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AN ADDRESS *On the Character of*

General Seth Pomeroy

Delivered on the TWO HUNDREDTH
ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH *by*

George Eltweed Pomeroy

at FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

ORGANIZED 1661

NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

Sunday, May 20th, 1906

Under the Auspices of SETH POME-
ROY CHAPTER, SONS OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

To the Congressional Library

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S. P. P.

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ADDRESS.



THE honor you confer by asking me to address you on the life and character of Seth Pomeroy, on this, the 200th Anniversary of his birth, I fully appreciate; yet to come where so much of this subject is well known, makes it difficult to bring that with which you are not already familiar. I shall, therefore, confine myself, so far as practicable to the views I have formed of the character of this hero and patriot, from a study of the records and letters he has left.

The loyalty, bravery and fearlessness, of the warlike Knights of the 11th Century, were most assuredly transmitted to the succeeding generations. In the changing dynasties of Great Britain, and in the changing fortunes of the Pomeroy, these sterling characteristics remained unchanged. Hence, we find Eltweed of the 16th Century, selected and solicited to join the fortunes of the Puritans and immigrating to New England in 1630. It is known that the make up of the Puritan settlers was most carefully and seriously considered. Each one had some valuable requisite, which would aid in making the settlement not only attractive, but a force and a power that would insure success. After the minister was chosen, and the spiritual welfare of the Colony was thus assured, the second in importance was its protection, and Eltweed Pomeroy being a gunsmith of repute, filled that requirement. He was no doubt offered unusual inducements to join the Colonists, for besides being proficient in the trade that rendered him so valuable an addition to their numbers, he was a man of sterling worth and great vital force. He brought with him considerable property, and more was granted him in the way of lands in the Valley of the Connecti-

cut. This business consideration was an important feature, and it founded the fortunes of his descendants in New England.

His son Medad, followed his father's trade ; and after becoming established in Northampton, brought his father, who had become old and blind, from Windsor, Connecticut, to live with him. Deacon Medad was a valued citizen of Northampton, and increased his worldly goods. His son, Ebenezer, continued the business of gunsmith, and followed worthily the footsteps of his father. He was a man of property, of pride, and high social standing. In these three generations we see the type of character, that went to make up that of our hero, Seth, who was the son of Ebenezer.

We are gathered here today, to honor the memory of this, one of New England's greatest soldiers. In these days of strenuous commercialism, it will do us all good to look back two hundred years, and study the character of one who did such noble service in laying the foundation of our Nation. A proper sense of Trusteeship in the conduct of Corporate business is what we need today. Because of this requirement not having been made a part of men's education, the business world of this day has suffered discredit and dishonor. This sense was a prominent characteristic of the men of two centuries ago, and we may study the hero of that period with profit.

Two centuries have passed since Seth Pomeroy was born, near the spot on which we stand, and the seventy years which followed his birth are a history of the founding of a Nation: and his part in it was a most prominent one. He early began the management of the shop, turning out the best guns made in the country, and sustaining the reputation already made for them. You may readily see that a man of independent means and following a trade that was most sought for in the colony, was bound to become one of its most important members. Blacksmiths are always looked upon as men of brawn, and he was no exception. He was five feet eleven, or six feet in

height without superfluous flesh, strong and erect. Bred back from at least three generations of men of the same type and following, we find him an ideal in physique. His father had a proud mein and loved to dress well; but Seth in all his early and busiest years had no time to consider his personal appearance. He was busy making guns. He was a sure shot—few better. Ammunition was a scarce article in those days, and he wasted none by making poor shots; his were all “centers.”

He went hunting with five charges for his gun, and each one brought down its game. It is recorded that on his own farm, he shot a bear, a deer and a wolf in one afternoon. It was this skill with the gun, combined with judgment and foresight, and an absolute fearlessness that made him such a power in battle. He never knew fear; yet notwithstanding this, he accepted every opportunity that reduced the chance of danger in an engagement. Indian fighting doubtless aided in cultivating his natural caution, and made him a safe and successful commander.

