

at length the headstone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying Grace, grace, unto it. But, in the mean time, as each is brought into vital connexion with the chief corner stone, he becomes actually a part of the true church or house of God, and the various ordinances and places of worship on earth which are rendered subservient to this end have a subordinate interest and importance, from the use which is thus made of them in building up those who are "an habitation of God through the Spirit." The application of the expression to the mere earthly fabric, where the professed worshippers of God meet for the purpose of offering up to him their homage and tribute of praise, and receiving spiritual edification, has been often so interpreted as to foster mere sensuous notions, and to blind men's minds to the higher meaning which it really conveys. Ritualism becomes the ruling idea, and men please themselves with the thought that God may be worshipped with men's hands, as though he had need of any thing. This, however, is not necessarily, nor is it always, the case. Where the true idea occupies the mind, the spirituality of God's worship is understood, and valued and enjoyed. The presence of God himself is realized. Outward ordinances are seen and are valued in the relation in which they stand to him. As instituted by divine authority, as accommodated to our present circumstances, and as the means in the believing use of which spiritual intercourse with God is to be maintained, the child of God prizes them, cheerfully submits to sacrifices that they may be upheld, and makes strenuous efforts that they may be enjoyed. With David he is ready to say, "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy."

I. Let us then, in the first place, contemplate a little more closely the object set forth, according to the primary idea, in the expression "the house of God." It is the church of the living God, chosen in God's sovereign love from among the fallen family of mankind, when they were viewed as lying under the curse of a broken law, and weltering in the pollutions of sin. He who dwelleth in light which is inaccessible and full of glory, constructed the universe as a glorious temple for himself; and it does in most intelligible language declare his eternal power and