THE HOUSE OF GOD AND ITS BENEFITS

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Ps. 84: 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: They will still be praising thee. Selah.

An unnatural and rebellious son has driven the King of Israel from his throne and kingdom, an compelled him to flee for his life from the sanctuary and the beloved city. Yet no adversary can drive from the soul of the believer its delight in holy ordinances. Wandering on foot in the wilderness, his worldly prospects more dark and gloomy than the night of Egypt, he forgets not his God, nor the sanctuary he has left behind. The burden of his lamentation is, not his throne and kingdom, not the wealth and glory of the royal palace; but his being deprived of ordinances of God's house. "How amiable arc thy tabernacles, 0 Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. For a day in thy courts is better than & thousand. I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." He seems to envy, not those sovereigns who were permitted to sit peaceably on their thrones, and whose kingdoms were not disturbed with intestine commotions, but the birds that were permitted to hover near the altars of God, and to build their nests in some of the outer courts of the sanctuary. "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, 0 Lord of hosts, my king and my God." Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will he still praising thee.

The subject to which I will direct your attention on this occasion will be The House of God and its benefits.

I. The House of God.

God's house, for which the Psalmist longed, was the tabernacle placed by the king of Israel in Jerusalem, which contained the ark, the visible token of God's presence. It was called God's house, not only on account of its being specially dedicated to his service and appropriated to his worship; but because there God made special manifestations of himself." The idea of God dwelling in earthly temples is too sublime for mortals. It overwhelmed the mind of the builder of the first temple. "Will God in very deed," he exclaims, "dwell with men on earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built. The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. But I have built an house of habitation for thee and a place for thy dwelling forever." It is true that the "heaven of heavens" cannot contain the omnipotent Deity. Every part of illimitable space is filled with his presence. The angel Gabriel in his rapid flight to far-off worlds, on the outpost verge of creation even, leaves not his God, nor if bereft of his presence. To the spirit unclouded by sin, God is every where revealed. Hence the psalmist asks, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, the art there. If I tack the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and right hand shall hold me."

But, though God is every where, though he "composted our path, and our lying down," still there are some places where there are greater manifestations of his presence than in others. This is what is called his special presence, and is that for which Moses so earnestly prayed in the wilderness. "If thy presence not with us, carry us not up hence." Of this presence of Deity there are greater manifestations in heaven than in any other part of the universe. Hence; heaven is called his dwelling place. In this respect heaven is his throne, while earth is his footstool. It is this which gives heaven its glory, and it is the absence of it which makes hell so dark a place. It is true that God is known in hell. The Psalmist said, " If I make my bed in hell, behold, the art there." Yes, its kindling quenchless a flame and its undying worm declare that God is there, and reigns in the glory of his justice a consuming fire; but beyond this the blackness of darkness abides forever. Not one ray of the presence of God which makes heaven so glorious a place, ever penetrates the darkness of the prison-house of despair. Earth, too, had been shrouded in the same darkness,
But for the interposition of a Savior's loves. But for redeeming grace, not a ray of heaven's own light would have pierced through the dark cloud, which, in consequence of sin, hung like a pall over our world. " Through the tender mercy of our God the day spring from on high hath visited us."

God dwells with men on earth, but not as he dwells with the saints in heaven. No mortal could behold the glory of that manifested presence of God and live, which those enjoy who are said to "see his face" and "dwell in his presence." Still every saint on earth does enjoy some rays of that same light which the saints made perfect do in heaven; but there is this difference: here those radiant beams of God's manifested presence are faint and few in comparison with heaven; and while that holy place is filled with God, while it is all one consecrated dwelling of the Most High and not a particle of darkness ever mingles with its holy light; here he manifests himself only in particular places; in some favored spots, and at particular times. Jacob found a Bethel, though weary and alone, and attempting to rest his limbs upon the cold damp earth, with no other covering than the broad canopy of the heavens, and no other pillow than a heap of stones. "Surely," he exclaims, "the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Again at Peniel he had such a manifestation of the divine presence as to lead him to exclaim with sacred awe, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Moses on Mount Horeb, while employed in the humble occupation of a Shepherd met with God in the burning bush, and heard a voice saying unto him, "put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." And in after days when Elijah the prophet took refuge on the same mount from those cruel persecutors of the church, Jezebel and Ahab, it became again the place of the manifested presence of Jehovah. After the wind, and the earthquake, and the fire, had passed in their strength "the still small voice revealed to the faint hearted prophet that God was near. Such were the manifestations which ancient saints were permitted at times to have of the glories of God. And such was the sacredness of those places where God revealed himself but transiently. They became for the time holy.