No better soldier than Seth Pomeroy ever lived. He was obedient to the command of his superiors, and in turn demanded obedience from those whom he commanded—the perfection of a soldier's character. He led, because he was endowed with a judgment as perfect as his courage was indomitable, and because, he was absolutely without fear. He was as modest and gentle as he was courageous: while he was ever where danger was thickest, his heroic deeds were found out, not from his own report of them or from his own letters or diaries but entirely through the report of others. He was brave from principles that came down to him from generations of fighting ancestors—Knights, whose greatest ambitions were to conquer or die on the field of glory.

The Expedition to Cape Breton counted on capturing both guns and ammunition to augment its armament, with which to capture Louisburg. Major Pomeroy was the busiest officer in the command. There was something for his skillful hand

to do each day, and it never failed to accomplish it. When Grand Battery was captured, and the guns were found spiked, his services were immediately in demand, and he soon had some twenty smiths, many probably from his own shop, drilling out the cannon. It was a day's job, and the guns were soon turned on the city walls, effecting the early surrender of the fortress. His diary and letters on this campaign are full of life and spirit, as you already know, who have read Trumbull's Exhaustive History of Northampton. At this time he was thirty-nine years old—an age at which failure is not permitted. Experience has then succeeded youthful impatience; confidence and accuracy bring success on success, and nothing is impossible.

At Lake George in 1755, after the bloody morning rout in which the brilliant officer Col. Ephriam Williams, and the Indian Chief Hendrick were killed, it remained for Lieut. Col. Pomeroy, of Williams' Regiment, to gather his men at the hastily-erected barricade, and wait the charge of the successful French and Indians under Baron Dieskau. I readily imagine the coolness with which Seth Pomeroy bided his time. The yelling savages jumping from behind one tree to another on each side of the French Regulars, who came marching with steadiness, and with all the confidence of their morning victory, disturbed him not. The New England Troops under Gen. Lyman and Col. Pomeroy waited until the attack was within close range. Then every shot told. Not a foot of ground was lost. The battle was long and hotly contested, but with the first evidence of their weakening, Col. Pomeroy led his men out, and against, the breaking ranks of the enemy. The destruction and rout he made of both French and Indians, and the capture of Baron Dieskau, the general in command, was one of the most important events in Colonial History. It squared the defeat of Braddock of a few weeks before.

It was the first battle of the period in which New England troops were the chief factors. Gen. Johnson was

seriously wounded early in the engagement, and its success was due to Gen. Lyman, Col. Pomeroy, Col. Whiting and other New England men. Yet Gen. Johnson received the honor for the victory in lands and titles. The disappointment of General Lyman at the failure to recognize his services on this occasion, was so deep, that he removed with his family to South Carolina, where he died. But Seth Pomeroy, true to his character as a faithful soldier, returned like another Cincinnatus, to his farm and his shop, and was ready for the next call to arms.

Whatever may have been his highest ambitions, we are not permitted to know. We do know, however, that his manhood never permitted him to make a personal effort to obtain advancement in rank. It is conceded that he was at the head of the Army at Cambridge in 1775, when the Command was turned over to General Washington. He was then in his 70th year, far too old to continue a Command, entailing such great responsibilities. While young men were crowding to the field, ambitious for recognition, he willingly and with that love of country he ever placed first in his principles, stepped aside—even as at Bunker Hill, when he preferred to fight unassigned, with his own gun, rather than outrank younger men—History records his famous ride to Cambridge, in time for the battle, and credits him with saving the horse he had borrowed, from danger, by leaving it with the sentry and crossing Charleston Neck on foot, and in the line of fire from the English ships. This thoughtful act, though small, was characteristic of the man.

It is not difficult to comprehend how this type of man would succeed in every walk of life. His perfect fearlessness might, and did, carry him into every kind of danger. His quick perception, sure premonition and sound judgment, we may believe, brought him through unscathed.

As a soldier he loved the conflict—the duello—the fight with man to man. Contrasted with this fierce spirit, was the

gentleness, tenderness, Godly fear, and deeply religious sentiment, which made him a devoted, thoughtful husband, and a power for good as a private citizen.

We believe that he considered every business he was engaged in, whether public or private, a righteous one. That it was his duty to give it the full intensity of his purpose, and he trusted the consequences entirely to his God. His love of country was first always; when it called him, it was the call of God, and was obeyed without the hesitation of a moment. Then followed the love for his wife, the one being who was able to unlock his reserve, and turn the warmth of his heart into words. His letters to her show well the man—and what a pleasure it must have been to him, to give expression to such a woman. One was the perfect complement of the other.

