

TWO

SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE

CHURCH OF ST. JAMES,

AT SYDNEY,

IN

NEW SOUTH WALES.

BY

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BISHOP OF AUSTRALIA.

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THE
FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.

PREACHED ON

THURSDAY, 16TH MAY, 1837,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

FOUNDATION STONE

OF THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW,

AT SYDNEY,

BEING LAID BY HIS EXCELLENCY

LIEUT.-GEN. SIR RICHARD BOURKE, K.C.B.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

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A SERMON.

PSALM LXXXVII., 1, 2, 3.

"His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!"

THERE appears great reason for believing that this Psalm was composed on the completion of the Temple, and sung by the Korhites, who with their kinsmen the Kohathites "were over the work of the service."¹ Other interpreters have inclined to the opinion that it alludes to the reedification of the City and Temple on the return of the Israelites from captivity. Let this have been as it may, the Psalm was evidently designed to celebrate the praises of that chosen seat, where, through the union of the Throne and Altar, the Lord had appointed his majesty and worship to be eminently set forth. "His foundation is in the holy mountains" Zion and Moriah, which stand about Jerusalem; upon the first of which the throne of David was established; while upon the second Solomon erected the most stately of edifices dedicated to the service of religion. These great establishments, which during the most peaceful, prosperous, and

¹ 1 Chron. ix, 19.

happy period of the annals of Judah, were united in one harmonious confederacy, conferring upon each other a mutual dignity, support, and efficacy, were comprehended under the general name of Zion ; the gates of which, that is the whole regal and sacerdotal establishment, the Lord loved more than the ordinary habitations of Israel. "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph ; and chose not the tribe of Ephraim ; but chose the tribe of Judah ; the Mount Zion which He loved."² And of thee, thus chosen, thus approved, and thus supported, very glorious things are spoken "O thou city of God" by the mouth of the holy prophet, and by the words of the Lord Himself. Glorious indeed ! when of thee it is said, "The Lord hath chosen Zion, and founded it, and filled it with judgment. He is jealous for it with great jealousy. He hath desired it for his habitation, saying This is my rest for ever ; there will I dwell ; and there will I make the horn of David to bud."³ Upon the holy hill of Zion he hath set his King ; concerning whom he testifies, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people that this man was born there.⁴ To this, the distinguished seat of united piety and grandeur, while her own

² Psalm 78, lxvii.—viii. ³ Psalm 132, xiii. Isaiah 14, xxxii.—33, v.

Zech. 8, ii.

⁴ Psalm 2, vi vii. Psalm 87, vi.

children looked back with unappeasable regret from the side of the Babylonish stream, and wept when they remembered thee O Zion, the redeemed of the Lord shall ask the way ; encouraged by the promise that they shall come to Zion with singing ; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.⁵ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that publish glad tidings, saying unto Zion thy God reigneth.⁶ Out of Zion shall the law go forth ; and many nations say let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon her ; but they know not the thoughts of the Lord neither understand they his counsel : for Behold ! saith the Lord, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation ; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.”⁷

These are among the many excellent things which are spoken of thee, O thou city of God ! And these (so manifest is the intention of Scripture) we cannot hesitate in transferring from Zion which stood upon the mountains of Israel, and applying in an enlarged sense to the strong-hold of faith, the Church of the living God ; “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets ; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.”⁸ Such em-

⁵ Psalm 137, i. Jer. 50, v. Isa. 51, xi. ⁶ Isa. 52, vii.

⁷ Isa. 2, iii. Mic. 4, xi.—Isa. 28, xvi, and 46, xiii. ⁸ Ephes. 2, xx.

ployment of emblematical language, or the adoption of chosen objects to be signs and types of leading events, prominent characters, and cardinal appointments and institutions in the scheme of providential government, is by far too observable and generally recognised to require from me illustration or defence. It may suffice to mention as an example that the character and actions of the Redeemer are prefigured under those of a great number of the worthies recorded in Holy Writ; and that the entire history of the Jewish nation in its adoption and deliverances, may indeed be regarded as a speaking representation of the redemption of God's elect; as its overthrow is a picture not less striking of the rejection and final destruction of the wicked. After the same manner, the setting up of the Lord's mountain, or the erection of the kingdom of David and its incorporation with the most hallowed ceremonial of worship according to the divinely appointed pattern, together with the favour, preference, and protection assured to it by so many promises and pledges on the behalf of God, forms an animated figure of his love for that Church or assembly of faithful men, which has been from the foundation of the world the Church of God; and, since the fall, of God in Christ. It is a representation which awakens a peculiar and surpassing interest. Can we investigate it too closely? To

