last they felt sure that their wanderings were at an end, and they were settled forever. As they looked upon the foundations of the temple

THE BLICKENSDEFER No. 5, \$35. No. 7, \$50.



The only high grade, low priced typewriter on the market. Fully guaranteed. The Blickensderfer has many features not found on the high-priced machines, interchangeable type, direct printing and inking, simplicity and durability. For manifolding it can not be excelled. The stencil cut by the Blickensderfer has no equal.

The Blickensderfer is a favorite among the ministers, educators and professional class in general. Many manufacturing concerns, banks, newspapers, etc., are using the Blickensderfer with success.

For samples of work and catalog, address the

**Blickensderfer Mfg. Co., 136 E. Market St.,
F. D. Shera, Mgr. Indianapolis, Ind.**

**CHRISTMAS CAROLS
No. 11.**

This is supposed by the Author to be his best. See its poetical recitations, its prose exercises, its concert features, for little and big, and judge for yourself.

We can furnish also No. 10 if desired.

Price, post paid, single copy 5 cents; per dozen copies, 50 cents; per 100 copies, \$4.00.

Address all orders to the Agent,

**W. H. CLAY,
Huntington, - - - - Indiana.**

they felt that Israel could never be moved. Henceforth they would have a center toward which all the tribes would look and around which they would be united. One temple meant one God, one religion, one people. Henceforth it would be easier to keep together, to keep separate from the heathen world, and to keep from idols; for they had a sanctuary of their own, and what was infinitely better than idols, the presence of Jehovah himself.

All this and much more did the people see before them, and all this and much more would have come to them if they had gone straight ahead. This is one lesson for us; if our highest dreams are not realized it is not because our dreams are too high, but because our everyday aims are so much lower than our dedication-day dreams.

But that which excites the deepest emotion was the acceptance of the gift by Jehovah, and the wonderful supernatural display which assured the people that he had taken possession of it. It is here that our interest also reaches the highest point, for we want to know how we can dedicate to the Lord our temple not made with hands, so that he will accept it, and in accepting it kindle the fire on the altar of our hearts.

The temple was a free-will offering. The people did not come together to present to the Lord a house which they had been taxed to build against their will, nor to make him a present with an eye to future favors. They gave their best, and one's best always comes from the heart, and comes freely or not at all. It would be difficult to conceive how God could accept a gift under any other circumstances. And yet when we begin to think

of presenting ourselves to the Lord, we are apt to begin with an eye to business. We are perfectly willing to present ourselves to him for a consideration! We want to know what is the best bargain we can make. And even when we have given up all thought of a commercial transaction we find ourselves wondering what sort of a present God will make in return for that which we have given him "without a consideration." "I'm going to serve the Lord better and see if crops won't be better." "I am going to do better anyway, but I hope the Lord will remember me for it." We are like little children who will agree to love papa for a stick of candy and will love him a whole lot for two sticks. And yet we don't want our children to love us for two sticks or for two bushels; we want them to love us freely. Nothing else will satisfy a father's heart. And nothing else will satisfy the heart of our Father in heaven. God does not want to make a trade with his children; he does not need anything we can give him in return for anything he can give us; he wants us, and he wants us to present ourselves—to make a present of ourselves—to him, without a thought of what we may gain, without so much as thinking whether there will be gain.

Note, too, that the temple was built for God alone. The temple proper had no place in it for any one but God. There was the holy place, and there was the holy of holies—all for God; not a closet, not so much as a niche in the wall for any other divinity. And it was presented to God for his sole use; God and God alone was to dwell in it forever. If God is to come into my heart, I must present it to him for his sole use. If God is to kindle a fire on the altar of my heart it must have no other altar than his.—Pell's Notes.