We learn much of the private character through these letters to his wife. A woman of unusual ability and high moral courage, she was the ideal companion for such a husband. When he was away on his campaigns, she not only took care of her large household, but kept herself informed of the successful business of the shop, the details of which she duly transmitted to her husband, with words of cheer and Christian faith. She loved, honored and admired him deeply, and her words to him teemed with the fire of devotion, and were an inspiration to him in all his campaigns.

These campaigns had their annoyances and troubles. At the death of Col. Williams at the battle of Lake George, in the bloody morning fight, an attempt was made to supercede him in the command of the Regiment. His letters never referred to this matter, but his wife learned it through others, and her pride and spirit were deeply aroused. The admiration for, and confidence in her husband then became evident, and she wrote that she hoped for his return, "if it be with honor." She also learned that in the battle "many fell by his hand," and her alarm was excited on learning that he himself

was "near being wounded by a bullet, which cut a limb behind which he was firing." The husband did not mention any of these interesting matters in his letters, but did refer to the last incident in his diary.

That you may be quite in the spirit of this anniversary, I have selected three letters from the correspondence of Seth and Mary Pomeroy, which are as follows :

FROM GRAND BATTRE 1 MILE AND A
HALF NORTH FROM THE CITY OF
LOUISBURG, MAY THE 8TH, 1745.

My Dear Wife:—

Although the many dangers and hazards I have been in since I left you, yet I have been, through the goodness of God preserved, though much worried with the great business I have upon my hands, but I go cheerfully on with it. I have much to write but little time; shall only give some hints.

Tuesday, the last day of April, the fleet landed in the island of Cape Breton, about five miles from Louisburg. The French saw our vessels and came out with a company to prevent our landing, but as fast as the boats could get on shore, the men were landed. A warm engagement we had with them; they soon retreated, we followed and drove them into the woods, but few of them able to get into the city that day. Four were killed that were found, many taken. We lost not one man, we have taken and killed many more since, not less than eighty persons. The Grand Battre is ours, but before we entered it the people had stopped up the touch-holes of the cannon. Gen. Pepperell gave me the charge and oversight of above twenty smiths in boring them out. Cannon ball and bombs, hundreds of them, were fired at us from the city, and the island fort, some in the parade among the people, but none of them hurt, and as soon as we could get the cannon clear, we gave them fire for fire, and bombarded them on the west side.

Louisburg is an exceedingly handsome and well situated place, with a fine harbor. It seems impregnable, but we have

been so successful hitherto, that I do not doubt but Providence will deliver it into our hands.

SUNDAY, MAY THE 12TH.

What we have lost of our men I do not certainly know, but fear some twenty men. The army have generally been in health; it looks as if our campaign would last long, but I am willing to stay until God's time comes to deliver the city of Louisburg into our hands, which I do not doubt will in good time be done. We have shut them up on every side and still are making our works stronger against them; 42-pound shot they have fired in upon them every day. One very large mortar we have with which we play upon them—upon their houses, and they often break among them. Their houses are compact, for which reason the bombs must do a great deal of hurt and distress them in a great degree. Small mortars we have with which we fire in upon them. I have had my health since I landed.

My dear wife, I expect to be gone longer than I did when I left it, but I desire not to think of returning till Louisburg is taken, and I hope God will enable me to submit quietly to His will, whatever it may be and enable you with courage and good conduct to go through the great business that is now upon your hands and not think your time ill-spent in teaching and governing your family according to the word of God. My Company in general are well, but some few of them are ill, but I hope none dangerous. The affairs at home I can order nothing about, but must wholly leave hoping they will be well ordered and well taken care of. My kind love to Mr. Sweetland, my duty to mother Hunt, and love to brothers and sisters all. My dear wife, if it be the will of God, I hope to see your pleasant face again, but if God in His holy and sovereign Providence has ordered it otherwise, I hope to have a glorious meeting with you in the kingdom of heaven, where there are no wars, nor fatiguing marches, no warring cannon, nor screeching bomb-shells, nor long campaigns, but an eternity to spend in perfect harmony and undisturbed peace. This is the hearty desire and prayer of him that is your loving husband,

SETH POMEROY.

