

Rev. James B. Taylor
with the name

of the

* Hill,
Stephen P.

SERMON

MON.

DELIVERED

PSALM XXVII. 4.—*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*

PLACES are objects of affection, to religious minds, as they possess associations of benevolence, endearment, or sanctity. Such are cottages of woe, where is breathed the sigh of sympathy, which prompts to generous deeds;—home, where are exchanged all the sweet charities of domestic intercourse;—and the Sanctuary, where are seen and felt the presence and the glory of God.

This latter place, especially, has been to devout people in every age an object of strong, unwavering attachment. Not, indeed, as in every age existed in the form and with the appendages, which we associate with it now; for during a considerable length of time, in the early stages of society, men lived and worshipped under the simple canopy of Heaven. The incense of devotion arose from

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PRINTED AT THE ESSEX GUILDHALL, Here were the Altar of Gold and Golden Candlesticks, the

1833.

at, the Mercy Seat,

Haverhill, Nov. 7, 1833.

Committee of the Baptist Religious
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STEPHEN P. HILL

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PSALM XXVII. 4.—*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*

PLACES are objects of affection, to religious minds, as they possess associations of benevolence, endearment, or sanctity. Such are cottages of woe, where is breathed the sigh of sympathy, which prompts to generous deeds;—home, where are exchanged all the sweet charities of domestic intercourse;—and the Sanctuary, where are seen and felt the presence and the glory of God.

This latter place, especially, has been to devout people in every age, an object of strong, unwavering attachment. Not, indeed, that it has in every age existed in the form and with the appendages, that we associate with it now; for during a considerable length of time, in the early stages of society, men lived and worshipped under the open canopy of Heaven. The incense of devotion arose from wherever the heart chose to offer it;—though on the verdant plain, or under the shadow of embowering forests, or amid the solitude of mountain recesses. Hence the turf, and the rock where the worshipper knelt, became deeply endeared to his memory and his affections. Such were God's ancient Sanctuaries. Afterward, as men became acquainted with the arts, convenience and the divine command led them to construct buildings, where praise and supplication might be offered, with more regularity, and without being liable to interruption. The first of these, of which any particular mention is made, is the Tabernacle, which was constructed according to the divine pattern that was shown to Moses on the mount, and which was fitted to be removed, during the wanderings of the Hebrew Tribes in the wilderness. Here were the Altar of Sacrifice and the Altar of Incense, the Golden Candlesticks, the Table of Shew Bread, the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat,

and the Cherubim, all of which, to the pious Jews, conveyed the most solemn and delightful meaning. Subsequently to this, was the Temple, which was built of the most costly materials, and which, in every respect was a structure of unparalleled magnificence. Omitting a description of its several parts; of the sacred dresses of the Priesthood, of the consecration of the Levites to its service, and all the imposing ritual observed in it by divine appointment, we shall simply remark, that it was built on a hill of commanding eminence, to which, at stated intervals, the Jews went up to offer their devotions, and that it became interwoven with all that was endearing in their early remembrances, and all that was sacred in their religious hopes. If we imagine for a moment, the sublimity of its worship, and reflect upon the imposing circumstances attending it, such as the magnificence of the Temple itself, the elevation above every surrounding object, on which it was placed, and the thrilling tones of their music, as they ascended it in solemn procession, we shall not wonder that it possessed in their estimation, the most incomparable attractions. Hence we find, that when banished from it, and from its privileges, and doomed to pine in foreign captivity, if they sought an hour's retirement beneath the shade of the willows, by the streams of Babylon, the recollection of a thousand lost endearments would crowd upon their minds, and chilling the notes of their sacred song, would oblige them to give way to dejection and tears. Oh, how impassioned, and yet how solemn were the vows that, at such seasons, they would pledge to that hallowed spot! "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee above my chief joy, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

