

SOLOMON BUILDS A TEMPLE

*An Extra "Wantoknow" Volume
for Young People*

by
MONTAGUE GOODMAN



LONDON
THE PATERNOSTER PRESS

1950

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FIRST PUBLISHED, 1951

*Made and Printed in Great Britain
for The Paternoster Press Ludgate
House Fleet Street London E.C.4
by Stanley L. Hunt (Printers) Ltd.
George Street Rushden Northants.*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1					<i>Page</i>
	<i>Introduces a Letter and Its Writer</i>	...	...	...	5
CHAPTER 2					
	<i>The Banquet</i>	...	...	...	7
CHAPTER 3					
	<i>We Contemplate our Task</i>	...	...	...	10
CHAPTER 4					
	<i>On Setting Out to Build</i>	...	...	...	16
CHAPTER 5					
	<i>How to Use a Plumblin</i>	...	...	...	21
CHAPTER 6					
	<i>The Plumblin in Operation</i>	...	...	...	27
CHAPTER 7					
	<i>A Believers' Supper-Party</i>	...	...	...	36
CHAPTER 8					
	<i>The Temple Adorned</i>	...	...	...	43
CHAPTER 9					
	<i>We Put the Clock Back</i>	...	...	...	51
CHAPTER 10					
	<i>The Temple Erected</i>	...	...	...	59

CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCES A LETTER AND ITS WRITER

BELOVED SHRIMP,

While you've been away in Germany a wonder has occurred of which you may or may not have heard. The queen of Sheba has come to life again and visited Solomon as she did of old! No doubt she asked him questions as before but I know he asked her one and now they're married!! Fancy Uncle Solomon! Who'd have thought it? And they are on their way from New Zealand where they've spent an extended honeymoon. We must give him a royal welcome home. Let's whip up the old gang of the Curiosity Club and spread a feast. My father, who first discovered him and asked him questions when he was a boy, insists on joining in and promises to stand all exes so that clears away the chief snag. When can we meet and discuss plans?

Uncle will be home next month so there's no time to lose. I'm dying with curiosity to see the Queen of Sheba. I'm told she's super-O.K.!

*Yours ever,
JOE.*

Such was the letter of Curiosity Joe to his bosom friend Michael Smart (better known as "the Shrimp" on account of his diminutive proportions) and that's how the events recorded in this book had their beginning.

First, however, let me introduce Curiosity Joe to those of my readers who have not already made his acquaintance. He is the son of Jack Wantoknow, a pioneer missionary in Central Africa, and is chiefly known on account of a journey he took with his "Uncle" Solomon

(they adopted one another !) as a schoolboy, to visit his father in the wilds of Africa, and the thrilling events that took place there. "Solomon" is so called by his boy friends, and is the name by which he will go in this story, if you don't mind. The Curiosity Club was formed by Joe and his friends while at school together. Of course they've all left school now and are more or less scattered, some to the universities, others, like the Shrimp, to the army, and others again to business and professional careers. The Welcome Home Banquet organized in my honour (for you must know I am "Solomon") and that of my wife would be the first reunion of the club members and of course the first opportunity of my seeing again the boys who had meant so much to me in the old days and who had now reached the status of young manhood. If they are curious to meet the Queen of Sheba (I am afraid that's the name by which they have already dubbed my wife and which she will have to endure) I in my turn am not a little curious to see what sort of specimens my well-loved boy friends have blossomed into in the past few years. Curiosity on both sides will soon be satisfied.

CHAPTER II.

THE BANQUET

“ GENTLEMEN, I give you the toast : King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba ! ”

It was Curiosity Joe who raised his glass to the company of 40 young men with these words. The response was an ovation in the midst of which the Queen of Sheba found herself crowned with a wreath of roses while a charming gift of a richly bound and suitably inscribed copy of the Book of Books was presented in the name of the Curiosity Club in celebration of our wedding.

Well, there they were, a merry crowd indeed, and there were we as merry as the merriest. Of course all eyes were directed to “ the Queen ” and she had to make a speech which was applauded to the echo till I felt jealous for my place in their affections.

And then we sat and talked, all of us talking together, as the time passed all too quickly. We recalled the old days of the Scottish Camp and the story of Worldover School at siesta time, the Curiosity Club meetings and the unexpected arrival of “ Old Poker ” the Headmaster, with its extraordinary results, and above all that dreadful night when the flying bomb hit the school and the Shrimp saved the imprisoned boys at the risk of his life. While their tongues ran on, I mostly sat silent, contemplating them with a wonderful sense of satisfaction. For they had grown into a very presentable crowd. There were the twins (“ Dum ” and “ Dee ” we used to call them) not quite so much alike as formerly. And there sat “ Hold-all ”. I noticed his appetite had not diminished and his bulk had considerably increased. And ‘ Sleepy ’ Giles Green sat beside him. He shewed every indication of having woken

up considerably. And Arnold Hanks of the long legs (Shanks we used to call him) and dear old Rusty with his hair as red as ever and the beginnings of a moustache of the same colour. And Angus McDougall, "the Owl" of old, now a scholar of Balliol, Oxford, more full of brains and just as silent as ever. And there too sat Congrieve, "the conger-eel", and Cattermole ("Pussymouse") his pal, side by side as of yore. And Jack Cressfield, that nice boy who told the Club one evening how he lost his parents and found Christ in the London blitz (I shall never forget that night of the Curiosity Club). What a fine fellow he has grown! Guy Redmond, Geoffrey Stokes and Bill Page ("Buttons" for short) of the Unbelievers' Tea Party had all turned up, looking wonderfully pleased to be there. And a host of others too numerous to name, but above all and over all as Chairman, my dear Curiosity Joe. Well might his father Jack Wantoknow look proudly upon him. For he really is himself what he described the Queen of Sheba, Super-O.K. He has developed a fine physique, is tall and almost dangerously good-looking. He'll have to be careful with his girl friends! But his frank, free, open face and clear honest eyes are a joy to behold. But then as his adopted Uncle I may be prejudiced in his favour.

And now the evening draws to a close with many expressions of regret from all present. These at length were suitably voiced by a young man whom I well remembered as Alec Middlemarsh, the one time captain of Staplehurst School. He stood up and spoke thus:

"Dear Solomon and Mrs.—er—Queen of Sheba, (cheers and laughter) this has been an evening of pure delight. We've met you both—Solomon, we loved you single, we love you more married! What you've meant to some of us ("*all* of us!" from several quarters) well, yes, all of us, can't be told. But we need you still. I think some of us need you more than ever. You laid the foundations years ago and we've proved them well and truly laid, but

we want to build the temple. I understand that Solomon's Temple of old was a grand structure but you can help us build a grander temple made of living stones. The question I am going to put to you, and I put it after consultation with several, is, Will you help us build? Suppose in place of the old Curiosity Club, we reconstituted ourselves into an '*Honourable Society of Temple-Builders*' to meet under the presidency of King Solomon himself at a place and times to suit the convenience of as many as possible? Most, I believe, are within reach of London. My home is a spacious one and I've only to mention Solomon's name (it's a name to conjure with at home in view of what it has meant to me) and my parents will welcome us with open arms. Not the least attraction in my proposal is that it would establish a link between us all and an occasion of constant contact with our beloved friend and counsellor, Solomon."

From the manner in which this speech was received I discovered that the old boyish enthusiasm of former days still remained unabated and we speedily went into Committee of Ways and Means. Before we dispersed many necessary details had been settled, a Secretary appointed, and a provisional date of first meeting fixed, subject of course to the goodwill of Col. and Mrs. Middlemarsh. It was agreed that the Honourable Society of Temple-Builders should have a membership strictly "Pi" in character and that only "Pi's" (i.e., Christians) or "Would-be-Pi's" should be eligible to attend. A meeting for "Pagans" might be held at rare intervals at which no "Pi" would be welcome unless accompanied by at least one "Pagan". The regular sessions of the Society to be fortnightly and to take precedence in importance over every other engagement of a merely social or recreational character.

And that is how sprang into existence that notable community

"The Honourable Society of Temple-Builders".

CHAPTER III.

WE CONTEMPLATE OUR TASK

COL. MIDDLEMARSH and his charming wife, he a genial, soldierly product of the Indian Army, she silver-haired and smiling, received us in their lovely home crammed with rare and beautiful Eastern curios and furnished with Indian tapestries, rugs and inlaid tables, oriental divans and a hundred other things which intrigued us greatly. After serving us with refreshment as honoured guests they withdrew and left us to our proceedings.

“I say, Solomon,” remarked the Shrimp, “this seems about the type of thing your great original enjoyed in Jerusalem. It ought to be conducive to grand ideas in temple building.”

“Well, well, not altogether I fear; King Solomon suffered at last from too much luxury; however, let’s get to work. Some of you will have to sit Eastern fashion on the floor—we’re rather a crowd. But how good it is to be together again.”

“And how good to hear you talk once more, Solomon,” said Ralph Thornton. “You don’t seem a day older than when I was a kid.”

“I’m not, Rusty,” said I laughing, “didn’t you know I’d renewed my youth? However, we must not waste time. What about mode of procedure? The less formal the better, I think—you’re no longer boys to be talked to, but young men to talk with. I propose, therefore, that we just debate. I’ve no doubt I’ll talk a bit more than most of you, and you’ll ask questions much as in the old days. I imagine you’ve not solved all your problems, have you?”

“ We have not ; on the contrary we didn't know there were so many to be solved,” replied Middlemarsh.

“ Well I'm glad to see we're mostly armed with Bibles, and I've brought Young's Analytical Concordance with me ; a great book that,” said I.

“ And I've got my Cruden,” said Joe.

“ And so have I,” said Alistair Strange.

“ That's good, Dee, so now we'll get going. First, I suppose, we'd better get our objective clear. What is this temple we are setting out to build? What is a temple anyway, and what is its purpose? ”

“ Well, I always thought it was a sort of Church,” said Shanks.

“ Technically, no,” replied Angus McDougall. “ A Church is a place of worship, and a temple is a dwelling place of God, isn't that so, Solomon? ”

“ Very right indeed, Owl,” I answered, “ and a very important distinction. The Jews had many Synagogues or places of worship, but only one Temple. In fact, there never was more than one possible. First it took the form of a Tabernacle or Tent in which God dwelt in the midst of His wandering people, His glory appearing over the Mercy-Seat in the ark in the Holy of Holies. ‘ There will I meet with you and commune with you,’ said God to Moses. Then when Solomon built the great Temple in Jerusalem God made that His dwelling place and ‘ the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord ’. But at last God could no longer dwell in the midst of His sinning people, and Ezekiel in vision saw the glory leave the temple and the city, and it was never seen again for centuries. The Temple was empty.”

