

hath sent forth a labourer into that large and long waste vineyard—a shepherd hath He commissioned to watch over and carefully tend the numerous flock, who have been long wandering without a guide, and destitute of all spiritual food—a minister of the Góspel—one, too, who can speak to them in the feeling language of their revered sires. Now have they the blessed prospect before them of enjoying regular Gospel ministrations, and of worshipping the God of their fathers according to the dictates of their consciences without any daring to make them afraid. And who can appreciate Christian privileges so well as those who have been long deprived of them; we feel assured that, as each successive Sabbath morning comes, the number in Lochiel is not small, who will be able to fully enter into the meaning of the words of the sweet singer of Israel, and with heartfelt joy to say to those around them, “Let us go into the house of the Lord. Thither let us go up, and give thanks unto the name of the Lord. A day spent in the courts of the Lord’s House is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

Would that God may bless the sacred union formed betwixt the pastor and the people of Lochiel, and prosper His own work in the hand of His servant, granting unto him many souls as his reward.—*Communicated to the Cornwall Constitutional.*

SERMON preached at Toronto before the Synod on May 31st, 1854, by the Rev. Alexander Spence, Moderator.

“Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD.” *Zechariah*, vi. 12.

We are told that after the return of the Jews from Babylon they commenced the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, but that, owing to various difficulties which they had to encounter, the work proceeded very slowly, and that they were in consequence discouraged and began to apprehend that it would not be in their power ever to complete its restoration. Whilst in this state of mind, the Lord was graciously pleased to send His prophet Zechariah to assure them that the temple would be built by those hands which were then employed at its construction. “The hands of Zerubbabel” said the prophet “have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.” With the view, moreover, of impressing the more deeply on the minds of the people the truth of this message, the prophet was instructed in the passage before us to “take of them of the captivity and go into the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah; then take silver and gold and make crowns and set them upon the head of

Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, “Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord.”

As it is very evident, however, that that temple which was built by Solomon, and also the temple which at this time was rebuilt, and was placed under the protection of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, were typical of the Church of God as it was to exist under the Messiah, we shall on the present occasion make use of the words of the text as prophetic of the time when in the land of Judea and on the mount of Calvary a fountain would be opened whence would issue a life-giving spring, before the course of which disease and barrenness and death would disappear, and life and health, verdure and beauty would arise from its gladdening streams. In other words, we shall make use of the language before us as prophetic of the appointed time when the Son of God would lay the foundation of a new spiritual temple, would construct a platform upon which that spiritual building would be erected of which every believer forms a constituent part.

Now, although man builded the Jewish temple, that the spiritual temple, of which it was a type, could not be constructed by a human architect, we need scarcely make use of any words to show. It was necessary that God should “lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious,” a foundation-stone on which this superstructure might be erected. It was necessary that He, whose name is here called the Branch, should interpose, should by an all-perfect righteousness satisfy every demand of the law, make it honourable or magnify it before all worlds, should through His own merits and mediation open a way of access to a guilty world, even a way by which mankind might come unto the Lord Jesus Christ “as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious,” in order that, “as lively stones, they might be built-up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Of the Christians of Ephesus it was said, “Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” Here then we have language which plainly represents all true believers as united together in one Church, as constituting one spiritual temple reared by Christ, and that through the Holy Spirit.

Nay more: Christ is not only the foundation, the corner-stone of this temple, the Rock on which it rests; but He is the

Head of it. “He shall not only build the temple of the Lord;” but, as it is stated in the subsequent verse, “He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne.” Or, as it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Christ is as a son over his own house; whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Thus it appears very evident that the Most High has selected our guilty world as the scene of very bright and very glorious manifestations, and is in the course of erecting a temple in it composed of “lively stones,” lively as having received spiritual life through Christ. But, at the same time, it is a temple which will not be complete till all the elect shall be gathered in, till it shall comprehend all, to whatever visible Church they belong and by whatever denomination they may be called, who hold Christ as the Head, till they be received into Heaven in all their collected number, and be presented by the Head Himself to His God and their God, to His Father and their Father, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or blemish, redeemed by His blood and kept by His power through faith unto everlasting salvation.

Such in a few sentences is some idea of the temple which the Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the Branch out of his roots, was to erect. And doubtless such is its glory, such is its surpassing loveliness and beauty that we can form no adequate conception of it. We may be amazed at that glory which we see in many parts of creation. We may be astonished at the splendour of a nocturnal sky. We may experience much delight in the calm of twilight. Our minds may be filled with wonder at the restless heaving of the ocean, or at the rapid play of the electric fluid, or at the lowering aspect of a thunder cloud. In all these we may see a natural glory of the same kind at least, although vastly less in degree, as that which we believe the angels saw when the full blaze of creation’s first morn burst upon them, or which they now see in every star and in every system that wheels in the immensity of space; but what are all these when compared with the moral glory of the spiritual erection of which we are speaking, an erection which had its origin on Calvary and in the Cross? Into this angels desire to look, and in their presence there is joy whenever a stone, “a lively stone,” is added to it by the conversion of one here and another there, by the repentance, the renewing in the spirit and joining to the Church of the Living God of one worldling or profane person here, of one Sabbath-breaker there; and these very angels shall be sent to minister for them when they become heirs of salvation.

But this brings us to remark that, as this spiritual temple is composed of “lively stones,” in one sense every believer may be said to be a temple of God. It is affirmed that “God dwells in him,” that “Christ