We have alluded to the "Israelites, to whom pertained the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," and we have alluded to their economy, "the ministration written and engraven in stones, which was so glorious that they could not behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." But all that glory, and all the glory which followed in alliance with that dispensation is done away. All its imposing rites and ceremonies, and sacred furniture, and sacred buildings, are now to be found no more. Yet the worship of God has lost none of its intrinsic excellence, nor to the pious heart, none of its attractive beauties. It is now, indeed, performed with much less of external grandeur, which is fitted to strike the senses, but its very simplicity is calculated to make a stronger impression on the heart. "For if the ministration of condemnation

be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth, is glorious." The present dispensation, is one of great simplicity, but though without the magnificent accompaniments of the former, is, notwithstanding more glorious than that. The former being a ministration of death, the latter a ministration of life; the former, being principally shadow, the present substance; the former deriving its glory from the outward array of ceremonial observances, the present, from the inward dispositions of the soul. The sublime truth taught by the Saviour, stands out on this, in beautiful relief, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." So that in every view of the case, the language of the text is as applicable now, and is echoed with as fervent aspirations now, as when first uttered. It is the language of christian desire and christian attachment and christian consistency. The House of God is the object of christian desire; it is the *one* thing of more predominant, pre-eminent and absorbing importance than any other—it is the object of christian attachment. Here would the pious man fix his residence all the days of his life. It is the object of christian consistency. "That would he seek after" with all necessary effort and all necessary sacrifice. And why?

I. On account of its happy influence on Society.

Without stopping to notice the manner in which it blesses the heathen world, that spreads before us its appalling signs of woe, I shall confine myself to the good influence it exerts upon the immediate community in which it is placed, and shall maintain that it is the nursery of the purest morals and the best safeguard of social and public happiness. The virtues essential to the prosperity of all communities and nations, are Frugality, Industry, Benevolence, Justice, Intelligence, and the Fear of God. Where are these virtues enforced? In the Sanctuary. So none pretend to deny, and infidels, themselves, have confessed, that it teaches the purest code of morality that was ever known. It enjoins every thing which makes men better; it forbids every thing that makes them worse. Look at the moral law, and the Saviour's exposition of it, and his sermon on the mount, and at the principles which governed the lives of his apostles, and then say if, were they universally practised, whether the whole world would not become virtuous and happy. Or suppose these institutions, and conse-

quently the virtues which they nourish, were banished from society, so that no vestige of them should remain, where would one trace of human happiness be found? what shades would then be wanting to fill up the dark picture of human woe? The influence of the Sanctuary is silent, and unobtrusive; but it is no less efficacious, or benign. The sunlight is silent, yet who ever doubts the extent or the salutariness of its power? The dew is silent, yet where is the spot of earth it does not refresh? We do not sufficiently value these blessings, because they are common; and for the same reason partly, we do not sufficiently value the Sanctuary. The blaze of a volcano, or the fury of a tempest would arrest attention, in an instant, and so would some terrific convulsion of the moral world; yet who thinks as he ought to think, of God's *gentle* influences, as they reach us from Nature, and from the Gospel? Those of the latter class, especially, though they do more than any thing else, to bless mankind, are nevertheless, more than all things else, undervalued; and this partly, I repeat, because they act through the silent operation of causes, which to the mass of mankind are unseen. Let us for a moment endeavour to see how this is true, and it is obvious enough, by saying in a single word, that the influence of the Sanctuary is exerted on the *heart*. And as this is the most effectual influence, so it is the most noiseless. The heart is the source of action, and its dispositions are formed in the most imperceptible manner possible. It is *this* which the Sanctuary aims to purify and renew. In this *soil*, which gives support and vitality to all moral conduct, it endeavours to make the good seed of holiness take deep root. It plants and it waters, until that same seed springs up, and yields by the blessing of Heaven, its increase. Now it is from the secret springs of feeling in the heart, that a strong, irresistible influence goes forth, into every sphere of duty, and into every relation of life, and like leaven, diffuses itself through the whole mass of society. See it at the domestic fireside. How surely there, does it promote social virtue and social happiness! The consecration of the Sabbath to religious purposes, the sacred tranquillity which it breathes, the practice of going with the multitude to the house of God, the holy instructions there given, and the solemn motives by which they are enforced, are all fitted to impress the heart, with pious sentiments, which enter into all the cares, griefs, joys, endearments of the domestic circle. They promote courtesy, affability and sympathy. They influence parents to regard with tenderness, the well-being of their children, and they influence children to obey the authority, and