“ When did the glory next appear, Solomon? ” asked the Shrimp.

“ I see a reference in Cruden to Luke 2: 9,” said Alistair. “ It says ‘ And the glory of the Lord shone round about them ’.”

“ That was at Bethlehem, wasn't it? ” remarked

Ralph Thornton, with his Bible opened at the place.

“Right, Rusty,” said I. “And do you mark the significance? Look up John 1: 14, ‘And the Word was made flesh and tabernacled (*Greek*) among us, and we beheld His glory’. God had found a new ‘Tabernacle’ where He could dwell among men. It was the body of Jesus. You remember He referred to ‘the temple of His body’ which He would raise up the third day (look up John 2: 19). So God had a Temple in the body of Jesus which He had prepared, ‘a holy thing’, for His habitation.”

“And has He a temple still, Solomon, and if so, where is it now that Jesus is no longer on earth?” It was Jack Cressfield, looking very thoughtful.

“Ah, that brings us to the point of our Honourable Society, Jack. He most surely has, though it is no longer in Jerusalem, nor is it in Rome or Mecca, nor any other place to which men might go to worship Him. I think at this juncture we’d better read what Paul says about it in his epistles. Look first at Eph. 2: 19-22. ‘Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.’ That is, those who have been saved by grace through faith (verse 8), have been introduced into God’s kingdom as citizens, and into His family as sons. Now go on, someone.”

Geoffrey Stokes read aloud, “‘And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone’.”

“A good foundation for the building,” I interposed. “‘Jesus the corner stone witnessed to by the apostles and the prophets.’ ‘Other foundation can no man lay,’ (I Cor. 3: 11). ‘On this rock will I build my church’ said Christ (Matt. 16: 18). Go on, please.”

Bill Page took up the reading. “‘In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord : in whom ye also are builded together for an

habitation of God through the Spirit.' ”

“ I say, Solomon, I'd often wondered what that meant ; I believe I'm beginning to see.”

“ Wait a bit, Bill—let's read some more first,” I answered.

“ There's something more about Temples in I Cor. 3: 16, Uncle.” It was Curiosity Joe who spoke. He had been using his Cruden's Concordance while Bill Page read.

“ Well, what does it say, Joe? ”

Joe read, “ ‘ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are ’.”

“ And now someone read the 6th chapter, verses 19 and 20.”

Roger Strange read aloud, “ ‘ Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you which ye have from God? And ye are not your own ; for ye were bought with a price : glorify God therefore in your body ’.”

“ Thank you, Dum. I see you have the Revised Version, which is good,” said I. “ Now one more passage this time from Peter—someone read from his first epistle, chapter 2, verse 5.”

Frank Cattermole (the one time Pussymouse who had scoffed at Jonah and ended up by becoming “ Pi ”) read the following : “ ‘ Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’ What are lively stones, Solomon? ” he asked, looking up.

“ It reads in the Revised Version, ‘ living stones ’, a living temple built of living stones of which by grace you are one, Frank,” I replied smiling.

“ I am, indeed,” said he, “ and it is by grace every bit. What should I have been if there had been no Curiosity Club at school ! It was touch and go with me just then I can assure you.”

“ Well, each of us can say with Paul, ‘ by the grace of God I am what I am ’. And so you see from what we’ve read that God has still a temple among men, a dwelling place more wonderful than Solomon built for Him, a spiritual house made of living stones fitly framed together, builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. And it is because we are all individually concerned in the building of that temple that this Honourable Society of ours is a thing of firstclass importance.”

“ But, Solomon, Paul seems to say that each of our bodies is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Does that mean the same thing? ” It was Arnold Hanks who put the question.

“ Much the same, Shanks, and yet a little different. You see the Holy Ghost dwells in every child of God. He makes his body His home so that He may function through his eyes and hands and lips and mind and heart and thus accomplish His gracious purposes through the medium of his bodily powers. And at the same time He makes His temple out of the sum total of God’s people world wide, so that He might dwell in them and walk in them and manifest His presence wherever they come together.”

“ Is that what is meant by the Church, Solomon? ” asked Quartermain.

“ Precisely, Quarters, and this leads me to point out the twofold character of the Christian life, both of which aspects are of the utmost importance, and the development of each of which should be the chief concern of every believer. First his individual temple character and second his corporate character as a unit in that great temple which is in process of building as more and more living stones are ‘ fitly framed together ’ into it. So that you see our Society will have a dual concern. First, our being personally ‘ rooted and built up in Christ ’ and established in the faith that so we may be indeed holy temples in the Lord ; and, second, that we may become fitly framed together with all fellow believers in that

mystic body, that 'habitation of God' which is His Church."

"I think I see," said Angus the Owl, thoughtfully. "There is *a* temple, and there is *the* Temple with which every Christian is concerned. *A* temple which is his body, and *the* Temple which is the body of Christ of which all believers are members."

"Exactly Angus, and neither can be neglected without grieving the Holy Spirit, and without detriment to our own spiritual lives. So that you will agree that we have plenty to occupy our thoughts and study for some time to come if we are to become worthy Temple-Builders of this Honourable Society. And now we must close down for to-night, and I for one must hurry home or the Queen of Sheba may not be pleased."

CHAPTER IV.

ON SETTING OUT TO BUILD

“ I’VE been thinking over those temples Paul writes about, Solomon,” said Ralph Thornton, as we settled down comfortably on divans and cushions in Colonel Middlemarsh’s drawing room.

“ Which temples, Rusty ? ” I enquired.

“ Not the one in Ephesians made up of all believers, but what Paul calls in I Cor. 6: 19, the temple of our body. It’s a pretty serious thought, isn’t it ? ”

“ Serious in all conscience,” said I, “ but why specially ? ”

“ Well, it makes being a Christian so much more solemn a thing than most people appear to regard it. Fancy, it says in chapter 3: 17, ‘ the temple of God is holy ’ and ‘ if any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy ’. And again in chapter 6 it says we are not our own but are bought with a price, and in consequence must glorify God *in our bodies*. I find it rather a disturbing thought, I confess. Frankly I find my body a difficult proposition in many ways, certainly hardly a fit temple for the Holy Ghost, at any rate at times.”

“ Yes,” said Peter Round, “ and the further on I go the worse I seem to get. It’s all very puzzling, and not a little disquieting. How can a fellow like me be a temple of the Holy Ghost ? ”

“ And yet,” I answered, “ that’s just what you are, says Paul. ‘ What ? know ye not that your body *is* the temple of the Holy Ghost ? ’ Not should be, or may be, but *IS*. And because it is so it seems to me there’s much to be done to make it a worthy one. In fact that’s

what makes it so wonderful a life. If the temple were perfect there would be nothing to do, would there? and our Society of Temple-Builders would be superfluous. The marvel to me is that the Holy Spirit should condescend to make His dwelling place in such a very imperfect temple as my body. And yet it is clear He does, but on two conditions, apart from which it is impossible for Him effectively to do so."

"And what are the conditions, Solomon?" asked Roger Strange.

"First and foremost, that the Temple should be purged," I replied.

"Like Jesus and the Temple at Jerusalem when He drove out the money changers? I often thought that the most drastic and daring thing He did," remarked John Cross.

"I've got something about purging, Solomon," remarked Congrieve, who had, with several others, come armed with a Concordance, and was using it. "It says in I Cor. 5: 7 'Purge out therefore the old leaven'; and again in II Tim. 2: 21 'If a man therefore purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use'."

"And again I've found something under the word 'cleanse' which seems to apply," remarked Quartermain. "It's II Cor. 7: 1, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God'."

"Well, this is capital," said I, "with your help and Cruden's we shall get somewhere! So that is the first condition; the temple must be purged if the Holy Spirit is to occupy it effectively. A pretty serious business, as you will all agree."

"Rather like our annual spring-cleaning at home, Solomon," remarked the Shrimp. "Mother says she can't think how so much dirt and rubbish gets into the house in one year."

“ Not a bad illustration, Shrimp ; a house must be purified to be decently occupied. But curiously enough it must also be occupied to be kept purified. Have you ever seen how quickly an empty house gets dirty ? ”

“ Isn't there something about an empty house in the Bible, Solomon ? ” queried Giles Green.

“ Look it up under ‘ empty ’ in Cruden,” I replied.

“ Got it ! ” cried Roger Strange. “ Matt. 12 : 44— ‘ He findeth it empty ’. Of course, I remember, it was about the devil returning to a house he had left and finding it still unoccupied.”

“ Yes, and more than that,” I added. “ ‘ Empty, swept and garnished.’ All polished up and furnished, but without a tenant. But it didn't remain so, for its last state was worse than the first. It became full of devils. The only safeguard against that is to let the Holy Spirit occupy His temple. In other words, as Paul puts it, ‘ walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh ’. So the first condition is to purge your temple in order that it may be fit for the Holy Occupant to dwell there.”

“ And what is the second condition, Solomon ? ” asked Longstone, an old Scottish Camper.

“ A very practical one again,” I replied. “ The temple must be *built*. It's only an embryo temple at first. And building is a very canny business. You remember the warning Jesus gave on that subject ? ”

“ Wait a bit, Uncle Sol,” cried Joe, “ let's look it up in Cruden's.” And turning to the word ‘ build ’, and running his finger down the column he stopped at a reference in Luke. “ Is this it—Luke 14 : 28, ‘ intending to build a tower ’ ? ”

“ It sounds right,” said I ; “ anyone got it ? ”

Frank Cattermole read the verse as follows : “ ‘ For which of you intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation

and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish '."

"Ah, that's been my fear all along," remarked Congrieve. "I was afraid to begin for a long time for that very reason, and now the foundation is laid I sometimes wonder——."

"Never fear," said I, "the Holy Spirit will help your infirmity. He is concerned to see His temple finished. 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it' assured Paul to his Philippian converts, and one of them was nothing better than a rough Roman jailer. The thing that concerns you is to make sure of your foundation and of the quality of your building material."

"Didn't Christ say something about foundations, Solomon, somewhere in the Sermon on the Mount, I think?" And Ralph Thornton busied himself with his concordance. "Nothing under 'foundation'—ah, here it is under 'founded'; Matt. 7 : 25 : 'It fell not . . . founded on a rock.'"

"That's it," said I, "turn it up".

It was Cressfield who found it first and read, " 'Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not because it was founded upon a rock '."

