

and the lever to elevate. And the services may be both simple and spiritual, and unattractive to the carnal mind, nevertheless His Spirit renders them effectual unto salvation; and the worshipper may be a humble man that, like the publican of old, thinks very meanly of himself, and trembles under his unworthiness, yet him does the Almighty choose and receive into His covenant, and reveal His mercy to; so that not as man acts does The Branch, but He carries on His own work secretly in the heart and in the Church, through the instrumentality of a preached Gospel Sabbath after Sabbath, till He rears up a holy house, a temple of sanctified souls, to serve God. And if already, as we doubt not. He has got several such in our midst—if He dwells in the hearts of some worshippers here, and they in Him, then such believers does He edify Sabbath by Sabbath till the topstone be put to the building. But I would remind you, that whether to convert or to build up, He is blessing His own ordinances and carrying on His gracious work,—down in the heart forming living stones, striking the fire of love in the frozen affections of one, and kindling light into the darkened understanding of another,—here quickening, and there edifying,—all silently as in the building of the temple, but certainly as in the rearing of Zerubbabel and Joshua's house, the work goes on; and on it shall grow, till ready for completion, for never shall this Architect leave it unfinished, but, having begun, shall perform it till the perfect day. Oh, then, what glory shall accrue to the Messiah, The Branch, for the execution as well as for the contrivance! The latter called for wisdom and love, but the former for the constant exercise of power, forbearance, tenderness, and skill. What a world of ruined souls to operate upon, and every one of them unfit! No genial ones, yielding to the touch like wax under the hands of the artist; but a dead and corrupt mass, resisting as soon as began to feel, and yet He bore with and overcame them, and made them a temple of love and of praise. Were it but one soul that He thus subdued, it would be a striking manifestation of His grace and power, for oh! this work is above man's power, and it is not of him that willeth; but it is thousands, thousands upon thousands, brought from the masses of fallen humanity to form a second temple, from being a synagogue of Satan to the service and love of God. Their hearts praise Him: from every tongue shall plaudits ascend, and every one of that throng shall yet cast his crown at His feet. Oh! when the immense multitudes whom no man can number shall be together in heaven, and form the one temple there, what jubilees and laudations shall ascend like fragrant incense from a temple! Every one saved by grace—every one to the praise of the Architect who chose, quickened, sanctified, and crowned them. Thousands are their tongues, but all their hearts are one, and it is anthems of praise to God and the Lamb they ascribe; and whether and how many from our new Church shall join in that anthem—whether and how many shall then compose that temple, of whom it may be said on that day, “born here,” “here joined, here grew, and here completed,” O God, grant some souls at least to the comfort and gain of the under-builder, as well as to the praise and glory of the Architect Himself.

It is twenty years this Sabbath since he who now addresses you, first preached to you from these words, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” That was the keynote of a ministry which, I trust, however imperfect, has not been altogether without fruit. Next twenty years, where either speaker or hearer shall be, none can say. Another may occupy this pulpit, another voice sound in your hearing, “Thus saith the Lord.” Others, too, may occupy these seats, and other voices join in raising the notes of praise; but whether, in God's providence, our time is to be short or long, well were it that on our entrance into a new Church we would increase in the Divine life, and therefore should we earnestly pray that God by His Spirit would quicken and revive us,—that our worship may become more heartfelt; and our charac-