all men of feeling and intelligence, the history of the race to which they belong, or of the great family of mankind, must form a subject for the deepest sympathy. But though the record of what has befallen our common human nature may occasionally transport the soul beyond its proper sphere, with emotions of sympathy the most intense, how shallow and transient is the flood of feeling originating in such a source, compared with the deep-seated and solemn course of thought with which the followers of God trace through the succession of ages the annals of the spiritual heritage, or Church of the living God! Its members, however separated by time or place, have indeed been held together by a bond more forcible than that of nature. The characteristic features of a family resemblance have been more visibly displayed among them, and more uninterruptedly transmitted from generation to generation, than can ever occur in the common order of descent according to the flesh. And can it be supposed then that the relationship is not felt and acknowledged wheresoever it prevails; or that the history of the children of God can ever be matter of indifference to those who after their example are now abiding upon the holy hill of Zion, and within the folds of its everlasting gates? The narrative of their trials and vicissitudes, and, above all, of their preservation uninterruptedly

in the midst of a world banded together for their destruction, will call forth in us the most profound conviction of the overruling Sovereignty of God, in proportion as our minds are united by similarity of disposition to those who are the subject of our enquiry. To the world at large, whatsoever is important in its history appears to be comprized in scenes of tumult and excitement. But beneath all this, kept out of sight very much by the din and agitation which attend all worldly transactions, there is a history, the history of faith and its professors, which deserves attention in proportion as it fails to attract it. Even this we find exemplified in the Scripture. For while the proud and mighty have had their strong holds of power and luxury and worldly wisdom spread over the face of the earth, their Babylon, and Tyre, and Rome, and Athens, and Corinth, absorbing all attention, and their histories regarded with universal eagerness, one city there was which by common consent they wholly overlooked, or did but look upon with contempt; which they repulsed from their confederacies; of whose history they remained wilfully ignorant; in whose fortunes they scorned to take an interest. And that one despised city was Zion; in which the Lord of Hosts delighted. How correct and forcible an emblem to prove that according to the judgment of this world, those things are most

usually treated with indifference and aversion which are in the highest estimation before God!

It would be impracticable on this occasion to trace minutely the history of that Church of God which has been described as at all times existing in the world ; which, even when most persecuted is not forsaken, and though it may be cast down can never be destroyed. The purpose of our Creator in revealing Himself to mankind has ever been the same :—to magnify his own glory by supplying Man, His creature, with the means of attaining a degree of bliss beyond what his present state of existence admits : and the means successively appointed for accomplishing this end have ever partaken of the uniformity of the purpose itself. The instrument for effecting it has ever been that Church whose foundations are upon the holy hills ; and whose constitution has invariably included these two requisites :—that there be a body of spiritual truth revealed for the belief of man, and visible means divinely appointed for preserving that belief from extinction. It is plain that even the first man's faith and dependence upon God were put to trial by proposing to him things not seen as objects of belief ; and we have reasonable ground for thinking that his intercourse with that Being who is the only proper object of faith, would be carried on, as ours is, through the medium of ordinances and symbols of divine institution. The scriptural

relations are consistent with and favour the supposition that the Tree of life in the midst of the garden might be endued with sacramental efficacy, during the time that the Church was indeed one fold comprehending the entire human race. But although the sin of Adam has introduced this change, that the Church now consists, as the derivation of the original term denotes, of those who are called and chosen out of mankind, and not, as previously, of the universal race, still there has not been a new institution but a transfer merely of symbolical appointments. Profounder and more spiritual views of God have unquestionably been imparted through the Gospel; and a nearer and more filial access to the Father has been accorded through that Spirit of adoption which pervades and presides over the new dispensation. But so far as relates to the maintenance of a visible Church to which the promises of salvation are annexed, we find that outward means of grace, the same in kind with those which were established in paradise, have been by a most wise adaptation rendered suitable to the altered condition of mankind. However closely we may recur to the origin of things, we shall find that the discovery and settlement of the mode according to which he should worship God, have never been among the things which were left to the discretion of man. Will-worship was always forbidden and re-

jected ; God having invariably appointed certain channels through which His grace should be conveyed ; certain marks by which His worshippers might be recognized ; and certain sensible bonds by which they were to be united and held together. By such methods "Jerusalem was built as a city that is compact together" or "that is at unity in itself," and the same relation which the Mount Zion bore to the remnant of the commonwealth of Israel, has the frame of the outward visible Church always been designed to hold to the world at large. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion ;" and concerning the Church he says, "Thy walls are continually before Me : " as if He never ceased to look with delight and satisfaction upon them for the sake of those who dwell within their sacred enclosure.