love the character of their parents, and bind the parent and the child, the husband and the wife, the master and the servant, the host and the guest, in the bonds of a happy and endeared relationship. Here then is another radiating point of good influence. From it, light spreads over all the public walks of life. It invests the merchant, the tradesman, the neighbour, the artisan, with the virtues of industry, integrity and the love of peace. These are the constituent parts of a community, and a community is a constituent part of a nation. So you perceive, that the Sanctuary, by endeavouring to enlighten and save an individual, exerts the surest and happiest influence upon the country; for the welfare of that, is only the aggregate welfare of the individuals who compose it. It is like going to the thousand little sources which supply the waters of a mighty river, and purifying them patiently one by one, until the whole are purified; or, to use a figure of the Saviour's, "it is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."

Illustrations of this truth might be carried much farther, and thrown in every possible variety of form, and yet by whatever lights we view it, it still has the same prominent, unchanging character. It challenges Philosophy to examine the causes and principles of human happiness, and Philosophy is compelled at last to give her testimony in its favor. It lays its finger on the page of History, and for all the improvement, which society has received since the christian era, it bids it tell to what we are indebted? And History acknowledges no other agent, than the Religion of Jesus Christ. It next asks of Reason, and Reason instantly replies, that nothing is so sure as this, of moving the springs of good exertion, or of sustaining men in the prosecution of high and benevolent enterprise. Then it appeals to *Fact*, and the vital benefits which are discoverable upon mankind, at large, together with the contrast of light and shade upon the moral world, declare that nothing so nicely graduates the scale of public morals. Sustained by these concurrent voices, it looks to Heaven, and Heaven smiles with approbation, acknowledges its claim, and places upon its credentials, its own stamp and signature.

Now I ask you, my Brethren, if all this were as much believed, as it deserves to be believed, would not the Sanctuary be more loved, than it is loved, and would not such a tone speedily be given to public sentiment, as would make vice and vicious persons, ashamed to dwell in its neighborhood? And were you willing that "this light shining in a dark place" should be utterly extinguished

and all reverence for Religion forever lost; what then would be the evils that would ensue? With what violence would the flood-gates of immorality open upon us, and how soon would all social order, and public happiness rush to ruin?

“The Pulpit, therefore, (and I name it filled
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware,
With what intent I touch that holy thing,)
I say the pulpit, in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar, powers,
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue’s cause.”

II. The attachment of good people to the Sanctuary arises from the fact that it is *the birth place of Souls*.

I have spoken thus far, of its temporal benefits, of its influence in reforming practice, in elevating character, and in enlightening the mind. A yet higher branch of its blessedness, is its tendency to guide the soul to Heaven. “Of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself, shall establish her.” How many remember it as the native spot of their spiritual existence! And let us remember, that the salvation of the soul is the grand object of religious institutions. Other, and very happy advantages flow from them, but they are all subordinate to this. For this, Christ suffered, and died, and for this he commissioned his servants to preach the Gospel, and for this—pre-eminently for this—they here in the Sanctuary, every Sabbath station themselves, to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. Here God delights to make his word effectual, through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, whose silent and unseen agency is exerted on the heart, until it softens, and subdues, and melts it. Then the eye moistens with a tear, and the bosom heaves with a sigh of repentance. Then the thoughts of earth fade away, and the scenes of eternity occupy the whole field of vision. The remembrance of misimproved hours, of neglected privileges, of wasted mercies, of aggravated sins, come painfully upon the mind, and makes it grieve for its folly and its guilt. Then the struggling conscience labours beneath its load and longs for some source of relief. And when the darkness gathers most heavily, and the storm beats most fearfully, and the avenger of blood, pursues the most closely, then the trembling sinner, as his last resource, grasps the horns of God’s altar, resolving, if he must perish, to perish there. Happy moment! The darkness breaks away, the storm passes over, the enemy dares not approach, the prostrate heart is raised, the penitential tears are

