

Christ, God manifested in the flesh. For his righteousness he thirsts;—his spirit, its meekness, its gentleness, its love, its patience its charity, its kindness, its long suffering, he ardently desires; the burden of his address to his heavenly Father is, I shall be satisfied when, and only when, I awake in thy likeness. There is a growth, in the divine image upon the Christian's soul, and let no man be discouraged from seeking and cultivating this growth. It is for this that the Son of God came! it is to this that every child of God is predestined. "For whom he did fore-know he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." But is there no danger of spiritual pride? Should not the fear of undue elevation discourage us from seeking after these higher graces of religion? Nothing can be further from the truth than the theory which underlies this question; humility is the print of a deep and growing piety, not of a shallow and changeable religion: in proportion to the extent of personal holiness is the depth of personal humility. It is your cold, dead, half-hearted Christians that are stuck up with spiritual pride. The nearer you get to God the more will you feel your nothingness, your unworthiness: then pant after Him, thirst for his presence, thirst for his image: say to Him "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee." Say to Him, I long to be holy as thou art holy, to be merciful as thou art merciful, to be perfect as my Father in heaven is perfect.

"Thou, only, canst my spirit ail.  
Come, O my God, my God."

3rdly. The faithful Christian pants after God in the sanctuary. We have already pictured David's position in the wilderness, and his long and far separation from the tabernacle. The circumstances of God's people now, though somewhat dissimilar, are occasionally such as to excite emotions correspondent with those to which the Psalmist gives utterance in the 63rd Psalm. "My soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." Sometimes personal affliction—family sickness, or a long voyage, interferes with their enjoyment of sanctuary privileges. What would they not give to resume their position in the house of God, to join its blessed praises, to unite in its earnest supplications for spiritual good, to sit under its instructions: to behold the glory of Him who dwelleth between the cherubims; often have we seen and heard dry and

thirsty souls long after the sanctuary, mourning that they made so imperfect a use of its ordinances while they were within their reach, and vow solemnly that if permitted to return to them they would employ them to their own edification and to the Glory of God. I would, however, say a word to those who are often kept, lawfully kept, from the house of the Lord. Remember that David lived under that dispensation whose religious worship was principally carried on in a central position. The Jews did not extend, neither did they seek to extend, the influence of their system of religion beyond their own nation. They worshipped at Jerusalem and there especially, yea, and almost only, did they look for those manifestations of the divine presence which accorded with the genius of the Mosaic economy. You live under another economy, an economy whose genius and spirit vary from those of the former dispensation—and economy whose characteristic is diffusion rather than concentration, a dispensation which has no visible centre, a dispensation in which wheresoever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is he in the midst of them—where all may come with boldness, and obtain, &c.—where all may with unveiled face behold as in a glass, &c. When, then, you are debarred from the enjoyments of the house of God, forget not that you have access to him at all times, and may behold his power and glory in your secret exercises—forget not that in his gospel you have the richest display of his attributes, and whoso looketh into the perfect law, &c. It is a privilege, high, holy, unspeakable, to come up to the sanctuary, and still may we say with David "How amiable, &c." but blessed be God, he has recorded his name upon the sick-room of the Christian and upon the cabin of the ship in which he voyages, and upon the mountain top, or the quiet vale, or the river's bank, or the ocean shore, and upon the secret, sacred chamber of the man of God, and there will he show us his glory, there will he bless. Wherever the soul is that pants after God, there God is in the fullness of his love.

The faithful Christian thirsts for God when he comes up to the house of prayer—this is his desire to see the divine power and glory as he has himself seen in other days, or as he has heard of their manifestations in other days. When the man of God visits the holy sanctuary, he keeps his feet as he walketh hither, his soul goes out in holy contemplation and desire after the king of kings and he oftentimes cries within