With respect to the Visible Church, I return to observe, the Lord has never left the terms of its communion or the dispensation of its ordinances to the choice and controul of men themselves. The Scriptures abound with proofs to the contrary. Since the fall of man, reliance on the great Atonement to be offered for sin, or faith in the efficacy of the blood of the immaculate Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, has been the all-pervading essential principle, upon the maintenance of which the existence of the Church has depended. But beyond this vital principle, and with a view

exclusively to its defence and preservation, there have never ceased to be certain external ordinances and representative signs appointed, not only for the maintenance of a visible order, but to be channels for the communication of grace through their spiritual reception and application. The animal sacrifices of so early institution and of such prolonged continuance; the Ark within which Noah and his family were saved from perishing; the sign of Circumcision by which the patriarchs were brought into covenant; the manna of the desert, and the water from the rock whereby the souls of the faithful were strengthened and refreshed; the Mercy-seat in the Most Holy Place whereon the blood of propitiation was sprinkled; and many others which will readily occur, were so many positive tokens or federal pledges, established by divine appointment to ratify the covenant with successive generations; to uphold the visible order and unity of the Church; and instrumentally to communicate its benefits to such as were faithful partakers of them. Now, the Lord Jehovah is a God who declareth the end from the beginning; and from ancient times the things which are not yet done. We shall therefore do injustice to the unity and the corresponding grandeur of his designs, unless we on the one hand contemplate those early institutions as fulfilled in later ordinances, and, on the other, regard the now existing in-

stitutions as hallowed and illustrated at once by derivation from the earlier rites of which the Church of God has at no period been destitute. There is, I repeat, a uniformity in such appointments, the very contemplation of which gives birth to a complacency of feeling, as it manifests a correspondency between them and the Giver of them who is essentially unchangeable. As the fundamental principles of the Gospel were under obscure shadows beforehand depicted in the law, so the material fabric, if I may so term it, of the Christian Church has in most substantial respects a close correspondency with the model which had been of old time introduced and enjoined by Divine authority. When the Mediator of the New Covenant had finished upon earth the work which was given him to do, neither did he direct the introduction into his household of an entirely new economy, nor did he leave it to the caprice or fallible judgment of individuals to determine in what manner their connexion with other believers should be supported ; or under what regulations the common worship should be carried on. But as there had been of old a people of God, so did he appoint a Church to be gathered unto himself, by laying a command upon his Apostles to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. As the first Covenant had ordinances of divine service by which its adherents were

united among themselves and visibly distinguished from the world, so had the new and better Covenant an institution of Sacraments which were to compass a spiritual end by serving in the first instance as tokens of outward communion. And as, to ensure the maintenance of the former dispensation it was ordained that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge and they should seek the law at his mouth," so, to preserve Christian truths from being either adulterated or swept away, was the same appointment of a standing ministry continued: "He gave some apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."¹

In the last place therefore to apply to a practical end these abstract ideas, as they may be termed, of the nature and constitution of the visible Church of Christ, or that collective mystical body which has been here spoken of, the first important observation is that this Church has assumed the place under the guardianship of God once occupied by Zion of old; which, in itself, and in all that is foretold or promised concerning it, is but a type of the "Holy Catholic Church" and of the "Communion of Saints" within it. Happily for ourselves we are attached to a portion of the Church which

¹ Ephes. 4, xi—xii.

has never deemed it necessary or justifiable to confine the hope of salvation to her own members; or jealously to fence in a narrower field for the exercise of the love of God than that over which it has pleased Him to determine that it shall extend. The Church of England has never taken other ground than this:—that while she acknowledges all who faithfully call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, receiving him as the Christ, and as the Son of the living God, to be actual members of the visible Church of the Redeemer, she yet maintains that there is but one exposition of Christian faith, and one form of association in Christian communion, strictly conformable to the will and appointment of God. Sensible therefore of the evils arising from unnecessary divisions, and forewarned that every departure from the unity of the Church both violates its peace and weakens its means of defence, she deems it a part, and a leading part, of the duties entrusted to her by her God and Saviour not to recede from or surrender those principles and institutions which the Apostles delivered to the Church from which she derives her succession. Is it then a matter of indifference to you that such should be the constitution of the Church whose cause you are this day met together to promote? No my brethren; it is not a matter to which you can safely remain indifferent. No man can take an enlarged view of the signs of the times, and attend to the prognostics dis-