Here is the letter which he received in reply:

NORTHAMPTON, MAY 27, 1745.

My Honored and Dear Husband:

The 25th inst. yours reached me, rejoicing to hear that you were alive and in health, (glory to the great Preserver of Man). O thou, my longed-for good and tender husband, you are in an enemy's land, but God rules their hearts. I now write, not knowing what will befall you. May infinite power give you to tread upon the high places of the enemy, preserve from death, be your shield, strength, support, deliverer from harm, keeper from evil and all fire, your guide and instructor in all your dangerous engagements and laborious undertakings. Your labors and great concerns are many and exposedness to sudden death awaits you. My heart is with you, my soul distressed and much pained for you. May God be my support, in whose hand is the breath of life and the soul of all living. May God enable me to trust His goodness, faithfulness, and rely on His mercy till the evil be past and divine gales blow a heavenly calm.

My dear husband, suffer no anxious thought to rest in your mind about me, your tender offspring, or business at home. We are in a Christian land, daily experiencing divine favor, neighbors and friends ready on all occasions to afford assistance when needed or required. I am in health and also the family, at present, no evil at any time hath occurred since your departure. Mr. Pease has been faithful in your shop business and behaves with good content, and by these, presents his due regards. Seth, your other little self and second name, I have sent down to New Haven, about a month ago. Our dear and tender parents, brethren and sisters are in good health, and kinsfolk and all others in this town, not one person sick as I know of. Divine Providence smiles as though our enemy, this summer, would be restrained, and our peace not disturbed. The whole town is moved with concern for the expedition, how Providence will order the affair, for which religious meetings every week in town are maintained.

My dear husband, I leave you in the hands of God, desiring to submit to His will, whatever it be, (praying for, etc).

Please to write every opportunity. Mr. Sweetland sends his kind love to you. My love to you in the bonds of peace, and may God grant you to see much of divine goodness, all which being the true desire of your dutiful and loving wife,

MARY POMEROY.

P. S.—Experience King sends her love to her brother.

To Major Seth Pomeroy in the expedition against Cape Breton.

TEN YEARS ELAPSE.

NORTHAMPTON, SEPT. 12, 1775.

Honored and Dear Sir:

These, if you behold them, may inform you that it is with the utmost fear that I now set my pen to paper least I write to one in the eternal world, but yet trusting and hoping in Him who has defended you heretofore.

On Thursday we had the sorrowful news of Col. William Titcomb's death, and that Col. Goothridge was wounded, and by reason of my not hearing of your death, I trusted you were then alive. This we had more certainty of yesterday, for at first it was such an account that we could hardly believe it. We are informed that it was a very bloody battle on both sides; hundreds killed, and when those who brought the news left you you were still engaged, and by reason of the superiority of your enemies in number, we are all in the utmost concern to hear the event and dread it too. You are though, I conclude, ere this time conquerors, or (I dread to say it) conquered. The assistance by which this comes I expect will be too late to give you any relief, unless it be to assist in carrying off and taking care of the wounded, etc. We are at the utmost loss and wonder that we have not heard from you later, for Wednesday morning was the last news we had from you, wherefore we fear that the posts are cut off, (as was the post that rode from New Haven, between Fort Lyman and you). For since the scout from Hoosick went out, it is high time it was returned, but not yet heard of.

I have been on the point of sending you one of our sons with these, but one at present only being returned from New

Haven, and many other reasons, I have it at this present not best to me to let one go.

Thus far I wrote and went to bed, determined to finish in the morning—but at midnight a cry came at our door with the joyful news of victory, though stained with blood. Blessed be God that He hath returned to our arms, and that He hath spared you when He hath seen fit to cause others to fall at your right hand and at your left.

The assistance by which I was going to send this was a company of about sixty men from North and Southhampton, which were to set out about Sabbath morning by about sunrise, but it stopped upon hearing of your victory, and went immediately to follow the directions of the Court in raising 2000 men, which I hope will be with you ere long.

As you are now involved by the death of others into a greater business, so I hope and pray that you may have a double portion of the spirit of God, to assist, direct and quicken you in your undertakings, and that you may be made a blessing to the Kingdom of Christ and His Church in this part of the world, and that you may in due time be restored to me and to your family victorious.