"That's a rock that won't give way ; when everything that can be shaken in this shaky world has collapsed, that rock will remain unmoved, and 'he that believeth (or buildeth) on Him shall never be ashamed'. All else is sand, and sand (like man's opinions) *shifts* and makes a rotten foundation for any building."

"But you said something about building materials, Solomon ; I suppose they are important. What precisely did you mean?" asked Peter Round.

"I've got something here," remarked Middlemarsh ;

“ It’s under the same word ‘ build ’,” and he read I Cor. 3 : 12, “ ‘ build on this foundation gold ’ .”

“ Yes, Rusty, read it,” said I, for Ralph Thornton had already found the place.

He read : “ ‘ Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned he shall suffer loss ; but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire ’ .”

“ Yes,” said I, “ the building material is of the first importance. In fact it must be fire-proof like gold, silver, and precious stones, not inflammable as wood, hay or stubble. You see the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost in tongues of fire and ‘ our God is a consuming fire ’, so there must be no rubbish or jerry-building in His temple. I think that must do for this evening. We have discovered that there are things to purge out and things to put into the building of our temples. Plenty of food for thought between now and the next meeting of this Honourable Society. I think I’ll close by giving you Jude’s exhortation to the temple-builders of his day. You’ll find it in the 20th verse of his little epistle. ‘ But ye, beloved, *building up yourselves* on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.’ So off we go to our several houses, and I to the Queen of Sheba. By the way, she wants the next meeting to take place at our house. How many of you could make an afternoon of it next Saturday week and spend it in our garden with a session after tea ? It’ll be great if this lovely weather continues.”

This suggestion being received with acclamation, it was agreed to consider it a date, and the meeting dispersed.

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO USE A PLUMBLINE

IT was a lovely summer day and a great reunion. For my wife and I had included in our invitation not only the regular members of the Honourable Society of Temple-Builders, but a number of other old boy friends of other days who, mainly by reason of distance, were unable to attend the regular Society sessions. We had even filled our house with some who could not return home that night. These included one or two Scottish Campers, such as Andrew Bray, Tim Drown, Tony Wincott, and Archie Gorrock, who were full of reminiscences, particularly of siesta time in camp, and the story of "Worldover School."

"Have you seen the Dragon lately, Commie?" asked Andrew Bray with a twinkle.

"Now and again," said I, "but you've probably had more acquaintance with him, for I understand he spends much of his time north of the Tweed!" I retorted, amid general laughter. "He's a foul fiend anywhere," I added, "and doesn't leave any of us quite unmolested. He will even enter the temple itself and defile it if we are not careful to keep it fully occupied with a better Spirit."

We had just had tea and were grouped upon the croquet lawn for an informal session of our Honourable Society. It was a lovely setting, with flowers of all kinds around us, and the lily pond with its goldfish inhabitants adding greatly to the peaceful scene in the gleaming light of the setting sun. The members had invited the Queen of Sheba to join our Society for this one occasion, which she gladly consented to do, being, as she said, "as much interested in temple-building as any of us."

“ Well,” said I to the assembled company, “ how are your temples progressing ? I hope you are making good use of the plumbline as you build.”

“ Plumbline ? What plumbline ? ” queried Michael Smart.

“ You’d better read your Bible more, Shrimp ; you’ll find all about it there, though I’m not surprised if you’ve missed it, as few people pay as much attention to the minor prophets as they should.”

“ I confess I can’t make head or tail of them, so I generally skip most of them in my Bible reading,” remarked Bill Page.

“ A bad practice, Bill. I visited a gem mine as I passed through Ceylon a few weeks ago, and watched the natives haul up buckets of black mud. It looked worthless to me, but when the natives passed it through a sieve looking for amethysts, rubies, moonstones, and other precious gems, I learned a lesson in Bible Study, which I commend to you. Read diligently, even what you can’t understand ; you may find a priceless jewel there to reward your search. Now turn to Amos and read about the plumbline.”

“ I’ve found it, Solomon ; it’s the only time it is mentioned. It comes in Amos 7 : 7,” said Ralph Thornton, busy as usual with Cruden’s. “ It says, ‘ Thus He shewed me ; and behold the Lord stood beside a wall made by a plumbline with a plumbline in His hand ’. What do you make of that, Solomon ? ”

“ Well, I can see a good deal, and it’s very important I think. I could make a sermon out of that verse.”

“ Go ahead, Solomon, we’d like one of your sermons. It’s a long time since we heard one you know.” It was Middlemarsh who spoke, and as there was general approval I went on.

“ Well, you’ll have to help me. It’ll be a good exercise in sermon-making ; how would you divide the text ? For, of course, a sermon must have heads. I always say

a children's address ought to be like a shrimp (begging your pardon, Mike !), mainly heads and tails."

"Well," said the Owl gravely, "it's about a wall, anyhow ; would that do for a start ? "

"Excellently—Head I, ' It was a *Vision of a Wall* '. There's a tremendous lot in a wall isn't there ? To begin with it's a *construction*, a solid result of planned, purposeful labour. Walls don't arise by chance, they have to be *built*."

" *Balbus murum aedificavit*," murmured Mike Smart.

"Good for you, Shrimp, you're quite a classical scholar ! " I exclaimed.

"It's about all the Latin he knows," said Joe. "He was always bottom of the form in that subject."

"Well, anyhow he does remember that much. If Balbus wanted a wall he had to build it, and the Romans knew how to do that. We've got Roman walls standing in England after 2,000 years. They were built to stand and withstand. They had excellent bricks, but bricks are no good in themselves, and even a pile of bricks is no better, but erected into a wall they become of first-class importance. So with us Temple-Builders life is no longer an aimless aggregation of disconnected incidents as it was before we were converted. It has taken on design and purpose ; we have begun to build."

"That's a good first head, Solomon," remarked Tony Wincott, another of our Scottish Campers ; "and now what about the plumbline ? "

"Righto," I replied. "Head II : ' It was a vision of a wall *made by a plumbline* '. You all know what a plumbline is, I suppose ? "

"I thought it was something sailors used to plumb the depth of the sea," remarked Giles Green, with his usual drawl.

"No, no, Sleepy, you are thinking of a plummet. A plumbline is used by a builder to keep his building upright."

“ Yes, Sleepy,” said the Shrimp, “ to *shore* it up you know—nothing to do with the sea ! ”

“ Now Shrimp, stop it,” said I, “ Giles understands me if you don’t. It is used to keep the builder’s work perpendicular.”

“ Oh go on, Solomon,” said Quartermain, “ we all know what a plumbline is. No one could build a wall without it. What we want to know is what use you’re going to make of it in your sermon.”

“ That should be obvious, Quarters, for it’s equally essential in Temple-building. It is an entirely *Requisite Implement*. As you say, no wall could be built perfectly straight (as it must be if it is to stand) without constant application of the plumbline. No builder would think of relying on his own unaided judgment in building a wall. It might seem straight to him, and to those who watch him build, but it won’t be without the plumbline. ‘ There is a way that seemeth *right* (not merely pleasant) to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,’ said King Solomon. You need something more reliable than your own unaided judgment in building your Temple wall. And a plumbline is a *Reliable Implement*. It can’t, like a watch, go wrong. It will advise the builder unerringly. If he wants advice he can have it. But, of course, he must remember that the plumbline is also a *Relentless Implement*. It won’t withhold the truth for fear of giving offence. It can’t be tampered with. If your wall is crooked it will tell you so. If you don’t want the truth you’d better leave it alone.”

“ I say, Solomon, this is a first-class sermon,” said Ralph Thornton. “ I know that plumbline. Anything else about it ? ”

“ Well Rusty, we can say this, that a plumbline is not only *Requisite*, *Reliable* and *Relentless*, it is *Ready to Hand*, isn’t it? It’s within the reach of the humblest builder. It is not costly nor complicated—a stone and a piece of string would make quite an efficient one. ‘ The

wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.' A child can use it. None of us can plead it wasn't available to him."

"I've got another point," said Tony Wincott. "Can't we say it's a *Rectifying Implement*? I mean, its use is to enable the builder to correct his errors rather than merely to condemn his wall."

"Excellent, Tony, and seeing we've got so far we may as well drop metaphor and say at once that the plumbline with which our Temple wall must be built is the Word of God, which is profitable, said Paul to Timothy, for *doctrine*, that is, it will keep our thoughts in a true line with God's: for *reproof*, that is, it will tell us if our wall is crooked: for *correction*, so that we may know how to put it right: and for *instruction in righteousness*, so that we may build our wall uprightly. 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.' And now for another head for our sermon. What shall it be?"

"Well," said Jack Cressfield, who had been listening with his usual quiet intentness, "you haven't said anything about the Lord yet who was standing beside the wall."

"Thank you, Jack, I hoped someone would make that point. Let's say Head III: *It was a Vision of the Lord standing beside a wall made by a plumbline*. You see we are not irresponsible builders. We have a Lord who is standing beside our wall. He is intimately interested in the progress of the work. It is in fact His wall that we are building. He has appointed us the task and provided the material. He is the master builder who inspects the work in progress. He has every right to criticise it. 'Let every man take heed how he buildeth.' We are working with His eye upon us. He is lovingly concerned that we should make a good job of it. So He stands beside the wall. And there is another thing Amos saw in his vision. Can anyone help me?" There was a

pause while they all conned the verse afresh. Then Roger Strange said, "It says that the Lord had a plumb-line as well as the builder. Is there any point in that, Solomon?"

"Most assuredly, Dum. Let's make it the 'lastly' of our sermon. Head IV: *It was a vision of the Lord with a plumbline in His hand.* You see it is His prerogative to judge the wall, and the instrument by which He does so is the same as that which He has placed in the hand of the builder. The builder builds with the plumbline, and the Lord judges the building with a plumbline in His hand—His application of the plumbline will disclose whether we have used the plumbline in the course of our building. 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day,' said Jesus. There is but one plumbline—the Truth of God. 'Sanctify them through Thy Truth. Thy word is Truth.' That is the one and only criterion. It must be applied to every phase of our building, with the knowledge that at the last the Lord will apply it Himself and judge the wall with faithful relentlessness by the verdict it gives.

"So let us arise and build with plumbline in hand, with a heart that stands in awe of and trembles at God's word, and with a strong determination to build according to its faithful, searching dictates, and we shall build a Temple to His glory. But I see the Queen of Sheba is trying to catch my eye. No doubt she has some deep thoughts to contribute to the discussion."