closed in Scripture, without receiving a serious impression that the great controversy as to the true grounds of religious belief must be, and that speedily, brought to an issue. So many indications cannot be mistaken. Is it nothing to you, then, let me ask, that in the perilous and perplexing times which are approaching, you should be provided with a guide so qualified to lead you to truth and safety? that you should have firmly planted among you a Church which, declining neither to the right hand nor to the left, walks advisedly between the two extremes, from each of which the cause of religious truth is threatened with serious injury. The Church of England has innovated nothing; has invented nothing; has abandoned no article of the faith; but has simply gone back to resume the primitive system of Christianity from the point where it was first broken in upon and disturbed by human invention setting aside the plain appointment of God. The Church of England has vindicated the cause of truth by asserting the great principle that all things necessary to salvation are contained in Scripture, or may be proved from it; yet has at the same time repressed the excesses of private judgment, and guarded against its abuses, by inculcating a becoming and sober reverence for the voice of Christian antiquity.

It is in maintaining the sufficiency of Scripture on the one hand, and in guarding it from

fanatical perversion on the other, it is in continuing to assert freedom of thought and conscience, without giving occasion to such a deplorable breach of unity as must shatter the fabric of Protestant Christianity to its foundation, that the Church of England, if I mistake not her position and duties, has a great and trying part to play. May she play it faithfully, fearlessly, and charitably. This day is to witness the commencement of an undertaking which promises to enlarge her ability to recommend her own principles; established as they are upon the eternal truths of the Gospel. Independently of the charge which rests upon her to be always prepared to support those truths against those adversaries who may strive to gainsay and resist them, there is the more congenial office belonging to her of preaching them fervently and faithfully to such as "come to our door and cry for help, and will not go away till they are told how they may escape the wrath of God, as well as to the hardened sinner who cares not for our help, and has not so much life left as to know that he is dead." Think of the multitudes in this crowded and increasing town, who are now perishing through unacquaintance with those doctrines which it is our province to preach; but to whom under present circumstances, they cannot be made accessible. How are we to reach them? where can they

be assembled? where may we address them? If we would preserve in the fellowship of Christ's religion those who are and ought to be regarded and treated as our brethern in the Gospel, if we would maintain them in adherence to even the outward ordinances of the Gospel, and much more under the sanctifying influence of its true spirit, we must have more extended accommodation to offer them, for hearing those topics of fundamental and eternal importance which are the great instruments employed by God's grace in awakening and converting the soul. Who among us can, after the subject has been thus presented to him, who I say can continue to lavish the means, in many instances the abundant means, which God has bestowed upon him? He knows—he cannot plead ignorance—that the want of pecuniary means alone retards, and has so long retarded the erection of that house of prayer wherein many a soul, now perishing for hunger, may be supplied with bread from heaven, and to its own great and endless comfort be encouraged to take of the waters of life freely. It is while thus engaged in dispensing the instruction, and in ministering the consolations which are derived from the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that the Church truly realizes that picture under which the text presents it, of a seat of holiness founded upon an immoveable basis, and visited with the favour and protec-

tion of God beyond all other dwellings. From such exertions, so unwearied, and so charitable, from influence so healing and so corrective exercised over those who through neglect are sunk in vice and given up to habits of fraud or violence, from these her labours among such as but for her interference, would never hear an admonitory word in their sins or a consoling word in their sorrows, from this her tendency to do good where but for her it never can or would be done, the Church derives her claim to the encouragement and support of those who are, by the ordinance of God, His ministers to us for good. The representative of the Sovereign upon the throne cannot put his hand to any work more strictly in accordance with the design of his high station, than one which has for its object to promote the glory of the Eternal Sovereign whose throne is above the heavens ; by Whom Kings reign ; and Who has decreed that they shall be the nursing fathers of the Church. But the hand which was first applied to this work is mouldering in the grave. Were it otherwise, were he still in possession of the authority with which he was then invested, I could not speak of that act without incurring an imputation which, even when unmerited, few men have fortitude altogether to despise. But General Macquarie has long ceased to be an inhabitant of this world ; and therefore I may express the

admiration which I really feel of his zealous and persevering endeavours to provide this Colony with places of public worship. Where-soever they occur they form a noble monument to his memory ; and when the Church which is now to be undertaken shall stand, as through God's blessing I trust it will stand, a Temple dedicated to His glory and service, it may still be a subject of regret that he who conceived the design had not survived to be aware of its completion. But now let us turn from this subject, and avail ourselves of the opportunity to direct our thoughts and desires towards another building not made with hands ; the city of God which hath foundations upon the heavenly mountains ; foundations which were laid on that spot where the cross of Christ was planted ; the Church triumphant built up by the labours of prophets and Apostles, and cemented by the blood of martyrs ; the Church of the first born concerning which glorious things are spoken ; which will one day open wide its everlasting portals to those of all climates and all ages whose names are written in heaven. This shall be their rest ; there shall they dwell in glory and felicity, in the fulness of joy at the right hand of God for ever.

