

A Beautiful Temple.

The bible may be compared to a magnificent edifice that took seventeen centuries to build. Its architect and builder is God. Like this beautiful world, the work of the same Author, it bears on it everywhere the impress of a divine hand. This majestic temple contains sixty-six chambers of unequal size--the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. Each of its 31,173 verses is a stone, a beam, a panel of the building, which is a temple more glorious by far than that of Solomon or of Zerubbabel, with their hewn stones from Lebanon, their pillars of cedar, their doors of olive, their floors, walls, and ceiling overlaid with fine gold of Parodim, their holy places, their courts, their porticoes and gates. Would you have fellowship with the Father? You will be sure to find him within the precincts of his holy house. Shall we take advantage of the King's permission and step inside? We approach by the beautiful Garden of Eden, with its innocent flowers, its groves and lucid streams. The first of the building, that of highest antiquity, bears the name of the Chambers of Law and Justice. These are five in number-- the Books of Moses. One of these is a sort of vestibule to the others, and resembles a long gallery hung with portraits and pictorial scenes of surprising interest--mementoes of persons and events that had place before a stone of the building was laid: such figures as those of Abel and Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Hagar, Sarah, Jacob, Esau, and Joseph; and such scenes as Paradise and the Flood, the departure from Ur of the Chaldees, the Tent-door of Mamre, the Flaming Cities of the Plain, the Offering of Isaac, Rebecca at the Well, and the Governor of Egypt weeping over the neck of his brethren.

Thence we pass through an extensive range of imposing apartments-- the Chambers of Historic Record. These comprise the Library of the edifice, and in them are laid up the Church's archives for more than a thousand years. These rooms are twelve in number, and stretch from Joshua to Esther.

Then we come to a wide space called the Gymnasium of the building, or the saints' exercising ground --the Book of Job. Entering right of this we find ourselves in the Music Gallery of the Psalms, the orchestra of the house, where dwell all the sons and daughters of song, [R60 : page 6] with cymbal, trumpet, psaltery and harp. Issuing thence we pass at once into the Chamber of Commerce --the Book of Proverbs; not far from which is the Penitentiary of the place, where sorrowful bankrupts and other defaulters may remain for a time with profit--the Book of Ecclesiastes.

A little further on we enter into a tiny parlor in the midst of larger rooms--the Chamber of Sympathy with Mourners--the Book of Lamentations. Interspersed among all these the eye is regaled with such delightful conservatories of flowers as the Books of Ruth and of the Song of Solomon. And next we come to a noble suite of lofty apartments, some of which are of great capacity, and are laid out with extraordinary splendor--no less than seventeen in number. These are the Halls of Ancient Prophecy, and follow in grand succession from Isaiah to Malachi.

Thence we pass to the portion of the edifice of more modern construction, and we enter four spacious chambers of peculiar beauty. These are of marble fairer far than was ever taken from the quarries of Paros or Carrara--chambers of which one knows not whether the more to admire the simplicity or the exquisite finish. At once the walls arrest us. On them we see not golden relief of palm-trees, lilies, pomegranates, and cherubim; but four full-length portraits of the Lord of the building himself, drawn by the Holy Spirit's inimitable hand. These are the Books of the four Evangelists. Stepping onward our ears are saluted by the loud sounds of machinery in motion; and entering a long apartment, we find ourselves face to face with wheels, and shafts, and cranks, and pinions, whose motive power is above and out of sight, and which will bring on changes all the world over. This is the Chamber of Celestial Mechanics--the great work-room of the building--the book of Acts.

Leaving it, we are conducted into the stately Halls of the Apostolic Epistles, no fewer than twenty-one in range. The golden doors of fourteen of these are inscribed with the honorable name of the Apostle to the Gentiles, those of the seven others with the names of James, and Peter, and John, and Jude. Within these halls the choicest treasures of the Lord are stored.

And last of all we arrive at that mysterious gallery where brilliant lights and dark shadows so curiously interchange, and where, in sublime emblems, the history of the Church of Jesus is unveiled till the Bridegroom come--the grand Apocalypse. And now we have reached the utmost extremity of the building. Let us step out on the projecting balcony and look abroad:

Yonder, beneath us, is a fair meadow, through which the pure River of the Water of Life is winding its way; on either side of it stands the Tree of Life, with its twelve manner of fruits and its beautiful leaves for the healing of the nations. And in the distance, high on the summit of the Everlasting Hills, the city, all of gold, bathed in light and quivering with glory --the New Jerusalem; its walls are of jasper, its foundations of precious stones, its angel-guarded gates of pearl--the city that needs no sun, no moon, "for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Oh! let us make this beloved house OUR HOME.

Lord, open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."--*Selected.*

=====