"Well, hardly that," remarked my wife with a twinkle, "but you have talked so much that I'm afraid the coffee is getting cold and the ice cream is getting warm!—in other words, supper is ready and we want you all to stay and share it."

I need hardly add they willingly did so, reminding me of the old days when they equally willingly accepted my invitations to "come to tea with me".

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLUMBLINE IN OPERATION

I LITTLE thought my plumbline sermon would prove so disruptive among the Temple-Builders as it apparently did. Several of them seem to have gone home and applied it to their walls without loss of time. For a couple of days after our garden gathering I received two letters, and before the week was out had three callers and a telephone talk !

Here is one of the letters :

DEAR SOLOMON,

Sorry to bother you, but as a matter of fact you have bothered me ! I mean that about the plumbline the other night. It's a relentless implement all right. I'm almost sorry I used it as I did when I got home after the meeting. Solomon, my wall's all crooked if the Plumbline is correct, and, of course, as you told us it's as reliable as it is relentless. Well, I'd better be frank and tell you straight away. I've got a girl friend. Really Solomon, she's top-hole—as pretty as can be and clever and cute and a first-class sport. She's "sweet seventeen"—a bit young for me, for I'll be 21 soon, but we're frightfully fond of each other, and, while we're not allowed to be properly engaged, we're determined to get married one day. And now for the snag. She's not by any means pi, in fact she declares she's frankly an unbeliever, and chaffs me for being "religious". Well, I sat up late with my Bible and Concordance to see if everything was O.K., and jolly well hoping it was ! I began with the word "unbelievers", and this is what I found : II Cor. 6 : 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers". Well, that fairly flummoxed me, for of course, marriage is a yoke right enough, and here am I wanting to marry an unbeliever, and wanting it more than anything

else in the world ! Then I turned up " marry ", and that made matters worse. For I Cor. 7 : 39 seems to indicate that a Christian must marry " only in the Lord ". Well, how can a Christian marry an unbeliever " in the Lord " ? It looks as if my wall is getting definitely out of plumb, and the worst of it is it's gone so far now it would be beastly awkward to pull down what I've built.

Any advice you can offer will be most thankfully received by

Your ever grateful friend (and none more so, or with more cause),

FRANK CATTERMOLE.

After reading this letter through two or three times, which I did with increasing interest, I set myself to the task of writing a suitable reply. Years ago this would have been an easier proceeding than I now found it. For in the light of recent happy experience I found it hard not to sympathise with poor old Pussymouse in this his first love episode—yet I must not shirk giving him the advice he sought and of which he was obviously in urgent need. So I took up my pen and wrote as follows :

DEAR FRANK,

You have set me the most thankless task in the world ; to advise a young man against his inclinations, yet as you ask for it I have no option. All I can hope is that we shall remain friends in spite of it ! Your letter is like your name, frank. I will try to be equally frank with you. First, then, you are quite right in your reading of the " plumbline ". However distasteful (and I know, old fellow, how dreadfully so it must be) *you can't marry the girl of your choice if she is an unbeliever*. It just can't be done if your wall is to be straight. To ignore the plumbline is to court disaster to the whole building, for a single crooked tier affects the rest, and the crookedness increases as the wall progresses, until the inevitable collapse comes at last. I've seen it happen too often to

doubt it. I might leave it at that, but as it's always easier to submit to unwelcome advice if one can see the reason for it, I will try to shew you the why and the wherefore, for as in all the counsels of Scripture there is sound wisdom and solid reason, so in this matter there is a principle of the first importance involved in the prohibition (for it is no less) which faces you, which I will do my best to explain.

Of course it doesn't only apply to the question of marriage, but to many another human association. It is a question of becoming "yoked"—*i.e.*, brought into bondage to any person or thing that may interfere with your freedom wholly to follow your Lord. That is why Mercy in "Pilgrim's Progress" refused Mr. Brisk, saying, "I am purposed never to have a clog to my soul." The Lord says to those who come to Him "Take my yoke upon you" and our only yoke-fellows must be those who share the yoke of Christ, otherwise we lose our freedom, or are faced with conflicting loyalties. That is why our Lord made discipleship so tremendous a challenge. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Every other obligation must yield place to Christ or discipleship is impossible. That is also what it means when it says that marriage must be "in the Lord." Of course it must, as must everything else in a Christian's life. As a child he obeys his parents "in the Lord"; as a servant of Christ he labours "in the Lord"; he rejoices "in the Lord"; he is strong "in the Lord"; he stands fast "in the Lord"; and the wife obeys her husband "in the Lord." It means that Christ must be Lord in every relationship of life. If He is not Lord of all then He is not Lord at all.

There is a further practical aspect of the subject that should be borne in mind. It is expressed in the question of that same Amos who introduced us to the plumbline,

“ Can two walk together except they be agreed? ” Think of setting out to walk—and it’s a long walk, Frank, perhaps for half a century—with a person with whom you are in disagreement upon the most vital subject of all. You just can’t walk together at all. You will have to pray *alone*, while your wife completes her toilet in the same room, and secretly laughs at you. You will go to worship *alone*, while she plays tennis. You will read your Bible *alone*, while she reads the latest novel. You will make your Christian friends *alone*, and find it hard to invite them to your home. You will never be able to mention the Lord you love in her hearing, and you will have a constant conflict of interests which will only court disaster after the first flush of married “ bliss ” is past. And don’t delude yourself that you can influence her—she is far more likely to influence you in the wrong direction! Again, suppose there were children, what chance would they have in such a home? How unfair to them for time and for eternity!

No, Frank, far better to remain a bachelor for life than to endure such a travesty of marriage.

But of course you will know how to deal with this problem. You will pray. Why not pray the Lord to save the girl you love? If you truly love her you will desire this for her most of all. And then tell her plainly the position, and that you are praying for her conversion. Hard? Desperately so, no doubt, but it may prove the solution. And if it doesn’t? Well, you’re very young. don’t think me brutal if I remind you that there’s plenty of time, and that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out!

There! I’ve said my say and that’s that. You know how much I care for you, and that you will not be forgotten by me as you face this first grave decision in your life. There are no doubt others to follow!

Your affectionate friend and counsellor,
SOLOMON.

Then there arrived by the same post another letter marked "Private and Confidential," and sealed down with wax. It was from a boy whom I'm going to call Godfrey Glover, and was indeed both private and confidential in the extreme. It is only with his express permission, and in view of the importance of the subject discussed, that I venture to include it and my answer in these pages, in the hope that others in like circumstances may gain help from it. Of course Godfrey Glover is not the true name of the writer.

This is what he wrote :

DEAR SOLOMON,

I've used the plumbline and am desperately unhappy in consequence. I know I can trust you to observe my confidence, so am going to make a clean breast of it. The fact is I am a beast, and a vile one at that. It began when I was a kid at Staplehurst. You know the sort of thing some chaps do at school. Well I got in with a rotten crowd and soon was as bad as the worst. My mind was like a lewd picture gallery, and I spent most of my leisure time walking up and down in it gloating over the pictures. In fact I was a prisoner there, locked in, and couldn't escape. Then you know you came to the school and had those talks, and at that last talk I was one of those who was converted. I really was, Solomon, and have never changed or looked back. At first it was perfectly wonderful. I could hardly believe I was the same boy, and the Curiosity Club was a great support. But since I left school I'm afraid I got slack. There's no help, you know, at home. Father left us and Mother divorced him and married again and, well, it's not a nice home for any chap, let alone a Christian, to be brought up in. But the real trouble came when I got into the firm I'm with. There's a big crowd of clerks, men and girls, and it was an eye-opener to me. They call themselves ultra modern and scoff at marriage and all the decencies. All day long the talk is rotten, and they use such specious arguments about self-expression and the folly of inhibitions that, in the absence of any help or good

companionship, I'm ashamed to confess I got carried off my feet. If I'd only had the courage to declare myself a Christian as soon as I arrived it wouldn't have happened—I only wish I had. But I didn't, and this was the result. All the old passions flared up again and craved for indulgence. I lulled my conscience with arguments that after all, what is natural can't be very wrong as long as you don't harm anybody else, and so it went on, till the other day one of the girl clerks, very pretty and full of life, if perhaps a bit bold, asked me to join a party of them who were going away for the week end. It came just at a time when my people were away, and I was at a loose end and, well, Solomon, I consented and we all went to Margate together. You can guess what went on. They were all of them used to that sort of thing and knew the ropes. The girl made herself very pleasant to me, and I tried to throw myself into it all without allowing myself to think. But afterwards, Solomon! All the arguments I had used appeared hollow and sham, as I ought to have known they were, and shame overwhelmed me. They said I was a spoil-sport, and all went back without me. How I ever came to your show on Saturday I don't know, or how I sat through it. I went home and applied the Plumbline, not that it was needed to reveal my crookedness. My Bible opened at that dreadful chapter, Proverbs 7. I'd never seen it before, but oh, how it described me! And now I don't know what to do. For God's sake write to me and tell me or I think I shall go mad!

Yours ashamedly,

GODFREY GLOVER.

It took me much prayerful cogitation before I could undertake the onerous duty of answering this distressful letter. The writer was a favourite boy friend of mine who has appeared under his true name in more than one of my stories, and it pained me beyond measure that he should have fallen so grievously into the snare of the devil. I must help him to the best of my ability, though I felt much at a loss how best to do so. First I thought I would ask him to tea as in the old days and have a talk

afterwards, but I feared he would feel too embarrassed to come. At length I decided on a letter, and this is what I wrote :

DEAR GODFREY,

Your letter made painful reading. The only redeeming feature is that you wrote it. It must have cost you a lot to do so, and you were no doubt sorely tempted to bury it all in oblivion. I am sure you don't expect or wish me to condone your conduct or excuse it in any way. It was, as you rightly say, beastly and shameful. It does not, however, help matters to call yourself names, and to give way to despair is the worst form of folly. There is, of course, one step first and foremost, for you to take, and I trust you have taken this already. It is to confess your sin in all its hideousness to God and seek His pardon—"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." And again, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What will no doubt be harder than confessing the sin will be to believe that it is forgiven—yet full and free forgiveness is assured by the Word of God and the blood of Christ. God will be *faithful* to forgive you because of His promise, and *just* to do so because of the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin. Confess your fault and claim His gracious forgiveness. This will put your conscience right, which is the first essential, for a Christian with a guilty conscience is an easy prey to the devil. But it's not only conscience but conduct that must be adjusted, and this is a grave and difficult matter indeed. To begin with there is the girl—it is of the first importance she should know that you have confessed your share in the wickedness to God and that you abhor it heartily. Don't write; see her privately and speak honestly and plainly. If, as you infer, she is making a practice of such things there is little

more for you to do—at any rate at present. But she must know that you consider such conduct wicked, and that you will have none of it. Have courage, Godfrey, and face the music like a man. Let her laugh or scoff or deride : it matters not so long as you do right. If you excuse yourself or belittle your sin in any way it will go far to show that you are not a Christian at all, for all your profession. For “he that is born of God doth not commit sin, he cannot sin because he is born of God” ; which just means that sin is abhorrent to him and that he will never sit down under it or cease to resist and repudiate and hate it even if snared into it by the wiles of the devil.