"THE WORK OF THE SERVICE OF THE SANCTUARY."

A

SERMON

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, 28TH MAY, 1837,

AT

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH,

SYDNEY ;

ON THE OCCASION

OF A

COLLECTION MADE TOWARDS THE ERECTION

OF THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW.

THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF THE KING OF SWEDEN

BY HENRY BURNET, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

LONDON, Printed by J. BARNARD, at the Crown and Anchor, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1734.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

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A SERMON.

1 CHRON. XXII, 19.

"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise, therefore, and build ye the Sanctuary of the Lord God."

THAT David, the truest pattern of devotional sentiment and spiritual fervour, should yet be found the first, and not the first only, but also the most earnest promoter of the design for the erection of that Temple which Solomon his son was appointed to commence and finish, must occasion much surprise to those persons, for such there are, who believe that spirituality of mind is not connected with or assisted by, but rather opposed to, any careful provision for the solemnization of external worship. Such, however, is the relation contained in Holy Scripture. "Behold," saith the Lord, "a son shall be born unto thee who shall be a man of rest (whereas David himself had been, during the greater portion of his reign, involved in wars and commotions.) He shall build an house for my name—he shall be my son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever!"¹ Thus spake

¹ 1 Chron. xxii, 9—10.

the King of Israel and Judah, before his death, to his successor Solomon, to whom, in obedience to the Divine command, he consigned the erection of the Temple. Nevertheless, though forbidden to be the actual agent by whom this work should be undertaken and completed, he manifested his disinterested and devoted attachment to the design, by the extent of the preparations which he set on foot, and the abundance of the resources which he bequeathed for its execution. "David said, Solomon, my son, is young and tender; and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical of fame and of glory throughout all Countries. I will, therefore, now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death."² As his own words describe his exertions, "Behold, in my trouble," or in the midst of poverty, "I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass, and iron, without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared, and thou mayest add thereto.—Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee."³

These are most interesting and edifying declarations: they reveal to us the secret thoughts of the heart of David, together with his deliberate resolves concerning the most appropriate

² ver. 15.

³ ver. 4—16.

and effectual mode of establishing the worship of Almighty God, upon a firm basis, in the midst of his people Israel. The design which this chapter relates him to have taken in hand, of building a Temple suitable, so far as any work of human fabric could be suitable to the glorious Majesty of that God whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain ; this design, I say, was not any sudden thought of rash and inexperienced youth ; it was the deliberate counsel of matured age—the age of one who, having during almost forty years, reigned over the people of the Lord, being taught also by lengthened observation and experience, and assisted, we are not to doubt, by that spirit of prophetic wisdom which so abundantly rested on him, had attained to an understanding both of the will of his Heavenly Sovereign, and the truest interest of his earthly subjects.

We shall not be long detained from the main subject, by looking back upon the Scriptural accounts, whence we may gather, with some probability, what has been the divinely instituted course, in making appointment and provision for the rites of external worship. In the beginning, before the arts of life had made much progress, the whole earth formed but a vast temple. The appearances of nature were sufficient to impress with awe the simple minds of the few inhabitants of the world ; and its woods or caves would provide

a seat for the devotion of those who had scarcely any experience of artificial accommodations for the service even of their domestic life. At a much later period, indeed, the Sanctuaries of the Patriarchs appear scarcely to have assumed any higher character. Abraham, obtaining a settled possession at Beersheba, "planted a grove, or tree, in Beersheba, and there called upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God."⁴ It was a hallowed spot—hallowed by the divine ordinance; for thither, also, Isaac went up and builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord;⁵ and Jacob, also, "took his journey, with all that he had, and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac."⁶ It is unnecessary to trace every stage of this primitive worship, by particular reference to the altars successively erected at Hebron, in the plains of Mamre, at Bethel, and at Sichem. It may be presumed to have continued until the residence of the Israelites in Egypt had familiarized them with objects of magnificence; after which it appears to have been adjudged expedient that some advance should be made beyond the primitive ceremonial which had sufficed for their forefathers in an earlier stage of civilization. The greater and still increasing acquaintance of that later generation with more artificial and ornamental modes of life, rendering

⁴ Gen. xii, 33.