dried, and he who dwelleth between the Cherubim, shines forth. Can that moment ever be forgotten? Can it ever cease to endear the Sanctuary to the pious heart? There the light of hope first broke upon us, and the solace of pardon first visited us. There we were led gradually, but delightfully, into truth, and there by degrees the Holy Spirit was given us, to convince us of the fatal tendencies of the world and of sin, to create and to increase our love for spiritual pleasures and employments, to enkindle and to sustain our hopes, to develope and improve our graces, to nourish and promote our spiritual life, to foster in our minds an innumerable multitude of holy thoughts, and to attract to their adequate end our heaven-born affections; to enlighten, cleanse, comfort and sanctify us. There we have gazed on the spiritual glory of Christ, till we have felt the force of those glowing appellations by which he is distinguished,—the brightness of the Father's glory—the chief among ten thousands—the one altogether lovely—the sun of righteousness—the light of the world. We contemplate him in all his offices and relations and learn by our experience how truly he sustains them. As a prophet, he unfolds to our understanding, the sacred scriptures, and teaches us things to come. As a priest, he is mercifully touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been himself tempted in all points like ourselves. As a king, we rejoice to enthrone him upon our affections, and to see events combining their influence with the divine purposes, in spreading onward the period of his triumphant, universal reign. To meet our immediate necessities and sorrows, he is ever there essentially present. He heals the broken heart, and the balm he applies, is his own blood. He refreshes the thirsty soul, and the waters that he gives, are such as spring up to eternal life. He nourishes the fainting soul, and the food which he gives is the living manna, that comes down from Heaven. He succors the tempted, and the armor with which he supplies them is the sword of the spirit and the shield of faith. He visits the lonely, and during his sweet communion, makes their hearts to burn within them. He dwells in the heart inspired with his love, and fills it with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Thus you perceive, that the divine life is not only begun in the Sanctuary, but it is sustained, promoted, matured, there. Besides these sweet and saving influences, adapted to particular exigencies, a fountain is ever flowing there, and it is a fountain of life, and of love, to which all are graciously invited. We are led to it from

weariness and disappointment, from sorrow and from sin. A Sun is ever shining there, and it has healing and joy in its beams; it purifies the thoughts, it soothes the passions, it enriches the heart, it reconciles us to the events of Providence, casts light on the mysteries of grace, provides us with consolation through every trial of life, and furnishes us with hope in every period of our being. It tells of peace and triumph in death; it shows the grave dismantled of its shadows and purified of its corruptions; it makes certain the resurrection of the body, and "brings life and immortality to light."

Now tell me, my hearers, where else such provision is made for the spiritual necessities of mankind? To what retreat on earth, but to this can you flee from the storm of sorrow, the tumult of the world, the distresses of conscience, and the fears of futurity? Where else is comfort administered, rest found, and life dispensed? Say, ye, who have known its blessings by experience, have you any recollections dearer than those connected with this sacred spot? Have you ever experienced any more timely solaces, any brighter intervals of heavenly sunshine, any sweeter foretastes of a better life, any richer pledges of eternal bliss, than those you have felt and tasted here? And have not these blessed hours left such a . . . giance on your memory and on your affections as to lead you, when deprived of hailing their return, to respond to the impassioned language of the Psalmist, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Hence we remark,

III. The Sanctuary is the nearest spot to Heaven.

Imagination sometimes spreads its wings, and bears us upward, among the orbs of the Universe, and we wander from star to star, and from system to system, until we almost think we approach the dwelling place of God, and gaze on the magnificence of his glory. But what is distance in the estimation of an all-pervading, ever present Deity? What separates you from his love, or blinds your vision of his brightness, but sin? "Think not to say in thy heart, who shall ascend into Heaven" to see God, for he is nigh thee. He is nigh, if thou wilt but seek him, and Heaven may be enjoyed on earth, if thou wilt but choose to have it here. "For thus saith

the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." You need not go farther; "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth has sprung out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven." Now a medium of intercourse has been opened between the two worlds, and Angels ascend and descend from one to the other, that they may minister to those who are heirs of Salvation. But to what spot do they bring their selectest influences, and on what glorious eminence do they first rest? It is the ground of prayer.

"Prayer ardent, opens Heaven, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man in audience with the Deity."

