

In the one heart, God has collected the wealth, spirituality, and beauty of this earth,—has enriched this inner house above His sanctuary in Israel, and communicates His favor to it as He did not to the ancient one. Then shall we not value a believing man more than his fellows,—stand in awe of him as of something sacred, and acknowledge him as God's temple? You that are so in this congregation are to be appreciated.

But now to the edification of this temple. First of all, the foundation is laid. Every wise builder chooses a site, and lays a deep and solid basis. The foundation of the temple at Jerusalem has been ascertained to be exceedingly deep, and rests upon the rocks of Mount Zion; but the foundation of the believer's safety is laid upon the Rock of Salvation, which is Christ Himself. His finished work—His law-fulfilling righteousness and person, constitute a foundation stronger and more durable than can be found on this earth. Self-righteous men may build upon the rubbish of their works, and corrupt churches upon their rites and services, but other foundation can no man or church lay than that which God has laid, even Christ, the perfect and all-sufficient Redeemer. Here alone is safety, all else is sand. Now, on this Rock does the Holy Spirit found the soul, deep down on the finished work and person of Emmanuel does He place it, and there does the soul rest as the house on the rock.

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee."

But thereon he finds peace and security. As soon pluck this Church from its solid basis, as snatch one believing soul from the Saviour. It is part of Himself, rooted and grounded in Him, and shall continue when earth's solid foundation and every rock shall be removed; it will stand and find security and permanence, for its foundation is strong and lasting.

But next, the structure is reared. The temple at Jerusalem was built of immense stones quarried and prepared at a distance, so that no noise of hammer was heard in the building. In like manner, the spiritual temple is composed of living stones taken from the quarry of nature, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, and grows up noiselessly—no sound is heard, yet the building grows apace; in breadth of character, the believer grows; his desires become more spiritual, his aims more pure and lofty, deep in humility he grows, and upward in holiness; he discovers a closer resemblance to the Great Pattern, and in character attains to the sanctity and devotion of a temple. This may be the labor of years; at the cost of much self-denial, and of many a pang may it be accomplished. Affliction may have as much ado with it as preaching. The rod may have to be applied, as well as the law proclaimed; many a sin mortified, as well as many a humiliation borne; nevertheless, issue at last in the beauty of holiness, like this Church when its scaffolding was removed, shall the spiritual temple, and be ready for its crown. And so,

3dly, and lastly, shall the topstone be brought forth with shoutings of grace. It was a joyful day when the returned tribes saw the new temple (rising from so insignificant a commencement) brought to so glorious a finish; but when the topstone of the spiritual edifice is brought forth—when the work of sanctification is being crowned, and the Holy Spirit seals the soul for heaven, oh! then, what joy! Old in years, but ripe in grace; the outer walls decaying, but the inner revived; the tabernacle giving way, but the building of God ready for heaven. There is joy with the angels of God over such, for another soul is to be added to the temple above, and the consummation is to be obtained.

'Tis thus, then, Emmanuel The Branch erects his temple. He founds it upon Himself, rears it in holiness, and crowns it by His grace. And let me observe, ere I conclude this topic, that it is in connection with the ministry that He rears His temple; it is in this splendid house He forms a house more splendid and durable still. By the ministrations that are to be conducted here, by