Now a word on the subject generally. Why is this matter of sex so grave a stumbling block to so many otherwise decent fellows ? I think mainly because of the manner in which it is approached. I suppose like most small boys you were left to discover what you could and did so in secret with other boys in fear of being found out and punished. Of course, that’s all wrong and breeds a false sense of shame concerning a perfectly healthy and clean function of your body about which you should no more be ashamed than of your appetite. If boys were told quite plainly and openly of this function of their physical structure, as of any other, and warned against its abuse as they are warned against overeating, it would, I think, go a long way to correcting the covert and unclean approach which is so harmful. Of course the trouble is that this appetite is so much more insistent than any other, and calls for much more determined control. A boy above the age of puberty finds himself equipped with a man’s body before he has a man’s judgment to control it. Yet it must be done if the boy is going to become a worth-while man. Control must be learnt and practised, and failure from time to time must not be a ground of too much self-reproach, and certainly not despair. With a Christian there is the added advantage of the Holy Spirit Who ‘lusts’ against the flesh and whose fruit is self-

control. I do not think you should expect deliverance from sexual appetite; that would make you less than a man, but for strength and grace to control it. As Paul puts it, "that everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in lust." And he practised what he preached, for he writes, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection lest, having preached to others, I should myself be a castaway." Go thou and do likewise !

Well, that's all I need say, except for your encouragement to give you this word of King Solomon's, "A just man falleth seven times and *riseth up again*." You have fallen grievously, but no good ever came of staying down : you may rise up again and walk more humbly and circumspectly by reason of your fall. In other words, get up and get on !

I am available for a talk if you want any more. I should advise you, however, to forget those things that are behind and reach forth to 'better things' which are before.

Remember I am still as much your friend as ever and always glad to be

Your counsellor,

SOLOMON.

CHAPTER VII.

A BELIEVERS' SUPPER-PARTY

I HAD just settled down for a quiet evening in company with the Queen of Sheba when the telephone rang. I took up the receiver and a voice I recognised said :

“ Is that you, Solomon ? ”

“ It is, bother you ! ” I replied.

“ I'm awfully sorry, but we three want to come and see you. It's urgent. May we come along now ? ”

“ Am I to have no time with my wife ? ” I answered. “ Of course you may come, if you can face the wrath of the Queen of Sheba. Come and have supper.”

“ Ah, that would be grand ; a sort of complement to the Unbelievers' Tea-Party where we first met, eh ? We'll enjoy a Believers' Supper-Party by way of contrast. We'll come right along.”

And in due course they came, and we supped happily together. They were the three inseparables, Guy Redmond, Geoffrey Stokes, and Bill Page, inseparable ever since that memorable tea-party when they came to argue and remained to pray. Since that party, which ended so strangely with all of us under the tea table for fear of the flying bomb, the three had gone steadfastly ahead without looking back. A promising structure was arising in each case, a temple worthy of its Holy Occupant. It was a joy to me to see them, and I wondered what could have brought them to see me so urgently. I could see it was nothing distressing, by their smiling faces and confident air as they pulled up chairs after supper and settled down. My wife made as though to leave us, but Bill Page said :

“ I believe the Queen of Sheba could help in this conference if she would stay. . . ”

"I'm better at asking questions than answering them you know," said she with a smile as she resumed her seat.

"Well," said I, "I don't suppose the Plumline has been troubling you three has it?"

"No," said Guy Redmond, "it's not the Plumline we're afraid of, it's the fire."

"The fire?" said I, lifting my eyebrows.

"Yes," said Bill Page, "we don't think some of our building material will stand it."

"In other words," added Geoffrey Stokes, "we're not satisfied that we are putting the best into our lives; such a lot of it seems waste, and time is flying".

"And so what?"

"Well," said Bill, "that's what we came about. Take Geoffrey and me; we're both in the same office. Geoff is concerned with bills of lading and I'm making out invoices, while Guy is in a bank adding up figures. And we do much the same thing from 9 o'clock in the morning till 6 at night all the year round, with a fortnight's holiday in the summer. Rather a large slice out of our lives, isn't it?"

"Yes, and no prospect of anything better till we're middle-aged, if then," said Geoffrey.

"Yes," said I, "and so what?"

"Look here, Solomon, don't keep saying 'so what!' Can't you tell us what to do about it?" cried Bill Page, a little exasperated by my coolness.

"Well, somebody has got to write bills of lading and make out invoices, and banks can't be run without clerks. There's nothing discreditable in that so long as it's done well," I remarked.

"Yes, but can't we spend our lives better than that?" said Geoffrey.

"I don't know," I replied, "How do you spend the time you've got?"

"Well, Geoff. and I are taking evening classes at the London Bible College," said Guy.

“ And I’m helping Boxer Cross with his Boys’ Club in Shoreditch,” added Bill Page.

“ Very good, Buttons ; and what about Sundays ? ”

“ Oh, of course we’re all three assistant leaders in Crusader Classes in the afternoon,” said Guy.

“ And in the evenings ? ”

“ Oh, we’ve joined a Team, and go around to Mission Halls and open air meetings trying to preach,” replied Bill. “ You should hear Guy, he’s got quite a gift for it.”

“ And Bill and I can sing a bit. In fact we’re taking lessons,” said Geoffrey Stokes, with a certain excitement in his voice. “ I tell you, we have great times.”

“ Not altogether misspent lives,” I remarked. “ At any rate a good beginning.”

“ Yes, but can’t we do more, Solomon ? ” said Bill. “ What about whole-time service ? ”

“ And what’s that ? ” I asked.

“ Why being a parson or missionary, or going about as an evangelist. I should like that awfully,” said Guy.

“ Yes,” I said, “ it sounds very alluring. No morning train to catch, no tiresome work to do, no boss to tick you off ; just to go around preaching with crowds to listen to you, supposing they came. And who would pay you for all this ? ”

“ Well, I suppose there are Societies,” replied Guy.

“ And where do they get the money from ? ” I asked.

“ Why, from their subscribers, don’t they ? ” said Bill.

“ And the subscribers ; how do they get it ? ”

“ By working for it, of course,” answered Geoffrey.

“ Exactly, by doing what you don’t want to do, eh ? They slave all day so that you may preach at night. Quite a good scheme from your point of view,” I remarked drily.

“ But don’t some people live by faith, Solomon ? ” said Geoffrey Stokes.

“ I hope we all do,” I replied. “ We certainly all should. But if you mean doing no work for your living

and expecting other people who are Christians to keep you, too many do, in my humble opinion."

"Well now, dear," remarked my wife, quietly, "don't you think it's time you said something more helpful? You know what they want, I am sure."

"O Queen, live for ever," cried Guy, "thank you so much—I knew your being here would help us."

"Very well," said I, "listen to me and I'll explain the principles of Christian service as I understand them. The first is that Christian service is the prerogative of Christian people—only Christians may undertake it, and all Christians ought to. Before Pentecost God employed angels, and how glad they were to do it. A multitude of the heavenly host swarmed out of heaven to proclaim the birth of Christ. Angels announced His resurrection at the empty tomb, and two more of them were at the ascension with the promise of His return. And that ended their public ministry. Thenceforth God put the responsibility upon His redeemed people. 'They were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak.' All the 120 in that upper room, both men and women, the crowds heard them speak the wonderful works of God. And when the Church had grown to thousands strong and they were scattered abroad by persecution, they all went everywhere preaching the Word. The consequence was that the Gospel spread at a rate that has never been approached since. Every Christian man and woman was a vital witness. If it had continued so the whole world would have heard the Gospel in the first generation".

"O, come, Solomon, isn't that rather an over-statement?" interpolated Guy Redmond.

"Any good at arithmetic, Guy?" said I; "if so, take this sum. Suppose each of the 3,000 converts at Pentecost led one other to Christ annually (only one!) and their converts did the same, how long would it take to convert the world of say 800 millions—and there were certainly not more at that time? You can do it in five minutes."

“ I say,” said Guy, after some hasty work with his pencil, “ there must be something wrong, this can't be right. I make it only 19 years ! ”

“ That's right enough. And now after 1,900 years there are more than 800 million heathen still unsaved ! Pretty bad show isn't it ? And it's all because there are so few whole-time workers.”

“ Whole-time workers, Solomon ? I thought——”

“ Yes, Guy, whole-time workers—not necessarily parsons or missionaries or preachers, but whole-time all the same. All the time every day, all day, at school or college or business, in an office, in a bank, at the Bar, on the Bench, everywhere in the world, on land or sea or in the air, whole-time witnesses who, like the first persecuted Christians, go everywhere preaching (or, if you like, proclaiming) the Word, and, if necessary, suffering for it. There's whole-time service for you ! There's a mission field at your very door ! There's adventure without going to seek it ! There's a thrill in the most humdrum circumstances ! Suppose every believer were truly a whole-time worker at his everyday job ? Why, of course, like the early Church, it would be said of them, ‘ These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also.’ They're in our office, in the bus, everywhere ! That beats preaching in a Mission Hall where the public don't come, doesn't it ? ”

“ But it's jolly hard to speak to one's fellow-clerks, Solomon,” said Guy.

“ Why, I thought you were such a good preacher, Guy ! So you want a soft job, do you ? ”

“ No, Solomon, no. But I want to be the best I can, and I feel terribly limited at the office. Surely God does call some people to give all their time and energy to active Christian service, doesn't He ? ”

“ Indeed He does, Guy. All their time, and sometimes all the time, but not necessarily. He called Paul, and he obeyed, and went forth on missionary journeys which

continued throughout his life : but it didn't become a sort of profession with him, you know. He had a trade to his hand and turned to it at times."

" A trade, Solomon ? "

" Yes, he was a tentmaker, and I'll be bound he made first-class tents that didn't leak. He earned his living at it when he could, and at other times accepted gifts or went hungry. Like Carey, the cobbler missionary, who said his business was to preach the Gospel, and he mended shoes to pay expenses."