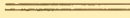
These from your most affectionate and loving wife,

MARY POMEROY.

Seth Pomeroy,

Colonel at Lake George.

P. S.—Your children are all well, and by these send their duty to their protected father. S. Ely by these also presents his compliments, and desires to rejoice with you in the goodness of God.



His letters during the Louisburg and Lake George campaigns, are written with the carelessness of a man who worked with more vital implements than the pen. Yet his books of account at that time show care and system, and we find that he instilled excellent method into his son Quartus, who carried on the shop during his absence. But at the time of the Revolu-

tion, we find his penmanship excellent, spelling and expression correct, and signing his name Pomeroy with the middle e which in early life he omitted.

We have no letters of husband and wife during the campaign beginning in 1775 and up to the time of the general's death in 1777. We know however, that the year 1777 had not closed before the devoted wife passed the heavenly portals to join her devoted husband—the old soldier, whose life was all in all to her, and when it ended, earth had no ties strong enough to bind her here.

My motive in coming to you for this anniversary is to aid in keeping the memory of Seth Pomeroy bright on the page of history, and to hold it high as an exemplar to youth.

He was a leading historic figure in the annals of the American Army, ever ready to serve his country where the strife was fiercest, yet with such judgment that he passed his 70th year still in the enjoyment of strength, when death suddenly called on him to surrender at Peekskill in 1777, while on the march with his command to join General Washington in the Jerseys. The inventory of his effects taken on the day of his death is a matter of interest, and you will note that his wardrobe on his last campaign was quite in line with that of any General in the army.

PEEKSKILL, FEB. 19, 1777.

MEMORANDUM OF ARTICLES BELONGING TO
GENERAL POMEROY, VIZ :

One scarlet surtout, hair buttons,
One blue great coat, hair buttons,
One brown strait bodiced, do metal buttons,
One green jacket, metal buttons,
One beaver hat, black cockade,

One white wig,
 Three fine linen shirts and one stock neck,
 One pillow case,
 Two pairs worsted hose, plain,
 One pair worsted hose, ribbed,
 One pair yarn hose,
 One pair leather breeches,
 One pair Winchester, do,
 One pair of boots,
 One pair of shoes,
 One gold watch, steel chain,
 One silver hilted sword and belt,
 One gun, powder horn and bullet pouch,
 One pair silver shoe buckles,
 One pair temple spectacles and case,
 One silver neck buckle,
 One pair knee buckles,
 One brass ink pot,
 One worked pocket book, with forty dollars, three quarters
 and one twenty-fourth of a dollar.

One paper written on "enclosed 2. 4. 0. I took from
 William Reed in Captain Hooker's Company, now at Peekskill,
 Jan. 31, 1777:"

One note of 20———L. H. given by Julius Pomeroy.
 One Commission,
 One almanack,
 Two day books with sundry other papers of little value.
 One crimson velvet cap,
 One pair gold sleeve buttons,
 One pair leather gloves and one jack-knife,
 One pair yarn mittens,
 One pair of red worsted gaiters,
 One black handkerchief,
 One pocket handkerchief,

In addition to these we know that he sometimes wore a scarlet cloak, which appears to have been left at home on this occasion.

The chapel at West Point has within it a tablet on which is inscribed the names of the Generals appointed by Congress in 1775 and that of Seth Pomeroy stands first; and across the Hudson on the hills above Peekskill stands a beautiful monument erected by the Sons of the Revolution of the State of New York to General Seth Pomeroy, who died and was buried there in 1777. Therefore we have in the Empire State, two public recognitions and commemorative monuments to Seth Pomeroy, where every soldier-youth of our Nation may see and derive inspiration from the character which is thereby perpetuated.

It would seem fitting that some public recognition of his worth as a soldier and a citizen be made at Northampton, and when, or if, the time comes to perfect this idea, you will find his descendants ready with hearty co-operation. It would seem appropriate to revere his memory by a statue or other suitable memorial, here, where he first saw the light, and where all his pure and useful private life was lived. Here, at this seat of learning, where it would be environed by an atmosphere of study and research; where it would speak eloquently to the mothers of future generations, of a noble life, nobly lived, the life of a Christian gentleman and one of the heroes of his country.