⁵ Gen. xxvi, 23—25.

⁶ Gen. xli. 1.

them less susceptible of impressions from the simple appearances of nature, furnishes a probable explanation of their receiving, not only the permission, but the express direction of the Lord, that they should lay aside the plain ritual which had heretofore prevailed among them; and, in its stead, adopt the comparatively complicated and splendid ceremonial attached to the Ark of the Covenant of costly wood, with its staves, and its rings, and its gold, with the Mercy Seat, of pure gold: the tabernacle also, with its table, its candlestick, and its curtains of blue and purple and scarlet, beneath which God, as he declared to David, walked as in a tent, going from one tabernacle to another; or to the successive resting places of the same habitation. But there was an advance beyond even this, which Divine wisdom saw it expedient to sanction, when He had given victory unto the kings of his appointment, and delivered David, his servant, from the hurtful sword.—Then, as David himself declared, he “had it in his heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of God, and had made ready for the building, but God said unto him, Thou shalt not build an house for my name;”⁷ The opposition of God was not to the design, but to the execution of it by one who had been a man of war; for it did not comport with the unsul-

lied purity of God, or of the Church of Christ, of which this sacred edifice was to be an emblem, that hands which had shed blood should be employed in the erection. Therefore he said, "Solomon, thy son, he shall build my house." —Then was addressed to his Princes the animating exhortation of the text, manifesting how intensely his own will and disposition were fixed, exhorting them with all their heart and soul to seek the Lord their God, to build the sanctuary of the Lord God. And to Solomon, accompanying his paternal charge that he should know and serve the Lord, he delivered the "pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the Mercy Seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit."⁸

In this recital the most interesting and important particular for our attention, in its applicability to the occasion of my addressing you this day is, that in delivering to Solomon the plan of that house which he was appointed to build, David gave him the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit; the Spirit of grace and truth and wisdom and knowledge, which had rendered him not unwise, but understanding what, in this particular, was the will of the Lord.

⁸ 1 Chron. xxviii, 11.

Nor could it have been, in plainer terms, declared to be agreeable to His will that, in proportion as he had placed his people in a condition to be stimulated and excited in their religious affections by objects of magnificence and sublimity, he would have them no longer contented with the plainness and simplicity prevalent in earlier ages, but rather accommodate the sumptuousness of their Temple and its ritual worship, to the improved character of all other parts of the inheritance which the Lord their God had conferred upon them. We see at once the *abuse* to which such appointments may be liable, and, from the example of the Israelites, the evils which arise from it. In this case, as in many others, men *may* mistake *means* for *ends*, and rest content in the use and admiration of outward forms and ceremonies, forgetful that their *only* value consists in exciting and fixing more profoundly in the heart, spiritual and devotional impressions. But it would be hard if God's appointments must be condemned and abolished on account of the abuse to which they are liable in the practise of men. The Almighty would not have instituted a form of worship which might gratify the senses and exalt the imagination, if in this there had been anything which necessarily led to a dependance upon outward form ; nay, nor unless the *proper* effect of these things had been to assist and encourage spiritual devotion, by impressing upon

the thoughtless and profane an awful apprehension of religion; and by disposing and enabling true believers to draw off their thoughts from earth, and in heart and mind to ascend unto the dwelling-place of God. The Christian, it is agreed, if he worship God, must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for God is a Spirit. But they greatly err who think that, because it is so, we do not need houses of worship or forms of devotion; but that the use of them must be laid aside, if we seek and hope to attain true spirituality of heart. If this were the natural unavoidable effect of the sumptuous establishment devised by David and completed by his son, is it lawful for us to think that it would ever have been authorised or suggested by God? Unless the Temple, constituted as it was in itself and in its services, had had a tendency to call forth and confirm those feelings which are acceptable to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would that Lord, who left us an example that we should follow his steps, have resorted so constantly and affectionately to that House, which, in a spirit of zeal for its preservation from defilement, he pronounced to be a house of prayer for all nations?

In making an application of these observations to the purposes of our present Meeting, I shall consider, *first*, the evident necessity which exists for an addition to the present number of our Churches; *secondly*, the character which

the proposed edifice should bear ; and, *lastly*, I will address a few observations to induce, by God's blessing, your willing and liberal co-operation in this undertaking.