" But in these days it is necessary for some people to give themselves wholly to the ministry in some form or other and to be trained for it, surely ? " said Geoffrey Stokes.

" And what else are you and Guy at the London Bible College for ? " I replied. " I think you are doing the very right thing. You are equipping yourself in anticipation for any form of service to which the Holy Ghost may ultimately call you. But don't assume that His call will be necessarily a call for life. You must be always at His disposal, and therefore should be careful not to pledge the future. For instance, He may send you to Timbuctoo to preach the Gospel there, but that does not imply that you are necessarily a missionary for the rest of your life, though, as with Paul, it may work out that way. And I may add, if you're not witnessing effectively at the office you won't be much good in Timbuctoo ! "

" Then you don't think we should offer ourselves to a Missionary Society ? "

" That's not for me to say Guy. I can only refer you to the Plumblin to keep you straight on that matter."

" Perhaps you can help us use it, Solomon. We *do* want to go straight," said Bill Page.

" Well, Paul lays down a general principle for our guidance. He says in 1 Cor. 7. 20, 21, ' Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant ? Care not for it : but if

thou mayest be made free, use it rather.' That is, reckon you are where you are and what you are by God's appointment and as His choice for you for the time being, and serve Him there with all your might. At the same time the Lord Himself bids us ' Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that He will send forth labourers into His Harvest,' and if you do that you may be the labourer He sends, especially if you pray ' Here am I, send me '."

" But how shall we know He is sending us? " asked Guy.

" You can't fail to know that," I replied. " When He ' thrusts forth ' (that's the word literally) labourers He gives them no rest till they obey. In other words, you will experience a growing conviction of His will, and then things will happen and the way will be made crystal-clear. And then, happy man, you will go ! And now I have a growing conviction, aided by something in the Queen of Sheba's eyes, that you must go now."

" Go where, Solomon? " asked Geoffrey, mystified.

" Why home, of course, look at the time ! "

And home they went.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEMPLE ADORNED

IT was a full house when the Honourable Society of Temple Builders next met at the home of Col. and Mrs. Middlemarsh. The garden gathering at my house had kindled much hitherto latent enthusiasm, and I was gratified to welcome quite a number of former Curiosity Clubbites with whom I had lost touch for some years. Tea and coffee and cakes loosened all restraints, and there was a volume of conversation worthy of a Mothers' Meeting.

Frank Cattermole was there, and taking me into a corner, confided that he had followed my advice with regard to his girl friend, who had, in consequence, completely jilted him, saying she always thought him a bit peculiar, and that she had other strings to her bow ! He had got over it quicker than he expected, and had determined to have no more to do with the sex. Whereat I smiled. A certain other boy was also present wearing a quiet, subdued look and not mixing so freely in the light chatter as before. He took occasion to tell me he had received my letter, for which he could not thank me enough, that he had had a dreadful interview which had cost him sleepless nights. His reception had been hostile to the last degree and he was wanting to change his job, the girl clerk having set herself to make his position in the office unbearable. But one good had emerged—all the staff now knew him to be a Christian, if a very poor one. I whispered to him, "Don't run away, stand your ground, be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart." That was all, but he looked

grateful. He will build a worthy temple in days to come I am sure.

* * * * *

“Gentlemen, time is too precious to waste over trivialities, and there is a Temple to be built, so let us go to it.” These words from me were sufficient to call all to attention, and the floor of the lounge was speedily covered with youths squatting in every conventional and unconventional pose in readiness for the evening’s debate.

It was Angus McDougal, “the Owl”, who opened the proceedings.

“Solomon, I’ve been giving a muckle of thought to these temples we’re building.”

“I don’t doubt that, Owl, and I’m sure we shall all profit by the outcome,” said I. “What’s your conclusion?”

“Well, that if our temples are nothing but walls, however straight we build them, they’re likely to be a trifle bare and unattractive, if not positively forbidding. Most temples I’ve seen or read about are lovely places, adorned with gold and marble and such like : oughtn’t our temples to be something the same?”

“O wise old Owl, you’ve said it!” said I. “Come, here’s matter for first-class debate. It’s true that when men build earthly temples they do the job well. Nothing is too good or costly and everything must be of the best. You’ve only to enter St. Paul’s cathedral, or Westminster Abbey, or St. Peter’s in Rome, to discover that. On our flight to New Zealand the Queen of Sheba and I visited Rangoon and saw the world-famous golden pagoda to Buddha. Millions of money have been expended on it. The dome is covered with solid gold which is renewed every year. It was a sight to be remembered as we flew over it in the afternoon sunshine. If such things are done for temples made with hands (though, as Stephen said, ‘God dwelleth not in temples made with hands’)

how much more should the true temples we are building be adorned with all that is beautiful, to His praise and glory.”

“ I think we shall want you to explain that Solomon,” said Quartermain. “ I’m not much good at parables.”

“ It’s very simple, Quarters, though also very important. Somebody read Titus 2 : 10.”

Rusty Thornton, alert as ever, promptly read, “ ‘ That we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things ’. Is that the phrase you mean, Solomon ? ”

“ That’s it, Rusty. Doctrine is a very important part of Christianity, but not the most beautiful. It needs to be ‘ adorned ’ to make it really attractive. I sometimes liken doctrine to a skeleton, a highly indispensable part of our make-up, but not very charming to look at unless it is adorned with flesh and skin and hair. What a repulsive crowd you would look if you were unadorned skeletons ! ”

“ And you’d look no better Solomon—we shouldn’t recognize you ! ” said the Shrimp.

“ No indeed,” said I, “ and so it is with our temple building. The work is not complete when the walls are up. It’s no more fit for the Great Occupant for whom it is destined than an unfurnished house would be for you and me to live in.”

“ Tell us what you mean, Uncle. I confess I haven’t quite got hold of it yet,” said Joe.

“ Right, Curiosity, I’ll explain. Some folk seem to have the idea that if one is a Christian, a believer, and ‘ fully surrendered ’, and particularly if there is nothing allowed that is inconsistent with that profession, then the temple they have so erected is such as the Holy Ghost can occupy with every mark of satisfaction.”

“ But surely you’ve told us many times that the Holy Spirit will dwell in every surrendered life. What more is required ? ” It was Cross who spoke, looking a bit puzzled.

“ Nothing more *required*, Boxer, than if a landlord handed you the key of an empty house. It would be yours all right, fully surrendered to you, but not a very pleasant place to live in in that condition. Nor would it be much better, though it would be something, if you found it had been cleaned out for you. So I don't think the temple of our body must be considered completely fit for its Occupant, though the building is faultless, and there's nothing in it that would grieve the Holy Spirit. There's much more to be done. I know some true believers whose lives are hedged round with inhibitions of all kinds, who seem chiefly occupied with the things they mustn't do. They don't drink, or smoke, or dance, or play cards, or go to theatres, or the pictures. All of these things are assiduously excluded from their temple. And that seems to satisfy their conception of what a Christian should be.”

“ But, Solomon, aren't we told to come out from the world ; aren't these things worldly ? You don't do any of them do you ? ” put in Peter Round.

“ No, Hold-all, I don't, and several other things I might name ; but I might refrain from them all and still be worldly—it isn't *things* that are worldly. As someone once said, ' the world is not a *sphere*, it is an *atmosphere* ', and if I stop at separation I have stopped half-way. It's not enough to cleanse my temple, I must go further. I must put into it all I can to make it a worthy place in all respects for God the Holy Ghost.”

“ Now tell us plainly what that means in practice. What sort of things must we put in ? ” asked Tony Wincott.

“ By all means. I'll give you a schedule of them right away. Turn to Philippians 4 : 8. You'll find them set out here.”

“ Shall I read it, Solomon ? ” asked Roger Strange.

“ Yes, go ahead Dum, and all pay attention.”

Roger read as follows :

“ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report : if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

“ There,” said I, “ you have your temple furniture and ornaments. Everything that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy is both fitting and becoming in the equipment and decoration of the temple you are building for the Holy Ghost to occupy in your life. And every one of those things makes your temple a more acceptable place for Him to dwell in. Of course He will occupy the temple unadorned, but I am sure He is better glorified and gratified if He finds them there.”

“ I say, Solomon, this provides me with quite a new outlook.” It was Andrew Bray speaking, and he went on, “ I’ve been brought up among some very strict people who think it would be wrong to go to a concert, or visit an art gallery, who rarely read anything but the Bible, and go to meetings every night in the week. Are they wrong ? ”

“ Not so much wrong, Andy, as unfortunate, I should say,” I replied. “ You see they are limiting their range of thinking, and in consequence excluding from their temple many things that might, and I think ought, to be there. Paul used a very comprehensive word when he said ‘ whatsoever ’ didn’t he ? He seemed to encourage his converts to develop their minds to the utmost in all the directions he names, and to imply that by doing so their lives would bring added glory to God, and I’m sure he was right. I don’t think God wants His people to restrict their vision in one direction only (like a horse in blinkers), however good and important that vision may be. There is a great danger otherwise of becoming a half-developed sort of person, or, as Hosea called Ephraim, ‘ a cake not turned ’, only baked on one side ! ”

“ Then you think Bill and I are right in taking singing lessons, Solomon? I confess I had some qualms about it,” said Geoffrey Stokes.

“ Provided you’ve got a voice, Geoffrey. David said ‘ O sing unto the Lord ’, and if you can sing, the better you do it the better God will be pleased to hear it. Otherwise don’t waste your time taking lessons, but be content to make a joyful noise. Only be sure it’s not an awful noise ! ”

“ But, Solomon, isn’t there a danger in all this? I mean if you train your gift of singing why not every other gift you may possess, painting, sculpture, music, literature, and a dozen others? ” queried Alistair Strange.

“ Yes, and dancing and acting too,” added Cattermole. “ I belonged to the School Dramatic Society at Staplehurst, and thought myself no end of an actor.”

“ Specially at girl parts with a flaxen wig,” interjected the Shrimp, as irrepressible as ever, whereat much laughter.

“ And danger there certainly is,” I replied, “ but none if you bear in mind that it is a temple for the Holy Ghost you’re adorning, and while some things may be good and innocent in themselves, they don’t make appropriate temple decorations. Moreover other things are certainly not worthy of the Occupant for whom it is being prepared.”

“ Can you give us a test, Solomon, as to what is and what is not desirable? ” asked Jack Cressfield.

