

The Wesleyan Methodist

Published under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Eastern British America.

Volume XXV.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1873.

Number 4

THE GLORY OF THE SANCTUARY.

A SERMON,
Preached at the dedication of the Methodist
Church, at Margville, New Brunswick,
Sunday morning, January 6, 1873.

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"And I will make the place of my feet glorious."
Isaiah, 60: 13.

At the beginning of Isaiah's ministry he

was favoured with a vision of rarest sublimity.

He saw in the temple the Lord sitting upon a

throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled

the temple. Bright, six-winged, seraphim,

from the heavenly country, were there. They

cried one unto another, and said: "Holy,

holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." And they

declared to Isaiah that the whole earth is full

of the glory of God. One of these seraphim

took a live coal from off the altar and touched

the prophet's lips therewith. When he had

received this baptism of fire the Lord bade

him go, and deliver to the people the mes-

sages he should receive.

Many of the words that Isaiah spoke were

not pleasant utterances for either the speaker

or the people. But in the later days of his

ministry brighter scenes opened before him.

His soul is aglow with holy rapture; and he is

permitted to declare some of the grandest

truths of inspiration. He tells of the suffering

Messiah seven hundred years before the angel

heralded his birth in Bethlehem; and he tells

his story as if he had been the historian of that

tragedy, rather than the prophet. He puts

upon record some important promises of grand

things God purposed to do for the world.

"The Redeemer shall come to Zion," says

Isaiah. "With his advent there shall come

light. And the Gentiles shall come to

try light, and Kings to the brightness of thy

rising." With the coming of this light there

was to be the manifestation of God's glory.

The people, even in distant realms,

should "lift up their eyes round about and

see." They were to gather themselves to-

gether in places of worship, and to worship

God in his own house. They were to come

from far, even from beyond the sea, and they

were to be converted, the prophet says, and

to bring gold and incense, and to show forth

the praises of the Lord.

The realization of those prophetic anticipa-

tions would necessarily involve the preaching

of the gospel, and the erection of buildings in

which the gospel could be preached. Hence

the prophets whose vision is made far-reaching

by the inspiration from above, behold, in

ages yet to be, and in many lands, habitations

built for God, and tells us of his glory. The

Lord himself, speaking through his servant,

says: "I will give you the house of my glory."

The sons of strangers shall build up the walls

and Kings shall minister thereunto. Nothing

shall be too good for God's house. The glory

of Lebanon shall come thence; the costliest

materials shall adorn thee; and genius and art

shall combine their skill, to "beautify the

place of my sanctuary." And then the Lord

says: "I will make the place of my feet glo-

rious."

By the place of God's feet we are to

understand the sanctuary, where God's pres-

ence is revealed to his worshipping people.

When Jehovah brought the Israelites out of

bondage he declared that he would make his

abode with them. He demanded that a dwell-

ing, or Tabernacle, should be provided for

himself, among their own dwellings, and out

of the same materials. Within this Tabernacle

which was in fact only a Tent was to be the

ark of the covenant, or chest containing the

Ten-Commandments on two tables of stone,

symbolizing the divine law of holiness, and

covered by the mercy-seat, the type of recon-

ciliation between God and man. The ark of

the covenant was the central point of the sanc-

tuary. It supported the mercy-seat, with the

cherubim, from between which Jehovah held

communion with his people.

The Tabernacle was peculiar to the dispensa-

tion of the Mosaic covenant. It was the

symbolical dwelling place of Jehovah, where

he was to meet with his people, or their repre-

sentatives. His own words were: "Let

them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell

among them." "I will meet you there,"

speaks there into thee, and there will I meet

with the children of Israel." Among the

ideas prevalent at that time, the place where

God rested his feet, was a footstool; and

that, there, between the cherubim, and over

the mercy-seat, God made the place of his

feet glorious.

In the time of David the Israelites attained

unto a degree of prosperity hitherto unknown.

The Kingdoms, that had been so long divided,

were now made one. Jerusalem was recon-

quered, and became now, for the first time, a

Hebrew city. He laid the foundations of what

for nearly three thousand years, has been

known emphatically as "the Holy City." He

prepared therein a place for the ark; and

brought it up, and placed it on Mount Zion.

David declared that it was in his "heart to

build an house of rest for the footstool of our

place of God's feet, we assume that the

place of his worship are meant; where

Divine law is honored; where there is the real

meat-seat; where God dwells among men;

where he permits men to draw near to him;

where he speaks to men; and where penit-

ent and believing souls are accepted, and pard-

oned, and saved.

That God makes the place of his feet

glorious is seen in what he did in connection

with the temple built by Solomon. He re-

vealed to David, by the descent of fire from

heaven, the particular spot on which he would

have the temple built. David recognized the

sign, and said: "This is the House of

Jehovah God." David made provision for

the erection of the edifice by providing work-

men and materials in great abundance. God

designed, however, that Solomon should build

the house. The plans, which were of Divine

suggestion, were given by David into the hands

of Solomon. When seven and a half years had

passed away the temple stood complete. With-

in and without it glittered with a golden splen-

dor, and a richness of magnificence, such as

had been known to no other structure since the

world began. The crowning glory, however,

of that brilliant building did not arise from the

fact that, as a specimen of workmanship, it

did not peer, but because God, on the occasion

of its dedication, honored it with his mani-

fest presence in the cloud. The assembled

multitude saw that God made the place of his

feet glorious on that memorable day, for "the

House of Jehovah," it is recorded, "had

filled the House of Jehovah."