But there were places that were always sacred, because always favored with the presence of God. Such was the tabernacle, reared by the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was reared for God, and when it was finished he took up his abode in it. "A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." And there the divine presence abode. Ever after when the children of Israel received any communication from God, it was delivered to Moses in the tabernacle. Thither, ever after, must the humble, penitent carry his sacrifice, would he have it accepted of his God. There the Pasheal Lamb must be slain, and there the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation, as they assembled at its door on various occasions.

Such was the tabernacle; but when the children of Israel had become settled in the land of Canaan, and God had enlarged their borders, and given them peace from their enemies round about, then he chose the hill of Zion for his habitation, and dwelt in the temple which Solomon built and dedicated to him. Thenceforward this magnificent edifice became the house of God and he filled it with the glory of his presence. "The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever, here will I dwell for I have desired it." On the day of its dedication, and immediately at the close of the dedicatory prayer, "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house."

Such, therefore, was the fact under the old dispensation. There were places rendered sacred for the time on account of the presence of God manifested transiently to his people. And there were places always sacred and always holy, because God in a peculiar manner made them his abode. And is it not equally true that God still reveals his presence, and hallows the place of his visitation? Are there not now favored spots where the christian often meets his God, and are there not places where he now makes his abode, where he has recorded his name, and where he may always be found by his assembled people? True, all under the new dispensation is spiritual; the material has
passed away, and emblems, and types, and shadows, are no more. Nor were they ever essential to the sanctification of the place where God revealed himself. It never was the outward manifestation, but the holy presence itself which hallowed the place of revelation. Under that dark dispensation they were undoubtedly necessary to assist the faith of God's people; but the veil being removed, they can well be dispensed with.

But though the outward splendors of the former economy have passed away; though the tabernacle has been long since taken down, and the temple long since demolished, still, there are houses of the Lord where he spiritually reveals himself to his devout worshipers. These are temples expressly built for God, and dedicated to his service. And though they are humble in their appearance compared with the temple at Jerusalem, they are not despised by the Holy One. They are still those "gates of Zion" which he "loves more than all the dwellings of Jacob." They are now the places of holy convocation, "whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." In them the holiest of homes of the holiest days are spent. To them come the assembled congregations to hear what God the Lord will say; to speak of his wondrous mime and to celebrate his praise.

"The God of Jacob chose the hill
Of Zion for his ancient rest;
And Zion is his dwelling still;
His church is with his presence blest,

His mercy visits every house
That pay their night and morning vows;
But more delightful stay
Where churches meet to praise and pray."

In short, then, every house which has been specially built for God's worship and dedicated to his service, and in which the true gospel of Christ is preached, is indeed the house of God, the dwelling place of the Most High, where he in a special manner manifests his gracious presence.

II. THE BENEFITS OF A REGULAR ATTENDANCE UPON GOD'S HOUSE

1. It tends to make us better members of society. Man was made for society, and whatever tends to qualify him for the various relations of that state, is of incalculable benefit. Our best interests for time, and, I might say, for eternity, are indissolubly connected with the real improvement of the social state. Worldly comfort, the happiness of domestic life, the mild and gentle charities of life contentment, sobriety, purity, intelligence, and sober habits, are advanced as society progresses toward a perfect state. But there is nothing so well calculated to promote good society as habitual attendance upon the exercises of the sanctuary. And I might add that nothing will secure this end without the influence of the sanctuary. In proof of this position, I need, on the present occasion, only to appeal to facts. What is the state of society in those countries where there are no Sanctuaries dedicated to the worship of Jehovah, as contrasted with those countries where every village and hamlet has its house of God? where tile ordinances of the gospel are regularly administered?