“ I think Philippians 4 : 8 should supply this quite satisfactorily. Anything that is not within the category shown there is not worth seriously ‘ thinking on ’. The question to ask, therefore, is : is this thing true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy? If not there is no place for it in my temple. You may apply this to almost any activity you contemplate, and if it doesn’t pass the test you must rule it out.”

“ And if it does, Solomon? ” asked Giles Green.

“Then it may be well worth while, if you can spare the time,” I replied.

“Oh, so that’s a further consideration,” remarked Tim Drown. “I hadn’t thought of that.”

“Well, you’ve only a limited amount of time in which to live, you know, and you’d best use it to advantage. Not much satisfaction to tell God when you meet Him that you were a very good actor or singer or painter, and He’ll certainly not be interested in your dancing! The great question He will want to know is what has your talent produced in trading it for Him.”

“That rules out dramatics, anyhow,” remarked Cattermole.

“Perhaps, though I’ve known preachers whose power lay largely through their histrionic ability. In fact I believe every talent may be traded for the Lord by its possessor if he is really heart and soul in earnest that it should. But I’m afraid we’re mixing our metaphors, and are losing sight of the temple we have in view. Only bear in mind that all these things can beautify the sacred edifice you are building, and that there is room for variety. I don’t smother the walls of my home with texts, or furnish it everywhere with pews, but I take care that every item I allow glorifies the One who is its true Master and Head. ‘O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness’ is a good text to remember. Holiness is very beautiful and everything beautiful will conduce to it. To shut yourself in a whitewashed cell and wear mourning garments will not make you more holy—sometimes quite the reverse. ‘Anoint thy head and wash thy face!’ said Christ, and He might have added ‘beautify thy house, and above all thy character with everything that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy’. If you do this your temple will be such that the Holy Ghost will delight to occupy.”

There was a pause in which everyone sat quiet. Then

Curiosity Joe said, "I think, Uncle, the Society would like to thank you specially for to-night. You see we all want to be out and out for Christ, and we don't want to waste our lives on trivialities. At the same time we want to be our own individual selves and not to conform to a rigid and restricted pattern, only developed in one direction. So we are particularly glad of what you have told us, and we trust our temples will be all the better built and adorned in consequence, even though they don't all follow the same design."

"Thank you, Curiosity," said I. "I don't think there's much fear of that. And now good-night till our next happy meeting."

* * * * *

Two days later the post brought me a letter. It was from "Godfrey Glover" and read as follows :

DEAR SOLOMON,

You'll be interested to know there's been a row in the office. It appears that our head partner, Sir Donald Hudson, has heard, I don't know how, of the indecencies in vogue, and yesterday three of the chief offenders got the sack, including the girl clerk in question. I thought it right to go in to Sir Donald and say he ought to dismiss me too, as I was as bad as any. In fact I handed in my resignation. To my surprise he told me he knew all the facts and that, while he didn't condone my conduct, he wished me particularly to remain, and has given me a better post in another department. I don't understand it all, except that I have been praying, and I expect you have too. But I feel humbly grateful, and I hope I have learned my lesson.

Your ever grateful and affectionate,

GODFREY.

CHAPTER IX.

WE PUT THE CLOCK BACK

IT was all very sudden. It arose out of an evening of reminiscences in which a group of us Temple-Builders were indulging. The talk had largely centred around the old camp days in the Highlands of Scotland, and incidents of all kinds were recalled reflecting upon the characters and eccentricities of various campers, from the wholly illicit sausage-eating competition one breakfast-time in which, after raiding the cook house for supplies and a frying pan, the redoubtable Hold-all had broken all records, and nearly burst himself by consuming 28 sausages at a sitting : to the pathetic story (if not true it ought to be) of the youngest camper who was found sleeping with a big toe (not his own) in his mouth in place of a ' dummy ' !

" And so, as Tom Moore wrote, ' Fond memory brings the light of other days around me '," sighed Tony Wincott as he lolled in an easy chair with a sentimental look on his face.

" Och aye," added Angus McDougal, " ' my heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here ' . Robbie Burns never uttered a truer sentiment."

" What wouldn't I give to put the clock back a few years and find myself under canvas again !" remarked Archie Gorrock.

" And why shouldn't we ? " burst out Tim Drown, as if suddenly inspired. " What's to prevent a crowd of us camping together this summer ? Of course we can't all get away, but some of us might—at any rate it's worth trying."

“ But there’s one all-important stipulation,” said Andrew Bray.

“ What’s that ? ” asked several at once.

“ That Solomon goes with us in his old familiar rôle of Commie,” replied Andrew.

At this everyone sat up and cheered, and the idea took fire. Before the evening was out many details had been discussed, and, to make a long story short, behold us now, some 30 in number, ensconced on a heather-clad hill on Royal Deeside, complete with bell tents, cook house, and a small marquee, trying, with no little success, to recapture the thrill of the old camping days on the same spot ten years before. I as Commandant back again in my tent on “ Mount Zion ” felt anew something of the old freedom of shorts and a shirt in place of the more sober attire suited to my years. It was wonderful what a number of us had been able to arrange our annual holiday so as to be able to come, and how young we had all of a sudden become once more ; it seemed too good to be true. The old camp games of “ Ragger ” and “ Puddox ” were enjoyed, though some of us found our limbs less supple than of yore. There was golf and fishing, climbing the glorious Scottish hills, and, of course, bathing in the pool, into which we dived from the old hump-backed, stone bridge spanning the burn which flowed beside the camp. The early morning dip was as cold and challenging as in former days, but there were those of us who met the challenge bravely, and bragged about it all the rest of the day ! What fun it was to be sure. But, best of all, what fellowship ! We had all come for the dual purpose of fun and fellowship, and we achieved both in rich measure.

It was in the evenings as we gathered either in the marquee or, ‘ weather permitting ’ (an important proviso in the Highlands), on the hillside, that we tasted to the full that fellowship of kindred minds that is only fully known to those whose hearts are centred on the same Object—Jesus Christ, as revealed in His Word—‘ Then

they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written of them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name'. Again and again as we sat there in the sunset light, with our open Bibles in hand, I mentally recalled those words of Malachi written 25 centuries ago, and thought of our holy intercourse being noted in heaven. A good deal of temple-building took place during those happy days, and almost as silently as with Solomon's temple of old, where there was 'neither hammer nor axe nor any tool heard in the house while it was building.'

"Solomon," said Alec Middlemarsh, "don't you think it's time we considered the other Temple?"

"The other temple, Alec?" said I.

"Yes. You remember the distinction you drew at the beginning between '*a* temple' and '*the* temple', which I take it, means the individual temple of our bodies in which the Holy Spirit wants to dwell, and His forming one Great Temple of which we are all living stones. We've had a good deal of light upon the former, but I confess I've a somewhat hazy notion of the other. Something about the Church, isn't it?"

"I'm glad you raised that subject, Alec," said I, "because I'm sure that, while it is of the very greatest importance, it is one of the least understood matters of all that concern our Christian faith. Indeed, most Christians I know suffer with you from the haziest notion of what it's all about."

"But after all does it matter very much, Solomon?" said Jack Cressfield. "Frankly, I'm not much interested in what's called church life. I never could see the importance of it. It seems to me that one church is as good as another, and none of them particularly attractive."

"I feel very much the same way," remarked Middlemarsh. "Of course, I go to church somewhere or other

once on most Sundays, but I don't get much out of it that I can see."

"Well, I don't know," countered Ralph Thornton, "there ought to be something in it after all. It's not so much the going to church, or the sermons, as the fellowship you meet there. It seems to me rather a selfish sort of Christianity just to consider your own interest and go your own way without regard to others. Look what we've gained by joining together in this Society of ours, let alone the Curiosity Club when we were boys. Don't you think, Solomon, there's a kind of intention that Christians should be linked together, and that it's somehow part of the scheme?"

"I most assuredly do, Rusty, and what's more I believe that none of us can afford to miss it. In fact I think the church is the most important thing in all the world."

"I say, Uncle, I didn't know you were such a good churchman. In fact, I thought you were inclined to be rather the other way," said Joe, looking surprised.

"On the contrary, my dear Curiosity, I claim to be an out-and-out high churchman!"

"My word!" exclaimed Mike Smart, "I can almost smell the incense! Do you go to confession, Solomon?"

"No, no, Shrimp, that sort of thing's not really high except perhaps in an unpleasant sense! I belong to the highest church of all, *the Church of All Saints*! Would you like to know how high that is? Turn to Ephesians 2, and read verses 4 to 6."

Quick as thought Roger Strange had his finger on the place and read, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'."

"You will agree," I said, "that nothing could be higher than that, and that's the true church—a company

of people saved by grace and seated together with Christ in heavenly places, which just means they are a heavenly people who, while still on the earth, have their citizenship in heaven, and have set their affection on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. And it is those people who Paul declares further down (verse 22) in the same chapter, are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

"How wonderful," said Tony Wincott; "that's the sort of church I should like to join if I could find it."

"But, my dear Tony, you *have* joined it. You're actually part of it, one of the 'living stones' that are forming it. That's the marvellous thing about it, that I'm afraid is so little understood. We don't have to build a church. God the Holy Ghost is doing that, and has been ever since Pentecost. And every sinner who is 'saved by grace' automatically becomes a member of it, and is called upon to recognize the fact and act accordingly."

"What do you mean precisely by 'act accordingly', Solomon?" asked Guy Redmond, who had been following the conversation with the closest attention.

"Well, Guy, that shouldn't be difficult, though I'm afraid many Christian people make it so. You see, if in fact all truly converted people recognized one another as brothers in Christ, and set themselves resolutely to shew fellowship to each other, it would all be very easy indeed, as well as exceedingly blessed. But I'm afraid they don't."

"I'm gathering what you mean—at least I think so," remarked Angus McDougal, slowly. "You mean that people are busy building rival churches instead of recognising the one true church."

"Not always rival in intention, but too often so in fact, Owl. It's rather like rival farmers building folds to keep their sheep from mingling together. Christ didn't come to build a fold, but a flock, and there's all the difference

in the world between the two. I'm afraid Christendom has been busy down the centuries in dividing the flock into folds."

"But, Solomon," objected Page, "you must have churches, mustn't you? There were churches in the Acts of the Apostles, weren't there?"

"True enough, Bill, there were churches in many places: they sprang into being wherever Paul and the other Apostles preached. There were even churches in people's houses. Aquila and Priscilla had one in their home. You see, Christians are, and are intended to be, 'gregarious' (which incidentally just means sheep-like). They feel the need of fellowship and mutual edification, and so come together in companies small and great for the purpose."