The Sanctuary, then, which is emphatically the house of prayer, has God chosen for his peculiar residence. Here he sheds his brightest beams of mercy, here he effects the best triumphs of his grace, and here he unveils the choicest manifestations of his glory. "He loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and will bless thee." It is with reference to this promise that Solomon exclaims, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house that I have builded! Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication. O Lord, my God, to hearken unto the prayers which thy servant prayeth before thee this day, that thine eyes may be open towards this house, night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, my name shall be there."

The manner in which the Divine presence is manifested more at one place than another, is beyond the power of our understanding to comprehend. The fact, however, that there is a peculiar sense in which God does thus manifest himself, is sufficiently clear and explicit, nor is it more mysterious to us how He manifests himself in this peculiar sense, than it is how He manifests himself at all. That Spirit can pervade the universe of matter, and that it can exert an unseen agency in the human heart, are facts equally beyond our comprehension. It is a remark in effect, I think, of Addison, that "the holy spirits in heaven are doubtless as much sensible of the presence of other spirits as we are of the bodies which we now inhabit, and are as much sensible of the presence of God,

as if we could see Him with our bodily eyes. But, at present, all we can know of the Deity is from the effects produced without us, and felt within us, and these effects are so obvious and satisfactory, that they amount to the clearest demonstration."

Now, it is in such places, of which we have been speaking—places consecrated to the service and worship of God—that these manifestations or effects of the Divine presence are more numerous and more glorious. The brighter are the beams which He lets fall on the natural and moral world, the stronger and more delightful is the agency by which He operates on the human affections.

Here we may live in His presence, bask in His light, and rest in His love. And the more holy we become, the more glorious will be the exhibitions of the Deity which we shall behold. In proportion as the clouds of sin are rolled away, will the heights of glory be discovered, and seeing the beauty of the Lord from His temple, and fixing our eyes steadfastly upon it, we may go from strength to strength, until we place our feet upon Mount Zion above, and see Him without a veil between. Oh, my brethren! what a glorious privilege is this, to see the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple! Is it not the highest point in the scale of happiness? Are not these the heavenly places in Christ Jesus? And are not the days that we spend in them, *Sabbath days*—emblems of heavenly rest—types of immortal glory—mirrors of unfading beauty and joy? Amid the overspreading darkness, where shines so pure a light? Above the heavy clouds, where towers so bright an eminence? Near to the eternal throne, what is there so much like an outer Court of Heaven?

Oh, ye wanderers from God! Come and find here a refuge and a home. Weary, benighted, tempest-tossed sinner! see this star beaming over the ocean of your fears, for it is a star of hope. Guilty sinners, flee to this ark of salvation, for mercy is here offered, and Jesus here waits to be gracious.

Proximity to Heaven! What affecting considerations are implied, in that expression,—a place of shelter from distress and persecution! "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;"—A school of instruction, where we have explained and enforced those doctrines and duties which are adapted to the various exigencies and periods of our being; where we may be assisted in adding "to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to

godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity;"—
 A magazine of grace, from which we may be supplied with motives
 and supports to sustain us through the perils of our probation;
 "For who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth
 that Jesus is the Son of God?"—A nursery for immortal bliss;
 "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall bring forth
 fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing;"—A fount of sa-
 cred refreshment, the mere anticipation of which makes the glow-
 ing imaginations and high raised hopes of those who throng it, to
 turn even the valley of Baca into a well;—A place of holy convo-
 cation and paternal love; "Behold, how good and how pleasant it
 is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious
 ointment that run down the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went
 down to the skirts of his garments, as the dew of Hermon and as
 the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion, for there the
 Lord commanded his blessing, even life for evermore;"—A garner
 of sacred wealth, and the emanating seat of the richest honors;—
 A source of intercourse the most delightful; of memories the most
 dear; of hopes the most glorious; of prospects the most brilliant;
 and of promises the most sure. Who is not touched with the blessed
 advantages of the Sanctuary, and ready to echo the sentiment of
 David, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that
 love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy
 palaces. For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say,
 peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God,
 I will seek thy good."

"Long be our fathers' temple ours,
 Wo to the hand by which it falls;
 A thousand spirits watch its bowers,
 A cloud of angels guard its walls,
 And be *their* shield by us possess'd.
 Lord, rear around this blest abode,
 The buttress of a holy breast,
 The rampart of a present God."