Contemplate for this purpose some savage tribe of New Zealanders, or some wild hordes of Tartars, or some petty barbarous nation ion of Africa, and compare their situation with our own. Who among us would consent, if it were submitted to his will, that society at large should revert to a condition such as exhibited among these and similar specimens of our race? On a serious estimate, what is human existence worth, under the circumstances in which these unhappy people are placed—without knowledge, without refinement, without taste, without morals, and without any acquaintances with the true
God, and the way of salvation? What could induce a civilized man to choose such a lot as his own, or even to sojourn in these homes of barbarism? But let the fires that have kindled upon the altars of God in the sanctuary e extinguished—let all their hallowed influences no longer be showered around us—let their deserted and crumbling walls only echo to the bird of night, and in half a century we should exhibit a state of society, at the best, but a grade above theirs.

France once tried the fearful experiment of demolishing their sanctuaries, or of converting them into temples of Reason; and what was the result? Such as to fill the mind of every beholder with consternation and amazement. All the foundations of society were swept away. The moral and social ties were unloosed, or rather torn asunder. Husbands stood in fear of their wives, and wives of their husbands; parents of their children and children of their parents; neighbour stood in doubt of neighbour and feared his approach. Contempt for religion and decency became the test of attachment to the government; and the gross infraction of any moral or social duty was deemed proof of civism worthy of emulation. All distinctions of right and wrong were confounded. The grossest debauchery triumphed. Proscription followed proscription, and tragedy followed tragedy, in almost breathless succession, until almost the whole nation was converted into a horde of assassins, and the country was converted into one vast field of rapine and blood. "France, during this period," says the historian, "was a theater of crimes, which, after all preceding perjuries, have excited in the mind mind of every spectator amazement and horror. The miseries suffered by that single nation have changed all the histories of the preceding sufferings of mankind into idle tales, and have been enhanced and multiplied without a precedent, without a number, and without a name. The kingdom appeared to be changed into one great prison; the inhabitants into felons; and the common doom of man commuted for the violence of the sword and bayonet, the sucking boat and guillotine. To contemplative men it seemed for a season as if the knell of the whole nation was tolled, and the world summoned to its execution and funeral."

Let our sanctuaries be demolished, or converted into other temples than the temples of the living God, and we, too, should witness the upheavings of all the foundations of society.

Do you ask for further proof of this position? Contrast, then, the state of society in those places in our own country where the inhabitants are most regular in their attendance upon the sanctuary, with those places where the sanctuary is visited regularly by but few of the inhabitants; where the mass of the people either neglect religious worship altogether, or are running here and there to hear preaching as fancy may dictate. Go through our country, beginning, if you please, at the spot where the pilgrims first reared an altar to Jehovah, and mark the state of society in every city, town, and village; mingle with the inhabitants and learn what are their opinions and habits; and then tell me where is the best society found? There do you find the most industry, most sober habits, most contentment, most sobriety, most purity, most intelligence, and most freedom from low, debasing vices? Is it among a church-going people, or where the sanctuary is seldom visited? This appeal is made with the utmost confidence, that, should the position we have taken be subjected to the most rigorous test in the way pointed out, the sanctuary and its sacred influences would be more highly prized. It would be seen that the virtues which go to adorn human intercourse and to cement society, flourish only where the hallowed influences of the sanctuary are felt. Can you point me to one idle and dissolute family; to one single disturber of the peace; to one vicious neighbor who loves the gates of Zion, and visits regularly the house of God? On the other hand, do you ever find that villains and knaves, the licentious and gamblers, or any of the great enemies of social order and moral purity, take any delight in the services of the house of God? Do they not shun the place, from the fact, that they know that its hallowed light would be too scorching for their polluted consciences? They dare not approach "lest their deeds should be reproved."

The history of robbers, adulterers, murderers, assassins, and all the great
desperadoes in crime, who have inflicted deep and bleeding wounds on society, and fallen sacrifices themselves to the incensed justice of their country, invariably proclaims, that with the neglect of the sanctuary, and desecration of the day set apart for its service, commences their career to ruin. Let it then be borne in mind by upon any people, among what class are the most hopeful converts found? Among those who have been taught to reverence the Sanctuary and to attend regularly upon its ordinances, or among those who have seldom visited the house of God? These inquiries are easily solved by those who have been careful to make observation in the matter. In the powerful revival which occurred last winter, in Wayne County, in the State of New York, it is stated by those who had an opportunity to know, that of the hundreds who were hopefully converted, there were but few who were not regular attendants upon some place of worship; very few were among those who habitually neglected the sanctuary, or who were runners about to hear preaching.