"That sounds very simple," remarked Congreve, "what a pity it didn't continue so."

"A pity indeed, Conger, but then nothing ever does when men try to improve upon it—simplicity always gives place to complexity. Paul gave expression to his fears for the church at Corinth in his second letter to them (chapter II : 3); 'I fear lest by any means . . . your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' So we have the great church hierarchies with all their complex organization, rubrics and rituals, all vastly different from the church as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles, and incidentally (and as I think consequently) far less effective in the world."

"Then how do you think it ought to be done in practice, Solomon? I suppose you've got to allow for everything being so different nowadays from what it was in the first century." It was Arnold Hanks who spoke for the first time.

"Well, Shanks, it's not really what I think that matters. You've got to use the Plumbline as in everything else, and it's not difficult if you keep to that. The difficulties arise when you try to introduce your own or other people's

ideas, no matter how hoary with tradition. And the first thing that will strike you if you go to the Bible is the absence of all rules and regulations on the subject."

"Then how do you know how to carry on? Are people left to their own devices?" asked Andrew Bray.

"I think you've forgotten Whose temple it is, and Who proposes to make it His habitation, Andrew. And that is the almost universal mistake. How little we hear about the Holy Ghost from the pulpit to-day! After all it's His temple and He should be in control, shouldn't He?"

"But does that work in practice, Solomon? Wouldn't it be chaos without rules and regulations to keep things in order?" asked Tony Wincott.

"Certainly if those who come together are not spiritual, and that is always possible," said I. "You remember it was so with Israel in the Promised Land. God intended a Theocracy, but it all broke down because they were carnally minded, and so at their request God gave them a king, though it grieved Him in His heart to do so."

"But He blessed their kings when they obeyed Him, didn't He?"

"Yes, Tony, He did, though He warned them that their monarchy would be a failure, and so it was. God is very generous—He blesses us as far as He can, even when we choose something less than His way. But His way is always best in the end."

"Have you seen the simple way in practice, Solomon? It must be very beautiful if it is really practicable," said Jack Cressfield.

"Many and many a time I have Jack, and I wish with all my heart that apart from all thought of denominational differences Christians generally could meet together in holy fellowship in this simple manner. And it's quite possible. I've seen something approaching it take place at more than one Christian Convention. After all, we are all one in Christ Jesus, and there's no better way of demonstrating that unity than to follow the example the

Lord Himself set us on the night on which He was betrayed."

"What was that, Solomon? Something to do with the Holy Communion, wasn't it?" asked Alec Middlemarsh.

"It was, Alec. The most simple and yet the most moving ordinance He left for us to do 'in remembrance of Him'. I think He intended it to form the focus of all worship whenever His people come together . . . 'There', said He, 'am I in the midst'. And the Holy Spirit leads our worship in His holy temple."

The sun had just sunk behind the hill, and there was a golden glow all around. We sat quietly watching the changing glory for a time. Then Curiosity Joe said quietly, "Uncle Sol, to-morrow is our last night in camp together. Don't you think we might 'do that' then?"

"What doth hinder?" I replied. "Are you all of one mind?"

There was a murmur of assent. "Very well, so be it," I said. And then we adjourned for cocoa and biscuits before we settled in for the night.

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPLE ERECTED

IT was our last day in camp, and, as good fortune would have it, the brightest and sunniest of all—a perfect summer day in the most perfect setting imaginable. Heather in full bloom spread over the hillsides as far as the eye could reach, giving a blaze of colour unrivalled, as I think, in nature. And over it all dominating the scene towered Lochnagar Mountain, 3,780 feet above the Dee valley, with Balmoral Castle under its shadow.

And Lochnagar was the goal of our ambition to-day. We had saved him till the last in faith that the weather would hold, and our faith was more than rewarded. It was a full day's effort to reach the summit from camp and return in time for the evening meal, and what awaited us thereafter. Fortunately there had been no rain for a week, and the going was good. But how we perspired, and how eagerly we drank the cold spring water we met on the way! There was much rivalry as to who would reach the summit first, and when those valiant Scots, Angus McDougal and Andrew Bray, boasting that they could out-climb any Sassenach of an Englishman, missed the party, how we laughed to think they had lost their way, and what a ribald reception we prepared to give them when at last they reached the top, bringing up the rear. But we laughed too soon, for, when with a final scramble we arrived full of triumph, it was to find the two canny Scots sitting there, calmly eating their lunch!

“So ye hae come at lang last,” remarked Angus. “I thocht maybe ye'd gi'en up the struggle! And there's Solomon, too, in all his glory. Sit ye doon mon, ye must be fair spent!”

And fair spent I was, for the pace had been almost too much for me. But how grand it was, and what a panorama lay below us. Like the Englishwoman who wrote from Venice that she was 'sitting by the Grand Canal drinking it all in, and that life had never seemed so full', we just sat and gazed our fill, and almost forgot the claims of hunger as we did so. However, out came our provender, cold chicken (have you ever known the delight of pulling a fowl to bits with your fingers and eating it without the formality of knife and fork?), and hard-boiled eggs, tomatoes, bread and cheese, with hunks of currant cake—a present from the Queen of Sheba—to end up with, the whole washed down with draughts of ginger-beer. And then we lay on the heather in the sunshine and felt that the world was at our feet, as indeed a considerable portion of it was, spread like a wonderful relief map before us. We felt tempted to say with Peter on another mountain, "it is good for us to be here, let us make tabernacles!" But we had left our tents below, and must make our way to them if we would arrive before sundown. The scramble down that mountain side, and the tramp through the heather back to camp, reaching the end of our journey dusty and leg-weary, remains a sweet memory to this day, and ever will. A plunge into the bathing pool and a vigorous rub down soon restored us, and we sat down to a supper of venison stew, sent to us by a neighbouring laird with his 'complements', feeling at peace with all the world. And then followed something more memorable still. The lovely summer day ended with one of the most spectacularly brilliant sunsets it has ever been my good fortune to see. The whole sky east and west was a blaze of red and gold, turning in places to emerald green and purple. Instinctively we hushed our voices as though we had entered some glorious temple flooded with light through stained glass windows of mediæval richness.

And as we sat together on the hillside, there before us

on a slab of rock covered with a simple cloth, stood a silver goblet and a plain loaf of bread. The goblet was nothing in itself, being indeed the camp Golfing Trophy competed for annually in the old camping days; but to-night it was a much more moving sight, for it was full of wine.

Yes, the Temple was there in very truth, erected on the heather under the open canopy of heaven, as it had been many a time in the old Scots Covenanting days. And we were there, the humble worshippers in the Temple of the Lord, and as we sat there silently it seemed that Another was there too, silent and unseen in the midst. It was as though those other words of Malachi had had a fulfilment specially for us to-night—‘the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in.’ Nothing had been planned, there was no ordered service, there seemed no need: we just sat quietly and waited upon the Lord. How long we sat I cannot say, but the silence was very wonderful. After a time it was broken by the rich tenor voice of Geoffrey Stokes (he had not taken singing lessons in vain) singing softly—

*Jesus thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again.*

We joined our voices with his and sang together with our eyes upon the simple emblems on the rock before us—

*We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still.
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.*

There was another quiet pause, after which Alec Middlemarsh rose up, Bible in hand, and read: ‘For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto

you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread ; and when He had given thanks He brake it and said, Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in My blood ; this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.'

Then he closed the book, saying with deep feeling, " that is very, very wonderful indeed ", and sat down.

By this time the sun had set and as we sat quietly in the gathering dusk a silver moon began to shew in the cloudless sky—it was as though the heavens were declaring the glory of God to us as we remained motionless, wrapped in our sacred thoughts. Then quite naturally someone began to pray. And then another and another. It was as though we were talking familiarly to our Father, and that He were with us ' closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet '. Then Ralph Thornton rose and, advancing to the slab of rock, said quietly to me, " May I, Solomon ? "

" What doth hinder, Rusty ? " I quietly replied.

And he broke the bread with his eyes glistening with restrained emotion. How lovingly we passed it from hand to hand, remembering that holy Body broken for us on Calvary.

Someone started to sing again—

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

And then with a word of thanksgiving I handed the silver goblet with the wine within it to dear Curiosity Joe, and so from one to another until they ' drank all ' of it

with the Lord's wonderful words in mind ' . . . shed for many for the remission of sins.'

"Can we sing together, Solomon, the hymn the Covenanters sang?" asked Angus, "I would well love to sing it on such a night as this."

And we sang to the tune "Crimond":

*The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green. He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.*

*My table thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head with oil thou dost anoint,
And my cup overflows.*

It was now clear moonlight, and we were able to look into each others' faces and smile—no one suggested it, but it seemed the natural brotherly thing to do and we clasped each other warmly by the hand. Then we began to talk—indeed we began to be 'merry' in the best and deepest sense of the word. And we didn't stop talking till midnight. How we loved one another, and how we loved the Lord, and revelled in His love to us. It was just as though a veil had been lifted and we had had a glimpse of the glory that is to be 'when this passing world is done.'

Shortly after midnight we turned in to our tents for our last night in camp.

I was nearly ready for bed when a voice outside said, "Are you too tired or may I come in, Solomon?" It was "Godfrey Glover", the writer of that dreadful letter some months ago. "I wanted to tell you, Solomon, how I felt this evening, if I may."

"Yes, do, Godfrey. I couldn't help wondering what you were thinking as I saw you take the cup."

"It was the most wonderful experience I ever had.

Frankly, I wondered if I ought to come this evening, and had almost decided to go for a walk alone : but oh, I am glad I came. Do you know it seemed as if the Lord Himself handed me the cup, and as though I heard Him say ' Take it My son, it is for sinners '. And I took it while a great light seemed to shine into my soul. Oh, Solomon, I am so happy. He has taken me out of the pit and the miry clay and set my feet on a rock, and He has put a new song in my mouth. I had to tell someone or I should burst ! And who better than Solomon ? Good-night, you blessed man ! ”

“ Good-night, thou blessed of the Lord,” said I as I grasped his hand ere he passed out into the moonlight.

And so my story ends. I could tell you much more ; I could recount how the three inseparables became at last separated, having each had his heart's desire—“ whole-time service ” for the Lord. One is now in Abyssinia, another in the wilds of Brazil, while Guy Redmond has been sent to Calcutta as branch manager of a bank there, where he is like Paul, a self-supporting missionary, banking by day, and preaching at night.

But I have said enough, and can only hope that my reader has been encouraged by what he has read to join (if he has not already done so) the Honourable Society of Temple-Builders.