But it is not an edifice of such grandeur

only that God's glory is seen. He honored

the frail abode of the Israelites. The Israelites

thought their Tabernacle, which was made of

linen curtains, and cambric and morocco coverings,

and brazen pillars, and of skins of various kinds,

and which was fastened inland here and there

with silver and with gold, was magnificent in

the extreme. And so it was for a people who

dwelt in tents, and whose civilization was of

the peculiar type of those early times. It was

in that frail tent that God dwelt among his

people, and it was glorious to them because it

was the place of his feet. God honors the

house which he built for him. It may be a vast

and splendid cathedral. It may be a costly

church, adorned with the most elaborate and

perfect architectural beauty which the most

cultivated taste, and the highest art, can secure.

It may be a lowly log cabin, where true-

hearted and honest-handed poor men meet

and worship and pray. Wherever sincere, pen-

itent, and believing souls are assembled to wait

upon God, he is present; and his presence

makes the place glorious.

Places of worship are sources of civiliza-

tion. Christianity is the best civilization. The

prophets, in glowing language, speak of some

of the things which God, through his church,

meant to do for men, individually and socially.

He designed to lift men up, as individuals and

communities, from their darkness and super-

stition, and error. The crooked places would

be made straight, and the rough places level.

Wherever the Redeemer's footsteps would be

apart, all flesh should see the glory of God.

Mark the course of the gospel! Behold what

effects have followed its march! Civilization,

jurisprudence, letters, liberty, become increas-

ingly developed in those lands where Christ's

gospel became established. The religion of

Jesus has demonstrated its adaptation to the

most important wants of men, individually, so-

cially, and nationally. It has proved its ability

to lift them into a higher and a nobler life.

How largely is our civilization permeated with

those teachings which have their home in the

sanctuary? Ask the statesman and the jurist

whence their branching jurisprudence grows.

Ask any thoughtful man "whence come the

principles upon which the fabric of the state is

built? They will tell you, if they speak the

truth, that those principles are the principles of

the ark of the covenant, of God which he hath

given to his church to proclaim and to defend.

In courts of justice, in legislative halls, in

markets of commerce, in the homes of the peo-

ple, we make the laws of God to be the rule of

our life, or, at least, we virtually profess to do so.

Let these principles of Christianity, which are

inculcated and inured with common religion,

as in Christian pulpits, be ignored in our

secular life, and the very foundations of our

civilization would be shaken; and the institu-

tions of society, which have been secured as of

great a price, and which are so dearly cher-

ished, would be greatly imperiled if not entirely

swamp away.

Amongst the salient peculiarities of the

Christian system are the Sabbath and the sanc-

tuary. Who of us can adequately appreciate

the influence which these exert upon the indi-

vidual, and upon the social life of the commu-

nity? The Sabbath morning comes. The

other morning breaks like that. The toiler

who is in most haste to become rich who is

most successful; nor he who holds his gold

with tightest grasp who is most prosperous.

They who recognize God's claims and respond

to his calls, are blessed of him. Those ac-

tions that do most for Christ, and are most

influenced by his teachings, abound most in

those elements that make a people great, and

prosperous, and happy. Investments made in

God's cause always pay in the long run. Those

who bravely endeavour, with willing and obedi-

ent hearts, to do something for the Master, will

leave the tread of his footsteps in their

mist. And he will make the place of his feet

glorious to them.

4. The place of God's feet is glorious be-

cause of the instruction which is there impart-

ed. The sanctuary is a centre of intellectual

light. It is the only place where regular oral

instruction is provided for the clergy. He knock-

the mind finds rest, in the house of God, from

the very day strain, by contact with those

which appeal to our spiritual and eternal in-

terests. This provision of God's grace is,

moreover, not for a select and favored few, but

for all men. There is, for every one who

will sit at the foot of Jesus, intellectual teach-

ing of the highest type, and of the grandest

importance. We do not claim for God's house

that here all wisdom dwells. The secular

world has its realms of knowledge, and its

storehouses of wisdom. The value of those

treasures is recognized and appreciated. But

in the place of God's feet, praying and believ-

ing hearts are lifted to a higher scholarship,

and made familiar with a lore more inspiring

and precious than all the wisdom of this world's

treasures. Even in the most familiar things,

the sky that overhangs us, the atmosphere that

surrounds us, the water that refreshes us, the

sun that warms us, the moon that enlightens us,

the waves that break upon the shore, there lurk

and there dwell, a mystery, which the eagle eye

has not detected, nor the profoundest mind

grasped. Scientists, who are still investigating

the phenomena of animal life, or the workings

of human intellect, or the laws of mind, are

led to the morning star, and in the dawn of

the new day, they are reminded of the

sun of righteousness, which they who sit in

darkness and in the region and shadow of

death may see the light, and rejoice in the

brightness and in the glory of his coming. The

botanist may profitably study the wonderful

growth of nature, in spring time, and in sum-

mer, and rejoice over the strange develop-

ments of bud, and blossom, and fruitage, and

golden harvest. But in the Lord's house, you

may come to a knowledge of him, who has been

called the plant of renown, and the Lily of the

valley, and the rose of Sharon, and whom to

know is life eternal.

While it is true that you should seek after the