My duty on this occasion is almost done. I had intended to
 have given an historical sketch of this church; but your time is
 already exhausted, and the materials that I have prepared, it may
 be better to present in another form. I had also intended to oc-
 cupy the hour partly in biographical notices of its deceased pastors.
 But this service, too, owing to the extent of surface over which I
 found it necessary to spread these reminiscences was, as you know,
 performed some few Sabbaths since.

In closing, therefore, permit me to remark, that a throng of interesting and solemn reflections rushes this day upon my mind. The ground on which I stand has been consecrated by the tears, and prayers, and toils of men, "whose praise is in all the churches." They planted the standard of the cross here in times that tried their souls; and around it many who were "called, and chosen, and faithful," rallied. Their preaching and their example, were fitted to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the weak, to cheer the desponding, to arrest the careless; and to convince gainsayers. Their influence yet remains. Their memories are yet held dear. Frequently have I been reminded, in my pastoral intercourse, of the beautiful sentiment of the poet, so truly applicable to them:—

"The holy cautions that they gave,—
The prayers they breathed: the tears they wept,
Yet linger here, though in their graves,
Through many a year the saints have slept."

Who that approaches such ground, will not come with faltering, though they may be filial steps? And who can be insensible to the affecting responsibilities which their lives and labors impose upon us all? Being dead, they yet speak. They address the friends of the Redeemer, and they beseech us to preserve and perpetuate the blessings they were instrumental in bringing us. They entreat us to permit the banner which they planted in the days of their trial, now to wave unclogged and unsullied in the days of our prosperity. They warn us against inward dissention and strife. They urge us to be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; to remember how we have received and heard, and to hold fast and repent.

The associations of this day are also full of affecting interest to all unconverted, unconcerned sinners. They are passing the period of their probation. A thousand rich barriers against their destruction have been raised in their path; and among them the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, the Ministry and its ordinances are pre-eminent. But have they turned to God, or have they forced their passage to eternal misery? Alas, how many, it is to be feared, have done the latter! neglecting all the privileges, slighting all the warnings, abusing all the entreaties, and defying all the threatenings with which God is endeavoring to arrest their perilous career, and to bring them back to goodness and Himself. "Oh, that they were wise, that they understood their own interests, that they would consider their latter end." Once more let me raise the voice of remonstrance, and beseech them, by all the dangers of the scenes through

which they are passing ; by all the merciful provisions which God has made for their souls ; by all the tears that have been shed, and the prayers that have been offered for them ; by the terrific thunders of the law, and by the agonies and blood of the cross ; by the joys of heaven and by the woes of hell, to be reconciled to God.

There are other thoughts connected with the immediate duties of this day, which struggle for a moment's utterance. We have bid farewell to the house where our fathers worshipped, but we have not left the spot. Still we linger on the ground of their toils and tears, of their privileges and hopes. Time, that wastes all things, not immortal, has impaired the former, but the latter remains, and on it you have erected this neat and convenient building, which we come this day to devote to the service of Almighty God.

Henceforth let it be sacred to the purposes of religious worship. May the incense of praise and prayer ever rise here from pure and humble hearts. May these walls ever resound with the songs of redeeming love, and this pulpit ever be consecrate to the mild persuasions of heavenly mercy. May here stand

“ the messenger of truth,
The legate of the skies ! His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By Him, may Sinai's law speak out
Its thunders, and by Him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whisper peace.”

Around this altar may *you*, my hearers, come with willing feet, with hands washed in innocency, and with hearts pure from the defilement of sin. May you evince your attachment to the sacred solemnities of this place, by a constant and punctual attendance upon them. May here your children be trained for good lives and happy deaths, and glorious seats in Heaven ; and here may they and their children worship, when you shall be sleeping in the stillness of the grave. As often as you mingle your devotions here, may your sanctified imaginations discern written on these walls, in golden blazing characters, “ Holiness becometh thy house, O, Lord, forever ;” and may the divine glory be so thrown around you, that you may be constrained to exclaim, “ This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.” And when at last, the lips quiver, and the voice falters in death, it will be a solace to reflect and to say, “ Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, the place where thine honor dwelleth.”

“ Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou, and the ark of thy strength.”
Amen.