With respect to the first of these points, I am of opinion that no proof carries, or ought to carry, so much weight as a practical proof. Is then another Church required ? Let the question be answered by reference to the state of this Town, comparing the numbers of its population with the means which are supplied for their attendance on public worship. It cannot be cast upon us as a reproach, that we should first fill the Churches we have before we think of building more. The state of things is this, that even among those who can afford to pay, and are willing to pay, for accommodation, there are at all times very considerable numbers compelled to wait the occurrence of a vacancy. And those numbers would be greater but for two reasons, of the truth of which I possess positive proof—namely, that many forbear to make application, knowing beforehand that it will be ineffectual ; others, rather than be altogether deprived of attendance on public worship, attach themselves to other modes of it, solely because they cannot find admission within the walls of that Church to which they would conscientiously give the preference. And in the case of those who are of a rank in life which would induce them to

avail themselves of a free sitting if it could be obtained, the state of circumstances is still more to be deplored, and more urgently requires amendment. If we are asked, Are ye the body of Christ, and Members in particular? Where, then, is the evidence, that every man minds not his own things but the things also of others?—Where is then the evidence that you are not wanting in the great duty of providing for them that need, the means, which every Christian ought to possess, of hearing freely preached the great doctrine of salvation by the Cross of Christ? Where are the churches, or the seats in those churches, which may be occupied by your domestic servants, free or bond, by the middle classes of society, or by the mechanics and labourers who form so numerous and so important a part of the population of this town? Alas! it is needless to say that we have neither churches nor seats to offer them; and it is a great question whether, in the metropolis of England itself, notorious for deficiency in this respect, there be, in proportion, a greater number of individuals living absolutely without the means of grace than there are in this very town. We may allege that the fault is their own, since they make no effort to attend the public worship of God even when an opportunity is afforded them. But let me enquire, when did they enjoy that opportunity?—and we must not think to pass over that question

by another enquiry—who made us our brother's keeper? We are their keepers and, so far as we each of us possess ability, must be responsible, yes, deeply responsible for their present unavoidable alienation from the services of the Christian Church. Could we be surprised, if thus banished from the assemblies of the faithful, they should lose sight of every principle of faithfulness, and grow up traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God? These evils I pretend not to say that the erection of another Church would cure; but surely, if greater numbers could there be brought to hear the true preaching of the doctrine of the Cross, we may hope that, through God's blessing upon his own Ordinances, some considerable palliation might be effected of the dreadful evil with which we are now threatened; nay, more than threatened, actually afflicted, in the growing up of so many thousands around us in a state of complete separation from the visible Church of the Redeemer. And God, the righteous Judge, be assured, will take the matter into his own hands. Look around you and be persuaded of the truth of what I say; that in every occupation and department of life, the evil and unhappy consequences will continue to be more and more felt, arising from so numerous a portion of the community being suffered to grow up without any sense of religion or fear of God; to roam at large, in a con-

dition of awful ignorance and indifference as to those doctrines of righteousness on which the common salvation of individuals depends ; and to the restraining influence of which alone we may look for the secure establishment of quietness, sobriety, and peace, as the prevailing characteristics of the community at large.

Secondly—I would offer a few observations upon the topic, What character the proposed edifice should bear : and this for the purpose of dissipating a persuasion, which the selfish love of lucre surely, and not a sense of due respect to God, nor an imitation of his profuse liberality to all the beings of his creation, has rendered so generally prevalent—that in providing for the worship and service of the Lord of heaven and earth, it is unnecessary to go beyond the plainest, cheapest, and even meanest proportions of absolute necessity. You bear in remembrance, I trust, my brethren, what was said in the former part of this discourse, respecting the relation which, it is evident, God willed should be established between the outward circumstances of his own people, and the degree of costliness and magnificence with which he would have his Sanctuary adorned. While every day and hour witnesses unsparing efforts made to extend the dimensions and to increase the accommodations of our private dwellings, shall the House of God alone be surrendered to the dominion of parsimony and the display of meanness ? Up-