And when the time comes for Northampton to make this Commemoration, we have before us the ideal portrait of an officer of high military bearing, erect figure, six feet in height, in military cloak, and beaver hat with black cockade; in boots and with service sword, evidencing a man of action and of deeds.

The countenance indicative of a broad mind, of generosity, unselfishness, and unusual perceptive development, a counte-

nance that would demand implicit obedience when commanding, yet would yield implicit obedience when commanded. The expression should convey the idea of a mind that had such perfect self control that no moment of its life would be said to have been an unguarded one.

Many times I have regretted that his body could not have been brought home and laid in Hampshire earth; but a few weeks since as I stood on Peekskill hills, and looked over the Hudson and its picturesque surroundings, with the war college of the Nation just across, I could not but think that perhaps it was well that his body had resolved to earth again, where he had laid down his life for his country, and where the boom of cannon and roll of drums and tramp of armed men, all of which had been so much a part of his life, could be continually heard, and where the Youth of our Land may learn the many virtues of one of the bravest soldiers that ever bore arms.

PROGRAMME

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organized 1661

Jonathan Edwards' Church

NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Vesper Service, May 20th, 1906

Under the Auspices of

Seth Pomeroy Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution

Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of

SETH POMEROY

Born Northampton May 20th, 1706

Died Peekskill, N. Y., February, 17, 1777

ORGAN PRELUDE—First Movement from Pastoral Sonata,
Rheinberger

ANTHEM—"The Lord is risen indeed,"
Wm. Billings (1746-1800)
From "Harmony of Harmony, Jacob French, printed
in Northampton (1802).

INVOCATION, by the Pastor, Rev. H. T. Rose, D. D.

SCRIPTURE READING, by the Chaplain,
Rev. H. G. Smith, D. D.

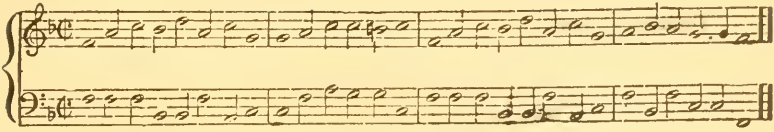
PSALM-TUNE for all the People.

Psalm VIII, from the Massachusetts Bay Psalm Book (1640), to be sung
to the tune York, as arranged by John Playford (1654).

York Tune

In Hart's Psalter, 1615

Two-part setting by JOHN PLAYFORD, (1655)



- “1. O Lord our God in all the earth
how's thy name worderous great
who hast thy glorious majesty
above the heavens set.
2. out of the mouth of sucking babes,
thy strength thou didst ordeine,
that thou mightst still the enemy,
and them that thee disdain.
3. When I thy fingers work, thy Heav'ns,
the moone and starres consider:
4. which thou hast set, what wretched man,
that thou dost him remember?
or what's the Son of man, that thus
him visited thou hast?
5. For next to Angells, thou hast him
a little lower plac't
and hast with glory crowned him,
and comely majesty:
6. And on thy works hast given him,
lordly authority.
7. All hast thou put under his feet;
all sheep and oxen, yea
8. and beasts of field. Foules of the ayre
and fishes of the sea,
and all that passe through paths of seas.
9. O Jehovah our Lord,
how wondrously—magnificent
is thy name through the world?”

PRAYER, by the Chaplain.

ADDRESS—The Character of General Seth Pomeroy.

Mr. George Eltweed Pomeroy, of Toledo, Ohio.

PSALM—TUNE for all the People.

Psalm CXXII, from Tate and Brady's version (1719) to be sung to the tune Mear, by Aaron Williams (about 1765)—see *Laudes Domini*, page 13.

“O 'Twas a joyful sound to hear
 our Tribes devotedly say,
 Up, Isr'el to the Temple haste,
 and keep your Festal Day.

Tis thither, by divine Command,
 the Tribes of God repair,
 Before His Ark to celebrate
 His Name with Praise and Pray'r.

O pray we then for Salem's Peace,
 for they shall prosp'rous be,
 Thou holy City of our God
 who bear true Love to Thee.”

BENEDICTION, by the Pastor.

ORGAN POSTLUDE—Fantasia on a patriotic theme,

Hesse





JAN 13 1989