If there is any spot on earth more frequently visited by angels to witness the displays of divine power in the conversion of sinners, and from which they oft return to their native skies with the joyful tidings of repenting sinners, it is undoubtedly the house of God. And if there is a spot on earth whose associations are more hallowed to the spirits made perfect in heaven, it is undoubtedly within those sacred walls where first they felt a Savior's love; where they solemnly entered into covenant with God and his people, and where they have often sat under his shadow with delight, and found his fruit sweet to their taste. And in the holy communings of the saints above, will they not often speak of the house they loved so well on earth, and which of all places on earth was most like heaven?

May this house be often the scene of angel's visits! from within these sacred walls, may the joyful tidings be oft borne to heaven that another and another sinner has repented! And when God writeth up the people, may it be said of this and that man that he was born in her!

A few remarks and we shall close.

1. We see that the dedicatory exercises of this day are no unmeaning ceremony.

Every house of God should be solemnly dedicated to his worship, and set apart for his service in a manner fitted to impress our minds with the truth, that it is to be in a peculiar manner the residence of the Most High; the place of the manifestation of his presence, and the power of the Holy Ghost; the place where public prayer is to be offered, the gospel to be preached, and the sacraments administered; the place of the sinner's conversion and sanctification.

2. We learn for what ends, and how a house thus dedicated should be used.

In all our visits to this house, our outward deportment should manifest that our minds are impressed with a sense of the presence of Jehovah; "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God," is a declaration of inspiration, which commends itself to every man's conscience. With what reverence, with what holy fear, and preparation of heart, should we visit the abode of God!

And, my hearers, if we believe that God will accept the offering of our hands this day, and that he will make this the place of his abode, then it should be used for nothing but that which is in entire accordance with the object of its erection and dedication. As Jesus drove from the temple those engaged in worldly pursuits, so should this house be kept from all uses of a m'ere earthly nature.

Most carefully, too, should we guard this house from being the vehicle of disseminating error. Whatever may be the views of others, I cannot but deeply feel that the house of God is desecrated when used for the purpose of persuading
men to disbelieve any of the doctrines of God's word. I know it is often asked, "What hurt can it do the house suppose men are admittted here who will teach doctrines not in accordance with the gospel?" True, the external structure may not be in the least impaired. The mortar, the timber, and dead materials may remain as before. But of what use will these walls when God has departed? And in what way can we more greatly provoke him to withdraw his gracious presence, than by consenting to make his house the place for corrupting his word? Oh, with what jealousy should the builders of this house guard this sacred desk from every thing that they have reason to believe God would not approve! Otherwise, are not the solemn exercises of this day in offering this house to God, and. asking him to make it the place of his abode, a solemn mockery? If the Savior has solemnly commanded us not to go after teachers of error nor follow them, if the Apostle has charged us not to receive them into our houses nor to bid them God speed, how much more displeasing must it be fo God to admit them into his house?

And here It may not be improper for me, considering the occasion and the fact that such mighty efforts are made to overturn every doctrine taught in the book of God, some by one class of men and some by another, to enumerate some of the great leading doctrines of revelation which the builders of this house expect will he maintained therein. They believe that the word of God is a sufficient, and that it is tho only infallible rule of faith and practice - that there is only one living and true God - that he has created all things, and that he upholds and governs all things according to the pleasure of his own...will-that man is a free and responsible agent-that he is a fallen being, totally depraved and utterly destitute of any thing pleasing to God-that in this state of sin and death he remains, under the wrath and curse of God, till he is renewed. by the Holy Ghost- that in order to make it possible for God to exercise mercy towards the guilty, Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, in two distinct natures, though one person forever, has given himself a sacrifice for sin, and that through him salvation is freely offered to the guilty that the conditions of salvation are faith and repentance-that all who exercise this will be benefited by the Savior's death, and that all who do not, remain under the same condemnation that was originally passed upon all men-that such is the perverseness of the human heart, such its love of sin, that no sinner will come to Christ, till made willing by the Holy Ghost--that, rather than the whole human family should be lost, and the suffering of his Son should be in vain, he has determined that some shall be made willing in the day of his power-that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment, and that the righteous will finally be received into eternal life, and the wicked driven away into everlasting punishment.