wards of two centuries ago a religious and excellent person, referring to this topic, observed, "although I am not ignorant that many men, well-reputed, have embraced the thrifty opinion of that disciple, who thought all to be wasted that was bestowed upon Christ in that sort, and that it were much better bestowed upon the poor; notwithstanding, I must confess, it will never sink into my heart that, in proportion of reason, the allowance for furnishing out the service of God should be measured by the scant and strict rule of mere necessity, (a proportion so low that nature, to others most bountiful, in matter of necessity hath not failed, no, not the most ignoble creatures of the world), and that for ourselves, no measure of heaping but the most we can get, no rule of expense but the utmost pomp we list; or that God himself had so enriched the lower parts of the world with such wonderful varieties of beauty and glory, that they might serve only to the pampering of mortal man in his pride; and that, in the service of the High Creator Lord and Giver, only the simpler, baser, cheaper, less noble, less beautiful, less glorious things should be employed: especially seeing, as in Prince's Courts, so in the service of God also, this outward state and glory (being well-disposed) doth engender, quicken, increase, and nourish the inward reverence, respect, and devotion which is due to

Sovereign Majesty and Power.”¹ Indeed, my Christian brethren, these remarks are conceived in a spirit, not only of warm piety, but of genuine wisdom—a wisdom which recognizes the great duty of devoting the first fruits of all that we possess, in acknowledgment of the manifold and undeserved marks of goodness which God has showered upon us; and delights to offer such acknowledgments by providing for the suitable establishment of that place, the Church, wherein His Honor dwelleth. Indeed, “the fabrics appropriated to the service of Religion can never be treated with neglect, till a total disregard for religion itself has first become prevalent, and men have lost all becoming sense of what they owe to God or to themselves.—Whenever this is the melancholy condition of a people, they cannot hope for, because they do not value or desire, the protection of God; and it is difficult to conceive that a spirit of religion really prevails where the temples of the Lord of hosts are not embellished with their proper dignity, and the public worship conducted in the beauty of holiness.”²

Now, therefore, in the words of David, “set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord, and to build the Sanctuary of your God.” I ask your contributions, my brethren, for a great national and religious purpose; and I ask them

¹ Sir Edwin Sandy's *Survey of Religion*.

² *Ornaments of Churches considered*, p. 137.

with much confidence, because it must readily be perceived how useful, becoming, and important is the purpose to which they are to be applied. The great object is to provide ampler means, and more sufficient accommodation, for spreading abroad the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and making known the extent and value of his redeeming love to thousands who are now as sheep, having no shepherd : perishing for want of some one who may instruct them, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it : this is the way, the truth, and the life, even Jesus Christ the Righteous ; accept him, therefore, with all your souls, for no man cometh to the Father but by Him. Yes, these are the glad-tidings which we wish for ability to promulgate on a wider scale. These walls, within which we are now assembled, have grown too narrow even for those who have a desire and longing to enter into the Courts of the House of our God ; much more for those multitudes who, unhappily for themselves, have no such disposition. They cannot be successfully invited or reasonably expected to acquire an acquaintance with the truths of the Gospel, as promulgated in our Churches, while in those Churches they have no place to which they might betake themselves, were they even disposed to seek the Lord, and to comply with the offer, held out by his tender mercy, of pardon and reconciliation. I urge not many motives

to engage you in this design of charity. One motive may be sufficient to influence every Christian, that is the desire to imitate the example of his Lord. If there be any who would surrender the House of God to neglect, let them remember to how much more than his accustomed display of displeasure our blessed Lord was transported when the question was, Whether the Temple of the Lord should be profaned or purified? In Him, on those occasions, shone forth that Divine energy on behalf of the place where God's honor dwelt, which manifested the applicability to him of the prophesy, "the zeal of thine House hath even eaten me." Are we his followers? We must not then be "slothful" in this business especially, but "fervent in spirit"—not taking it up timidly or coldly, but entering with determined energy upon an undertaking, by which we may be most acceptably and effectively "serving the Lord" our God. With our heart and soul set to seek Him, let us unitedly proceed to the work. It is a work in which we shall never repent of having engaged. As we have never seen the righteous man forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread—so, on the part of God, whom your bounty this day is destined to honor, it may be securely promised that no one, either in his own interests or the interests of his posterity, will ever be allowed to suffer on account of what he may, within the bounds of a reasonable pru-

dence, bestow upon such a work. Look.—
Whatsoever he layeth out, it shall be paid to him again—paid back to him with an increase of spiritual advantages above all price—paid back to him with the consoling reflection that he hath done what he could, to honor and exalt the Saviour from whom he has received so many blessings—paid back to him, I say, with the blessed hope that, in affording even to one poor sinner the means of hearing the sincere word of God, and becoming acquainted with that righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, he may have been instrumental in rescuing a soul from death, and in extending the limits of that heavenly Kingdom, in which they who turn others to righteousness shall reign in glory in the presence of God for ever