Such are some of the leading doctrines which the builders of this house believe that He who they hope will make it his abode, has revealed in his holy word, And I can confidently say in behalf of some of them, at least, and I hope of all, that they had rather that its walls should crumble back to earth,and its external structure be scattered by the winds of heaven, or consumed by fire, than that it should ever he used for the purpose of persuading men to disbelieve any of these doctrines. And as they have been pleased this day to commit this sacred desk to the speaker,* may God give him grace that his own soul may be imbued with these great fundamental truths, and that he may be enabled to enforce them upon the hearts and consciences of those who shall sit under his ministry from Sabbath to Sabbath. And when he and the builders of this house, and the people of his charge shall have Ceased meeting in earthly temples, and when he shall rest with them, as he hopes he may, in yonder burying place, and other generations assemble within these walls, may the sanctifying influence of these doctrines continue to distill in this consecrated place, and may our children and our children's children to many generations "through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" be here fitted for the services of the upper sanctuary and for the employment of the saints made perfect .above!
3. I remark again—that we should make an attendance upon the house of God a matter of principle.

People greatly err when they think it is left at their option whether they shall go up to the house of God or not. It is left to no man's choice, how often he shall attend the public worship of God, or whether he attends at all. It is true that men may not dictate to their consciences in this matter; but he who is Lord of the conscience has instituted the ordinances of his house, and he will hold every man to answer in the matter of attendance upon these ordinances at his most righteous bar. If any man neglects the regular attendance upon the sanctuary he sins against God, and wrongs his own soul. The man who willfully stays away from the house of God, contemns the institutions, the authority, and the worship of Jehovah. He fosters his own depravity, cuts himself off from the divine blessing, and treasures up for himself the divine displeasure. Let those who attend only once in a while, or only half a day, as convenience or self-gratification dictate think of this. Is it piety, or is it wickedness that gives rise to the practice? Is it devotion, or caprice and contempt of God? But there are many houses of worship in our country, and the enquiry may arise, may I not roam about from one place to another as fancy or curiosity may dictate? I answer: if it is right to be utterly destitute of principle in conscience, then the worship of God, if God and conscience are not to be consulted in the matter, we may.

But it is not left to a man's fancy where he shall attend the worship of God. It is true no man has a right to dictate to another in this matter, every man is bound to decide for himself, but in coming to that decision he is not to be governed by fancy or caprice, but by the word of God. His inquiry should be, where is God worshiped according to his word? Where is the gospel held and proclaimed in its purity? This question he is bound to decide in the fear of God, and when decided there should fix and there remain. No, caprice, no trivial grievances, no inferior considerations, such as popularity, or exemption from burdens, should ever be allowed to come in to weigh upon the question, Where shall I worship God? Let God and conscience be consulted, and these alone. Let the question be settled on principle and let principle keep it settled. If there is any truth in the preceding discourse, then those are not houses of God where the pure doctrines are not maintained. Let the word of God then be our rule and we have nothing to fear.

4. I remark, in conclusion, that a mere attendance upon the house of God will not save us. No doubt to some, we hope to many, this house will be indeed the house of God and the gate of heaven. But, alas! we fear it will not be so to others. We fear that some will go even from this house of God, to the world of despair. That the gospel here preached will too often prove a savor of death unto death. Oh! remember, my hearer that you can visit the earthly sanctuary but a little while, and then you will go to the resting place of man. Soon this congregation will have passed away. Soon those who have built this house will be gathered to their fathers, and these seats will be filled by others. If in this world we have been penitent believing worshipers, we shall be admitted to the upper sanctuary to join the general assembly of the church of the first born. But if otherwise, if, though the place you visit on the returning light of every holy Sabbath, be indeed the house of God and be truly dedicated to his service, you withhold your heart from him, you shall notwithstanding pass away from the place of holy solemnities on earth, but it will be never again to be congregated with the saints, or to hear the voice of prayer or praise. Unrenewed by the Holy Spirit, unwashed in the blood of the Lamb, your undying spirit will sink to

"That lone world of dark despair,"
Where no Sabbath's heavenly light shall rise,

No God regard your bitter prayer,

Nor Savior call you to the skies."

Oh! remember, in the dark world of woe, there will be no sanctuary, no prayer and praise, no preached gospel! When the spirit has once reached the last abode of the impenitent, its season of mercy, and day of probation has forever past. There is no house of God, no gate of heaven in the world of despair! Oh! then, my hearer, see to it that you seek God sincerely in his house!

And now we come, at this consecrated hour, publicly and solemnly to give this house to God.

But before doing so, it may be well for this church and society to pause a moment to contemplate God's dealings with them hitherto.

Twenty-five years ago this church was organized, by the Rev. Alvin Coe and Rev. Amasa Loomis. Then the country was new. With the exception of here and there a settler, with his rude habitation of logs, this and the adjoining towns were a vast wilderness. The church, as it was organized, consisted of six members, three of whom lived in Florence, two in Clarksfield, and the other in Wakeman. Subsequently their number was increased by additions from Eldridge, (now Berlin) Brownhelm, and this town. From time to time of its organization till 1826, eight years, the church did not enjoy the regular ministrations of God's word, but were occasionally visited by missionaries sent out by the Connecticut Domestic Missionary Society. These visitations were bright spots in the history of this church, during these eight years of her destitution of the ordinances of the gospel, and we would here take occasion to render thanksgiving to God for imbuing the hearts of his children in that day, With so large a spirit of benevolence, and leading them to care for the feeble settlements in this wilderness world, and to send us the bread of life. But for the assistance thus rendered, to all human appearance, our light must have gone out almost as soon as it was kindled. Nor would we forget the self-denial and devotedness of those missionaries, who cheerfully forsook the comforts and privileges of New England, and endured the hardships and privations incident to a new country, to carry the bread of life to the perishing. Among this number we would record the names of Coe, Seward, Hanford, and Tread, the last of whom has gone to his reward above. During this period 42 members were added to the church, 24 by letter and 18 by profession. About this time churches were organized in most of the adjoining towns, and those who were living in these towns connected with this church were regularly dismissed to unite in their own town.

In 1826 the churches undertook to support the gospel among themselves part of the time. For this purpose the Rev. Alfred H. Betts was employed to preach one sermon on each alternate Sabbath at a school house on the Ridge.

During the winter and spring of 1828 a meeting house was built of hewn logs, about a mile and a half from the lake shore on the road leading to Florence; and on the 22nd of May the same year, was publicly dedicated to the worship of Jehovah. The sermon on that occasion was preached by the Rev. D. W. Lathrop, from Luke 12: 32: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." On the same day Harvey Lyon was ordained and installed over the church by the Presbytery of Huron. This connection continued till March 28, 1830, when it was dissolved at the mutual request of parties. During this period 9 were added to the church by letter and 4 by profession.

In May of the same year, the Rev. S. I. Bradstreet accepted an invitation to labor as stated supply, which duties he performed till 1833, when he was laid aside by that painful illness which terminated his useful life. During this period
the church enjoyed one of the most interesting seasons of refreshing from on
high it has ever experienced. During the year 1831, 52 made a public
profession of their faith in Christ.

In Sept. 1833; Rev. Daniel Griffith, from England, commenced laboring as
stated supply, which he continued a year or more, during which time 16 were
added to the church-3 by letter and 13 by profession.

From Oct. 3, 1835, till April 3, 1837, the Rev. Eldad Barber labored as
stated supply. During this period an unhappy division took place in the church
with regard to the removal of the meeting house from its original location. The
consequence of this division was disastrous to the interests of the church and to
the cause of Christ. The spirit of revival with which the church appears to have
been been blessed in former years was gone.

"The Spirit like a heavenly dove
Flies from the scenes of noise and strife."

Hence we find that during this period only five were added to the church, and
these by letter; and from that time till the present year, eight years, not an
individual was received into the church on profession of faith. This was a dark
period in the history of this church. The vineyard of the Lord became like a
heath in the desert. Our Zion was like the mountains of Gilboa, on which fell
neither dew nor rain. Oh! how many souls ciuring this season of spiritual death
ripened for hell, we shall only know when the veil which separates us from the
other world shall be taken away. And in whose skirts the blood of these souls
will be found, and who must answer for all the dishonor brought upon the cause
of truth and righteousness while Zion lay bleeding in the dust, cannot be
known till every man's actions shall be weighed in the scales of eternity! No
doubt a large proportion of this church, if not all of them, have a solemn
account to render to their final Judge in this matter. Of this, however, I know
nothing. But oh! may this church learn a lesson from the past which she will
never forget-" to leave off contention before it be meddled with."

During the spring of 1837 a paper was drawn up and signed by most of the
members of the church, referring the matter of their unhappy disagreement to a
disinterested committee, pledging themselves to abide their decision. This
committee, after a full investigation of the matter, decided that the society
ought to be united in locating their place of worship at the mouth of the river.
And it is in, accordance with this decision that this edifice has been raised.

From April 1837 to July 1840, the church enjoyed but little ministerial
labor. At the latter period the Rev. Xenophon Betts commenced laboring as
stated supply, which labors were continued till July of the present year. Under his
ministry 17 were added to the church-4 by letter and 13 by profession.

The total number of members which have been received into this church from
its organization to the present time is 145, of these 46 were received by letter
from other churches, and 99 by profession. Of these one has entered the
ministry, 86 have received letters to other churches, 12 have gone to their
eternal home, and 3 have been excommunicated as unworthy the Christian
name. The present number of the church is, therefore, 61.

During the period embraced in the foregoing history, 102 children of
believing parents have received the sign and seal of the everlasting covenant.
And here I would not fail to record a fact connected with the history of this
church, to the glory of God's grace, as well as for the encouragement of
believing parents, that of the 99 individuals converted and received into the
church, all but 22 had been solemnly dedicated to God in their infancy.
Now, in view of the goodness of God to us hitherto, let us here in this sanctuary raise our Ebenezer and say, "Thus far hath the Lord helped us." Many of the present members of the church, I might say most of them, first found the Savior in that building in the woods, rudely constructed of logs. There they took upon them the vows of Almighty God, and there for the first time they feasted with Christ at his table. Often, as I have been told, was that house made awful on account of the manifested presence of the Most High, and, often was it the birth place of souls; but oh! may this house as far excel that in glory, in this respect, as its external structure is more elegant, expensive and durable.

Repenting, therefore, of our sins, rendering thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for his past goodness, and imploring his mercy to rest upon us in all time to come, we can now dedicate this house, as I hope we shall ourselves anew to God. Let us all rise and dedicate the house.

For God this house was built, and now, to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be it ever consecrated. Within these sacred walls may the saints often draw water out of the wells of salvation. As they were reared up for God, may the good hand of the Lord be upon them, and may they long stand to promote the glory of his name and cause. May this be consecrated ground, the place or God's richest manifestations and choicest blessings. May this sacred desk ever be the depository of truth. Sooner than it should be used for the purpose of disseminating error and corrupting the doctrines of the cross, let it be demolished! We had almost said, in the language of inspiration, "If we or an angel from heaven," should here preach any other doctrines than those which Paul preached, "let him be accursed."

These seats we give to God. May they ever be filled with those who will hear, love, and obey the truth. That gallery appropriated and expressly built for the use of those who lead in the praises of Jehovah, may it ever be filled, with those who will not only lead in the sacred song, but who shall make melody in their hearts unto the Lord.

When the builders of this house, and its occupants, and their pastor, shall have closed their earthly pilgrimage—when their feet shall no longer be heard treading these courts, may their children and their children's children, here learn the "fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." When that choir shall have passed away from earthly sanctuaries, when their tongues shall be silent in the grave, may their places be filled with others who shall here be fitted to sing the song of the undying seraphim in our Father's house above.

And now, arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength, Let thy priests be clothed with salvation, and thy saints shout aloud for joy. Here in this temple, built for the honor of thy name, and the advancement of thy truth, let thy presence dwell, and thy glory be seen.

My hearer, you tread on consecrated ground! Let a solemn awe pervade your soul as you enter these courts! Exclaim with the patriarch, "How dreadful is this place! Surely this is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven.