

RE-DEDICATION.

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED AT THE RE-OPENING

OF

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

IN

SHARON, CONNECTICUT,

MARCH 2D, 1864, BY THE PASTOR,

REV. D. D. TOMPKINS McLAUGHLIN.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST



NEW YORK:

PRINTED BY F. SOMERS

32 BEEKMAN STREET.

1864.

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BRADLEY, CONNECTICUT

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REV. D. D. TOMPKINS, MINISTER.

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S E R M O N . *

Arise, O Lord, into thy rest ; thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness ; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine Anointed.—Psalm cxxxii. 8-10.

And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.—Haggai ii. 7-9.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !—John i. 29.

And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come ! And let him that heareth say, Come ! And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Revelation xxii., 17.

We meet to-day, to dedicate this temple anew to the worship of Almighty God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; the God of our salvation ; our Light, our Strength, our Hope, our Joy, our Portion, for time and for eternity. The service in which we here engage is not a mere formality, an empty cere-

*This discourse was prepared simply as a memorial for the Church and congregation to which I minister. Its publication is due to the generosity of Milton St. John, Esq., of New York. Since its delivery, the historical portion has been rewritten, and made more complete. I have carefully examined Town and Church Records ; and gratefully acknowledge my obligations to Rev. D. W. Havens, J. Hammond Trumbull, Secretary of State ; Deacon Newton Reed, and others, for valuable information ; and especially to C. F. Sedgwick, Esq., from whose Historical Sketch of Sharon, I have freely drawn.

mony, a meaningless act. It is full of interest, of solemn moment; affecting us in all that is dearest to us in the life which is, and in that which is to come. Before I pass to the theme suggested by those selections, from the Word of God, which I have prefixed to this discourse, it has seemed to me not inappropriate to lay before you a rapid sketch of the religious history of our TOWN; for through a period of sixty years, the town of Sharon and this ecclesiastical society were *conterminat*e. They covered the same ground; they were worked by the same machinery; the affairs of the society being a part of the regular business of the town.

This town was laid out in October 1732, by a committee appointed by the General Assembly. Its title was N. S. It was divided into 53 equal shares or rights; of which one was reserved for the ministry for ever, one for the support of schools, and one for the first minister. The remaining fifty were sold at public auction, in New Haven, on the second Wednesday of October, 1738, to actual settlers. The deeds may be seen in the Town Records.

All ecclesiastical societies were originally co-extensive with the towns; and the First society in Sharon was constituted by the act which incorporated that town, passed at the October Session, 1739,—an act which gave to the inhabitants “all such rights and privileges as are usually granted to other towns in this colony,” with “liberty to call and settle some orthodox minister of the Gospel, in the work of the ministry in that place.” And here I notice a fact of great interest, and one for which, as a people, we should to-day give thanks to God; that at the first town-meeting, immediately upon the organization of the town by the election of town-officers, Nathaniel Skinner, the town-clerk, Jonathan Dunham and John Sprague, were deputed as a committee to go after a minister. This was December 11, 1739, O. S. They promptly executed their commission, and Jan. 8, 1740, it was “voted that Mr. Peter Pratt,” a member of the First church in Lebanon, who had been licensed by Windham Association, Aug. 28, 1739, “be called by us on trial for some convenient time;” and the same gentlemen were authorized to call him on probation, and “to agree with him for his wages,”

which were fixed at 140 pounds, Old currency, (to be reckoned at 29 shillings to an ounce of silver :*) and to be advanced at the rate of 10 pounds a year, or as his necessities might require, till it reached 210 pounds ; or, as subsequently modified on account of the straightened circumstances of the new settlement, 200 pounds. Stipulations were also made as to furnishing him with firewood, but they were afterwards annulled. The second town-meeting had reference solely to the settlement of a pastor. Mr. Pratt's acceptance was received March 21 ; and at the next meeting the town made arrangements for his ordination, which was fixed to April 29, 1740.

Before the erection of a church edifice, religious services were held in private houses. By a vote of the town, they were to meet alternately at Capt. Dunham's, on the S. W. corner, opposite Mr. J. S. Canfield's, and at Mr. Pardee's, near the stone-bridge ; these being rival neighborhoods. On June 23, 1740, it was voted to build a meeting-house, 55 feet long, 45 feet broad, and 22 feet between joints ; and Messrs. Sprague, Jackson, and Chapman, were appointed as a committee to fix the site. This plan was subsequently modified, and March 24, 1741, it was voted to build a house of logs or poles, of smaller dimensions ; and again, April 13, this vote was rescinded ; and in this, and a subsequent meeting, July 15, it was decided, that it should be " a stud house—fit for clap-boarding, 45 feet long, 35 feet broad and 20 feet between joints." This house appears to have been inclosed in the autumn of 1742 ; as the town-meeting Oct. 19, of that year, was held in the meeting-house.† There is no notice of the

* The balance of trade being largely against the colonies, they were drained of gold and silver, to pay their indebtedness to the English merchants, and forced to use at home a paper currency, which rapidly depreciated during the first half of the century. In 1705, an ounce of silver was worth in Massachusetts' currency, seven shillings. In 1741, it was worth 28 shillings ; and in 1749, 60 shillings. The rates of exchange varied in the different colonies, but all suffered in a greater or less degree. Before the present civil war, an ounce of silver of standard value, 9-10 fine, was worth about \$1 22½, and \$1 21. The expressions, "Old Tenor," and "Old Currency," relate to this depreciated currency.

In 1754, *eight* pounds, Old Tenor, equalled *one* pound New York Currency. [See will of Deacon Ebenezer Hamlin]

† I ought to remark, that the meeting-house was regarded as a Town-hall. Town-meetings were uniformly held in it.

dedication. It stood on the Green, a little south of the junction of the main street with the Poughkeepsie turn-pike, facing to the North. On June 6, 1743, it was "voted to build a belfry or steeple, at the North end of our meeting-house," there to hang the bell offered by the Hon. Philip Livingston, to whom a vote of thanks was given for his generosity. The bell was never received, and the meeting-house remained without a spire. Several years passed before this house was really finished. It was probably seated at first with plain slips ; but permission was given at various times, from 1742 to 1745, to build pews, both on the main floor of the house, and in the galleries ; the sites of the pews being sold to the highest bidders, and the pews being built at their own expense ; with this proviso, "that heads of families and fit persons shall sit in them." In the gallery opposite to the pulpit, the pews were to be in front, with two seats next to the wall ; an alley running between them. In the side galleries the arrangement was reversed, the pews being next to the wall. The original pulpit was, doubtless, quite a rustic affair. It was voted, May 3, 1745, that the pulpit be panned ; also that the windows be finished with *diamond*-glass, though sash-glass might be substituted, if found more convenient. "The pew next to the pulpit stairs" was "reserved for the present minister's family, and for the use of the ministry for the future."

"The seating of the house," in olden times, was a matter of great importance, and committees were chosen in town-meeting to take this matter in charge, under general instructions from the town. The ancient method of constructing churches was, to build pews around by the walls, and slips in the center ; and in all cases the gentlemen sat on the right hand of the minister, and the ladies on the left. An innovation was made on this mode of seating by a vote passed December, 19, 1749. A committee was appointed, who were directed to seat the meeting-house, by "*dignity, age, and list*;" and on another occasion, "*according to age, list and quality*;"* and it was further ordered, "that they seat men and their wives in the pews together." Also "voted, that the Deacons' wives be seated in the pew next the pulpit on

* Sedgwick.

the women's side ;”* the Deacons occupying the corresponding pew on the men's side.

Another important arrangement was the appointment of TITHING MEN, whose duty it was to maintain order in the house of God. They were sworn to fulfil this duty, and exercised a kindly supervision over thoughtless and wayward youth. Tithing-men were appointed in town-meeting as late as 1843. A law of the State *enjoins* it on “every religious society, to appoint at its annual meeting, two tithing-men, with the same powers as sheriffs and constables, to arrest offenders” against the good order of the sanctuary.† I am not aware that any such appointment has been made of late years. I take it for granted, that the omission has been an oversight, and not an intentional violation of law.

The infant society was not without its trials. Suspicions were awakened at an early day, that the pastor was falling into habits of intemperance ; and the fact at length became so notorious, that in the town-meeting Oct. 8, 1747, a committee was appointed to collect evidence against their pastor, and to prosecute him before the New Haven Association ; the town of Sharon being at that time in New Haven County.‡ The charge having been laid before the Association, the moderator of the Consociation cited the committee, consisting of “Matthew St. John, Ebenezer Jackson, John Gay, and John Pardee, to appear at Westbury in the town of Waterbury, before said Consociation, upon the 13th day of October instant, at 12 o'clock, at the house of Mr. Samuel Heacock, Jun., then and there to prosecute said charge and complaint.”§ The minutes of this meeting are lost ; but

* Town Records, vol. ii., p. 443.

† Revised Statutes of Conn. 1849. Published in 1854.

‡ Litchfield was erected into a county in 1751. The Association of Litchfield County was formed July 7, 1752. The churches in the county were at the same time organized into a Consociation. In 1791 the Consociation was divided into Litchfield North, and Litchfield South ; and the Association was divided the following year.

§ Since this discourse was preached, I have obtained the following extract from the minutes of New Haven Association. It is important, as establishing the fact, in opposition to the testimony of Parson Smith, that a church was organized here under the ministry of Mr. Pratt. It occurs in the record of the meeting, held in East Haven, Sept., 29, 1747.

it appears from our town records, that, as the result of this trial, the pastoral relation between Mr. Pratt and the church in Sharon was dissolved, and he was suspended from the ministry, Oct. 15, 1747. Dissatisfied with this result, he applied to the town in town-meeting, Dec. 16, 1747, to join him "in calling together the Consociation of the New Haven County, upon Mr. Pratt's cost and charge, to see whether they will take off the suspension and prohibition laid upon Mr. Pratt by the Consociation, convened at Westbury,*" in Waterbury, in October last past." His application was negatived. From a minute made at the next meeting of the Association, held at Durham, May 31, 1748, "voted, that the case of Mr. Peter Pratt be adjourned with the Association;" it seems that that body was still dealing with him. There is a hiatus in its minutes of ten years from the following September; but it is quite certain that the suspension was never revoked. He resided in the town for many years after this, and became the first clerk of the Court of Probate for the district of Sharon, in 1755. He is said to have been a man of superior talents. He graduated at Yale College in 1736, and died at Lebanon, in 1780.

After the dismissal of Mr. Pratt, the pulpit was supplied by Messrs. Camp, Richards, and others, for nearly one year and a half. The town agreed March 30, 1749, with Mr. John Searl, of Simsbury, a graduate of Yale College, of the class of 1745, to serve it in the ministry at a salary of 220 ounces of silver, which was subsequently changed to 220 Spanish dollars. He had a settlement also of 420 ounces of silver, or its equivalent in paper currency. He was ordained, as pastor of the church and minister of the town, the first Wednesday in August, 1749. His set-

"The town and church of Sharon appeared by their committee, exhibiting a complaint from said town and church, against the Rev. Mr. Peter Pratt, their minister and pastor, accusing him of the sin of drunkenness, and desiring the advice of this Association, what method they should take in the premises. The Rev. Mr. Pratt also appearing, and offering in his behalf; this Association therefore, advise the Rev. moderator of the consociated churches of this county, to cite the Rev. Mr. Peter Pratt to appear before the Consociation, to answer said complaint and accusations; said Consociation being appointed to meet at Westbury in October next; and also to cite the said town and church to appear at the said time and place, to support said complaint, and to produce the evidence necessary therefor."

* Now Watertown.

tlement was made an occasion for improvements in the meeting-house, such as flooring the gallery, finishing the front of it in a style corresponding with the other work in the meeting-house, putting in *cells* and seats, and on the main floor additional pews, next to the *lined* pews. He preached with great acceptance for nearly five years, when by the failure of his health he was compelled to seek a dismission. This was granted by the Consociation of Litchfield, June 25, 1754. Four years later, having recovered his health, he settled at Stoneham, Mass., where he continued to labor for eighteen years. He died in 1787. A discourse which he preached on occasion of the death of Rev. Jonathan Parsons, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, July 19, 1776, and of which a copy has been placed by General Sedgwick among our Church papers, indicates that he was a preacher of more than ordinary ability.

Upon Mr. Searl's dismission, it was voted, in "Town-meeting, June 25, 1754, that Messrs. John Williams, Ebenezer Jackson, and Ebenezer Frisbie, be a committee to apply to the Reverend Elders present, for advice whom to apply to, to preach with us, either for present occasional preaching, or to settle with us, and also to act upon said advice."

In the course of the summer, Mr. Cotton Mather Smith, of Suffield, a great grandson of Rev. Henry Smith, the first minister of Wethersfield, and a grandson of the celebrated Cotton Mather, was invited to preach here as a candidate. He graduated at Yale College, in 1754, and had studied theology with Jonathan Edwards. A call was voted to him in town-meeting, Jan. 8, 1755. One week later, to encourage him to accept this call, a settlement was voted him of 420 ounces of silver, in three annual installments, and an annual salary of 220 Spanish dollars. He was ordained Aug. 28, 1755. Arrangements were made in town-meeting, Aug. 20, for the erection of "a scaffold at the North end of the meeting-house, for the ordaining Council to ordain Mr. Smith upon; or, if it should be wet weather, to prop and well secure the galleries;" that they might not give way under the expected throng.

From the organization of the town, a fund had been established for the support of the ministry; one of the 53 lots, into which

the town was divided, being reserved for ever for the use of the ministry. This lot was sold in several portions at public vendue and from time to time Committees were appointed to look after the fund thus raised. The interest of this was applied to the salary, and the balance raised by a tax, which was assessed, like other town-charges, on the property of the town.

It was early seen that a distinct Society must ultimately be organized in the East part of the town ; and reference was had to this fact in the construction of roads. As early as April 8, 1753, it was voted to set off the South-east part of the town, the line being so run as to correspond closely with that of the present society of Ellsworth. The proposed division was not satisfactory to the applicants, who desired that the line should run North and South. "In October, 1767, Thomas Day, Phineas Foster, Caleb Strong, and 64 others, from the East part of the town, petitioned to be constituted a distinct Society. This petition was opposed by the town by a vote of 94 to 56, at a town-meeting, Jan. 2, 1768. The matter being thus brought before the General Assembly, a committee was appointed to view and consider, &c., and to fix a line of division if they should find the incorporation of a new Society expedient. This committee reported at the January Session, 1769, in favor of a division, and proposed a line of separation ; but the report was *not* accepted by the Legislature. (The original petition, remonstrances, copies of Town votes, report, &c., are preserved in the State Archives, Ecclesiastical, Vol. XII. Docs. 358-371.)*

Great readiness was, however, manifested at all times to aid those who resided in that section of the town, to secure larger religious privileges. In Town-meeting Dec. 12, 1753, it was voted "that we allow the people in the Easterly part of the town their proportion of the *minister's rate*, to maintain preaching among themselves, for the space of four months next coming." On another occasion it was voted, that they be allowed *one pound* for every Sabbath, on which they may have preaching. It was customary also during many years of Mr. Smith's ministry to pass an annual vote in Town-meeting, that Mr. Smith be allow-

* Furnished by J. H. Trumbull, Esq.

ed to preach on the mountain, one Sabbath in each of the winter months.

At a Church-meeting held July 5, 1796, application was made by several members of the Church in this quarter for a dismission, that they might be formed into a regular Church by themselves, whenever a council convened for that purpose should approve of the proposed arrangement. Their application was not granted; but the Church united with them in calling a council, which met Aug. 31, 1796, At another meeting, June 29, 1798, a second council was called, which met Sept. 4. The results to which they came, are said to be on file; but the papers have never come into my hands. The agitation went forward, however, both in the society and in the church, and a division was finally effected.

"Ellsworth was incorporated by special act, May Session, 1800," on the petition of Enoch Pearson and others, showing to this Assembly, that the South-easterly part of the town of Sharon, and the Northerly part of the town of Kent,.....may be incorporated as per petition dated Sept. 17, 1799, and a report of a committee appointed by this Assembly at their session in October, 1799," &c.* The first meeting of the society was held at the house of Capt. Thos. St. John, July 3, 1800. The next at the meeting-house.

The Church in Ellsworth was organized March 15, 1802, by the public signing of a solemn covenant, by 28 professors of religion, of whom 20 were from the Church in Sharon, 6 from that in Kent, and 2 from Greenwich; and by their being publicly declared to be a church of Christ. They then adopted a Confession of Faith and Covenant, which are almost identical with those used by this church, and voted to connect themselves as a consociated church, with Litchfield North.

A little before the time of Mr. Smith's settlement, another society was formed in the south part of the town, through the exertions, I believe, of the Rev. Ebenezer Knibloe, a clergyman from Scotland. It was composed partly of inhabitants of New York, and met for worship in the Round-Top meeting-house, at Hitchcock's Corner. The house stood on the west side of the

* Private Laws, 1789-1836, page 534.

road, on the New York side, and faced the road. The colony line ran at that time through the center of the highway ; but the road has since been changed. The house must have been built about 1753, as it is named in the will of Deacon Ebenezer Hamlin, May 13, 1754, as "the new erected meeting-house on the oblong, near Sharon." He bequeathed to the support of the Gospel there 24 pounds, Old Tenor. The society appears not to have had a *legal* existence, till 1792, when it was incorporated under the title of "Union Society, Amenia;" under the general act of the State of New York, passed 1784. The old house was taken down in 1786, and a new house erected, near the present site of the Presbyterian Church, in South Amenia.*

The church was organized, and Mr. Knibloe installed as pastor, in 1759. During the Revolutionary war, Mr. Knibloe was charged with being a tory, and was dismissed. The pulpit was supplied for about two years, by the Rev. John Rogers, D.D., of New York; the British at that time having possession of the city. After the war Mr. Knibloe returned to the pulpit, but not to the pastorate, and died there Dec. 20, 1785. For many years after this, the church relied on stated supplies. Religion declined, and this once numerous church became almost extinct. In 1815, the few remaining members and some recent converts were reorganized into a church, through the labors of the Rev. Joel Osbon.

Liberty was granted, April 14, 1755, to members of the Episcopal communion, to erect a house for which they had already provided the frame, on the corner of the highways, coming from the upper end of the town and the Iron-works Hollow (the neighborhood of Mr. Ethel Benedict's mill ;) to be used only for public worship, or as a school-house. It was erected on the upper end of the Green, near Capt. King's. It was stuccoed on the outside, and stood as late as the Revolutionary war, being then used as a barrack. The first preacher was the Rev. Ebenezer Dibble.† The house of worship now used by the Episcopalians was built in 1812.

In 1788, Mr. Cook, a Methodist clergyman, preached occasion-

* Extract from a letter of Deacon Newton Reed.

† He was employed as a missionary in the western part of the colony.

ally in this town. During 20 years, meetings were held in private houses, and occasionally in groves. In 1808, a house of worship was built at the upper end of Calkins-town. In 1836, the house was built in which they now worship, and the use of which has been so kindly extended to us, while shut out from our own sanctuary. God bless them for their Christian courtesy.

From this digression I return now to the ministry of Mr. Smith. In the opening of the first volume of Church Record's, he states that under Mr. Pratt's administration, there was no church organized. He says expressly that the church was formed under Mr. Searl's ministry; but that no Records were ever lodged in his hands. I have already shown by the minutes of the New Haven Association, that Mr. Smith has at this point fallen into error; for the *Church* as well as the Town took part in the prosecution of Mr. Pratt. I think it most probable, that the Church was organized during the first year of Mr. Pratt's ministry, 1740; but we have no record of the formation. I find the following entries, page 4, of the Records: "There was no Book of Records under Mr. Pratt's or Mr. Searl's administrations." "No Book of Record being procured at the time of my ordination,—the records being in a small paper book, by some means were lost, and never have been found." And again, "The Confession of Faith" (and Covenant) "now used, was accepted and voted by the Church, soon after my ordination." Test. Cotton M. Smith. And through 109 years, the disciples of the Lord Jesus here, in the act of public consecration, have bound themselves by the same Confession and Covenant.

The first minute of a church-meeting is in 1764, just one hundred years ago; when a *Standing Committee* was chosen to assist the pastor in cases of discipline.

Action was had in Town-meeting, Dec. 30, 1763, with reference to building a new meeting-house. A vote was passed, Sept. 16, 1766, to erect a new edifice, on a site not more than 30 rods from the old house, and to raise the money by subscription rather than by taxation; owing to the difficulty with those residing in the eastern part of the town. It was not completed till 1768, and for several years was encumbered with a debt. It stood on the ledge of rocks nearly in front of this house, and was used for the wor-

ship of God a little more than 56 years. In this house Whitefield preached in July, 1770, from the words, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

About 18 years after Mr. Smith's settlement, the church was seriously agitated with questions pertaining to the praises of the sanctuary. Two points were in debate ; the first, with reference to *Lining the Hymns, i. e.*, Reading line by line, or verse by verse; and the second, whether the singing should be conducted by a choir in the gallery, or by leaders in the body of the house. Votes were passed, and rescinded; and the agitation continued from 1773 to 1775. A compromise was effected, by which one half the day the hymns were lined, and the singing led by persons seated below. The other half of the day the singing was in the gallery, and without reading the lines. But in both cases the leaders were appointed by the Church. At length in Feb. 1775, it was voted that in future they would sing without reading.

In 1790 and 1791, the relation sustained by the baptized persons to the Church, was earnestly and prayerfully considered. It was finally decided, after a sermon preached by the pastor, that they were subject to the discipline of the Church ; but I have found no evidence that this decision was ever carried into effect.

A mandate was issued, Oct. 11, 1799, in the name of the State of Connecticut, signed by two Justices of the Peace and eight principal citizens, to Paul Smith, constable, to warn all those belonging to the First Ecclesiastical Society in Sharon, to attend a meeting to be holden at the church, Oct. 27, and to elect officers of said Society. From this point the records of the Society are distinct from those of the Town.*

The infirmities of age pressing heavily on the pastor, he made application to the Church and the Society for a colleague ; and at a meeting of the Church, held Jan. 24, 1804, a unanimous call was extended to Mr. David L. Perry, of Harwinton, to become the associate pastor. This call was accepted, and he was ordained as co-pastor, June 6, 1804. In the following year Mr. Smith preached a semi-centennial discourse, on the fiftieth anni-

* Society Records.

versary of his ordination; and closed a useful and honorable ministry of 52 years—a fact honorable alike to pastor and people—Nov. 27, 1806, in the 76th year of his age. He was watchful, prudent, faithful, and largely successful in the suppression of incipient evils in his parish, thus keeping it in a healthy state. He was alike venerated and loved by his people; an ardent patriot, a sincere friend, a consistent Christian.

At a Church meeting March 27, 1805, the pastors, deacons, and Church Committee, were directed by all proper means to instruct the baptized children of the Church in their obligations to ratify the covenant into which their parents had entered in their behalf, and to assure them of the deep interest which the Church felt in their salvation. In the summer of the following year (1806), the Church received a rich refreshing, and more than 40 were added on confession of their faith. Three fourths of these had been previously baptized.

I have been unable to gain exact information, with regard to the time when Sabbath Schools were established in this town. It appears to have been about 1818. They were first held in the out-districts; but before the demolition of the old church, they were drawn to the centre, and held in it between the morning and the afternoon services. Deacon Wm. M. Smith was elected the first Superintendent; and through a period of more than 40 years, he has faithfully discharged the duties of his office. Many in all parts of the land will rise up, and call him blessed; and many, who have already gone to the world of glory, will for ever praise God for the instructions received in this Sabbath School.

The Spirit of God was largely poured out upon this town in the winter of 1822, and 1823. As one of the results of this revival of religion, the attention of God's people was turned to the condition of the sanctuary. At a meeting of the Society, held Oct. 13, 1823, it was voted, that "Whereas the house dedicated to Divine worship in the First Ecclesiastical Society in Sharon, is so far decayed, as to be unfit for use or repair; therefore, to erect a suitable edifice for the service of Almighty God, according to the Congregational or Presbyterian system of faith and worship; the sum of \$4000 be raised by subscription, and that the names of all the donors be entered on the Society's Record;" and there

the names stand, from the giver of \$1000 down to the giver of \$1—alike honorable in God's sight, if they gave according to their ability, and from a sincere desire to advance the glory of God, and the kingdom of his dear Son in the world. The house was erected in 1824, on land donated by Dr. Samuel Rockwell, on the following condition: "The system of faith and worship to be maintained in said house, or in any other house to be erected on said land, is to be Congregational or Presbyterian, according as those terms have been generally understood and applied in New England; and particularly excluding all sects and denominations who, assuming either of these appellations, deny the divinity of Christ, or inculcate the doctrine of universal salvation."* Strange as it may seem, there is not, so far as I can discover, a word in the Records, either of the Society or the Church with reference to the time of the completion, or the dedication of this house. All that I have been able to collect on this subject, is, that the dedication occurred in the month of February, 1825, that a sermon was preached by the pastor (Rev. David L. Perry,) from 2 Chronicles vi., (41 42?) and that an original hymn, composed by the pastor or the pastor's wife, was sung, of which the following lines are preserved:

" O Thou!—the only great and good and wise,
Father of men, and Lord of earth and skies;

* * * * *

When evils threaten, and when foes invade,
And here we seek thine all-protecting aid;
From Heaven, thy dwelling-place, do thou appear,
And send a gracious answer to our prayer."

The anthem for the day, was "I was glad, when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the Lord." The house was thronged on the occasion.

Another revival was enjoyed under Mr. Perry's ministry, during the years 1831, and 1832, in which nearly 50 were added to the Church.

His ministry was suddenly terminated by apoplexy, Oct. 25,

* Town Records, Vol. 20, page 23.

1835. The messenger of death arrested him in the pulpit. He left it with assistance, and went home to die. He graduated at Williams College, in 1798, and was a tutor for three years, in that institution. "He studied divinity with the Rev. Dr Backus, of Somers, Conn. He was a man of very pure character, and of respectable talents, and died much lamented by the people of his charge, and by his brethren in the ministry."*

Mr Perry was succeeded by Rev. Mason Grosvenor. He was installed Sept. 28, 1836, and dismissed *May*, 14, 1839. He was succeeded by Rev Grove L. Brownell, of Woodbury, who was installed May 20, 1840, and dismissed Aug 1, 1848. The Rev. Thos. G. Carver was installed Oct. 1, 1851, and dismissed *Aug.* 6, 1853. The Rev Leonard E. Lathrop, D. D., was installed July 18, 1854, and died Aug. 20, 1857. My own ministry here began June 27, 1858. I was installed as pastor of the Church, Jan. 18, 1859. Of the former pastors, *four* he buried in our cemetery, and by their memorials there, still speak to this people. Two only survive, Messrs. Grosvenor, and Carver

The Church has had nine pastors, in a period of 124 years. The ministry of Mr Pratt extended through 7 years, 9 months.

"	"	Searl	"	"	5	"	3	"
"	"	Smith	"	"	52	"	3	"
"	"	Perry	"	"	31	"	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
"	"	Grosvenor	"	"	2	"	8	"
"	"	Brownell	"	"	8	"	2 $\frac{1}{3}$	"
"	"	Carver	"	"	1	"	10	"
"	"	Lathrop	"	"	3	"	1	"

And my own has " " 5 " 8 "

Some uncertainty exists with regard to those who have filled the office of Deacon in this Church. I have inserted in the Church Register, a complete list, with the term of service of each, as nearly as it can be ascertained. I content myself to-day with simply giving their names. They are in number seventeen, including those who are doubtful. Of the whole number only three survive: Deacon Aaron Reed, now resident in Troy, and the present deacons of the Church.† From its organization to

* Sedgwick's History.

† Deacon Wm. M. Smith died, March 15, 1864.

the decease of Deacon Paul Smith, the Church always enjoyed the services of three deacons.*

Deacon Nathaniel Skinner.

- " Hezekiah King.
- " Ebenezer Jackson.
- " Matthew St. John.
- " Jonathan Elmer
- " Ebenezer Frisbie.
- " John Williams.
- " Timothy Carrier.
- " Daniel Griswold.
- " Gain Miller.
- " Joseph Landers.
- " Benjamin Hamlin.
- " Paul Smith, Jun.
- " Isaac Chamberlain.
- " Aaron Read.
- " Wm. Mather Smith.
- " Charles Sears.

It is impossible to give an exact statement of the membership of this Church. The Society was organized Dec. 11, 1739, O. S. Dec. 22, N. S., a day memorable in the history of New England, and I may add of the world; for New England has moved the world. I have already given the evidence on which I base my opinion, that the Church was organized under Mr Pratt; probably about 1740. A list of members, inserted by Parson Smith, p. 3, of the Old Records, contains 46 names. This was prior to Aug. 31, 1766, which date appears on the next page.

From an entry made April 30, 1786, it appears that the number of church members at that date was:—

Males,	56
Females,	84=140
Deceased members up to that date,	140
Members removed, supposed to be alive,	96
Making a total to this date of	376

* Church Records, Vol. I., p. 186.

In the 18 years intervening between this and the ordination of Mr Perry—

There were added—By profession,	.. .. .	92
“ “ By letter,	.. ....	16=108
Making a total to June 6, 1804, of		484

The number of members at this time was :

Males, ..	..	39
Females, .	..	55=94

During his ministry of $31\frac{1}{3}$ years, the additions were .

By profession, .. .. .	..	346
And by letter, .. .. .	..	52
To which should be added—inserted in the list, at Mr. P's.		
ordination, .. .. .	..	2
Making a total of		400

His was truly a successful ministry He had a *working* people, who *co-operated with their pastor*. Such is the testimony which comes to me from all quarters.

The church numbered at Mr Grosvenor's installation, Sept. 28, 1836 :

Males, .. .. .	..	51
Females, .. .. .	..	130=181

During his pastorate there were added :

By letter, .. .. .	..	13
By profession, .. .. .	..	83=96

Under Mr. Brownell's ministry there were received :

By letter, .. .. .	..	14
By profession, .. .. .	..	19=33

Between this and Mr. Carver's ministry, there were received:

By profession, .. .. .	..	13
By letter, .. .. .	..	11=24

Under Mr. Carver were received :

By profession, .. .. .	..	14
By letter, .. .. .	..	9=23

Under Dr Lathrop were received :

By profession, .. .. .	..	3
By letter, .. .. .	..	8=11

Since my own connection with the church we have received :

By profession,.....	18
By letter,.....	10=28

And four are to be received on the coming Sabbath.

The years 1791, 1792, 1806, 1823, 1831, 1832, 1837, 1839, 1843, were years of special religious interest.

The additions by profession in 1823, were.....	133
The total number of members connected with this church from the beginning, as nearly as it can be ascertained, is.....	1,099

It is a fact too full of interest, to be omitted on this occasion that *fifteen* laborers have gone forth from this church, to work in the vineyard of the Lord. Their names follow :

Jeremiah Day, (the father of President Day ;) Daniel Smith, Vinron Gould, William R. Gould, Charles Y. Chase, Alvin Somers, William Jewell, Hiram White, (Methodist ;) John M. S. Perry, (For. Missionary ;) David C. Perry, Gilbert L. Smith, (a son of our venerable deacon ;) Charles H. Read, James Cleaveland, George J. Kaercher, Jesse W. Guernsey.

Of the contributions of this Church to the various objects of Christian benevolence, I am unable to speak definitely ; as no accurate account has been kept, until within a recent period.

From 1850 to 1857 inclusive, there were reported,	\$2057 80
For 1858 no report is made.....	
The amount from 1859 to 1863 inclusive (5 years,) is....	2059 99

The traveler in the northern hemisphere, when night overtakes him, and he has lost his way, lifts his eye upward, and looks for the Pole-star. By *that single star* he directs his course. When, however, he gets into the southern latitudes, a new object meets his eye. *Four* bright stars greet him, arranged in the form of a cross. By this cross his steps are guided, till he finds a safe resting-place. And if to-day I ask you to follow me, as I attempt to guide your meditations, not by the light of a single truth, but of that bright assemblage of truths, which stand at the head of this discourse ; I would have you remember, that **THE FOUR** are so correlated, that they constitute **A UNIT** ; **THE CONSTELLATION OF THE CROSS**. I can not dilate upon it in its *unity*, much less in *its several members*, as I would like. Still I will touch upon its principal features ; and will offer a few sug-

gestive thoughts, which may serve to bring these truths more clearly before you, and to impress them more forcibly on your hearts.

The text has a prayer, a promise, a direction, and an invitation. Let us look at

I. The Prayer. "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest: thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine Anointed." The Psalm, 132, was written on one of the most solemn and impressive, yet joyous occasions, known in the history of Israel. The ark of God had been for a time in captivity among the Philistines. They had borne it away in triumph from Eben-ezer, and exultingly placed it in the house of Dagon, in Ashdod. But they knew not that it was the ark of Jehovah's strength. It soon achieved for itself a splendid victory over Dagon and his worshippers. Philistia bowed to the God of Israel, and sent back the ark, with a trespass offering of gold. It came to Beth-shemesh, where it vindicated its sanctity anew in a fearful way: so that the Bethshemites cried out, "Who can stand before this holy Lord God, and to whom shall he go up from us?" Thence it was sent to Kirjath-jearin, where it remained for more than 50 years. It was finally brought up to Zion by David, with great solemnity and rejoicing, and placed in a new tent which he had pitched there for it; the old Tabernacle having been removed to Gibeon. Whether the Psalm was written by David or by Solomon, as some suppose, this event is plainly commemorated in it. The words which we have quoted from it were used by Solomon, with a slight alteration, in concluding the prayer which he offered at the Dedication of the Temple; and Rosenmuller supposes the whole Psalm to have been sung at the dedication of the second Temple.

And is there one in this assembly, who will not join to-day in the prayer, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests be clothed with salvation; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine Anointed." The tabernacle of God is with men. He dwells with them—dwells in the sanctuary.

There is the ark of the covenant—the symbol of his presence. We see here to-day no golden chest—no cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat ; but we *feel that the Lord is in his holy temple* ; that *here* we may bow before the mercy-seat with our praises and supplications ; that the ministry of reconciliation will here be honored, with the richest decorations with which God ever ornaments his servants ; that he will clothe them in robes of righteousness, set all over with precious gems, sparkling with the beauty of holiness, and reflecting the image of Jesus ; that the song of joy and gladness shall here ascend from the lips of redeemed sinners ; and that for the sake of the Son of David he will not turn away the prayer which is offered in this house. I turn to

II. The Promise : “ And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is *mine*, and the gold is *mine*, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.” “ I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come.” We live not in the day seen by the prophet, when he sang, “ The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet ! ” * “ Rather is it the time predicted by our Saviour, when, “ there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men’s hearts failing them for fear ! ” † What a terrific tempest has been for these three years, sweeping over our own land ! How is Mexico agitated ? South America stands trembling ! The rumbling of the earthquake is heard in India ! China is in commotion, and Japan. Europe heaves with anguish and fear ! Well, it is but the fulfillment of the promise, “ *I will shake all nations.* ” Unjustifiable as is the agency of man, giving occasion by his wickedness to these commotions, God is through that agency preparing the way, “ and the Desire of all nations shall come.” The power and the grace of Christ shall yet be seen in all lands, and *the whole Earth shall be filled with His glory.* ” But we cannot *dwell* on the bright picture here presented. We must

* Isa. xiv. 7.

† Matt. xxi. 25.

circumscribe the view. "I will fill *this house* with glory." Haggai prophesied, when the foundations of the Second Temple were laid. A strange scene was presented that day. Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, "wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy." The one class were mourning *departed magnificence*; the others were joyous in hope of the future. God by his prophet strengthened this hope, and assuaged the grief of the mourners. What if the Old Temple in some respects surpassed the new? God has a claim on all that is necessary for the adornment of his house, and in due time it shall come into his treasury. "*The silver is mine, and the gold is mine*, saith the Lord of Hosts." "Holiness to the Lord!" shall yet be written on all the treasures of Earth. And then he adds the promise that the glory of the Second Temple shall exceed that of the First.

I fully appreciate the feelings of those among us, who in the midst of our solemn festivities to-day find sadness stealing over their spirits, and the unbidden tear trickling down their cheeks. They have come to the old familiar sanctuary, but all is new. The old pulpit is gone! The walls are changed! The herald of the cross is not where he once stood! They look around for the place where they sat, and heard the word of life; but they cannot find it. Memory runs back to the day, when here they entered into covenant with God and his people, and first tasted the emblems of a Saviour's dying love; but they can not find the spot where they stood. What precious seasons of communion have they here enjoyed! What blessed scenes have they here witnessed? They think of the loved ones with whom they once worshiped here, and whom they shall meet no more on earth! Is it strange that they are saddened and weep? While then I would pause for a moment, that these loved ones on life's descending slope may give indulgence to saddened memories, I would, with tender and loving hand, brush away the falling tear, and say to them, Come, join the throng who sing to-day, as did the Jews at the Dedication of the First and of the Second Temples, "Give thanks to the Lord; because he is good: for his mercy toward Israel endureth for ever." "Instead of the fathers

shall be the children." I bless God that to-day we see this promise fulfilled. While yet the fathers are on the stage, and many of them still active, he has raised up the children to be co-workers with them, in beautifying and sustaining the House of God. Fathers and mothers in Israel, will you not, for the zeal evinced by your sons and daughters in this work, give thanks to God? Many have now an investment in this house, who had before no PERSONAL interest in the material structure. God grant that all who stand in this relation may ere long be built "as living stones" into the walls of the spiritual temple.

God is steadily advancing the kingdom of his dear Son. A brighter light shines in the world to-day, than ever shone in it before. The power of truth is more widely diffused, and its influence is mightier. You have seen sometimes a dark cloud looming up in the North, and there has appeared above it a luminous arch; and flashes of light have shot up from it, till the heavens were all ablaze, and the earth has become bright with the reflection. So is it with the spreading light of the Gospel of Christ. It is advancing from point to point. Its influence is intensifying. It will finally pervade the whole world. And with this growing power, may we not cherish an assured confidence, that, mighty as have been the workings of God's Spirit here in the past, and rich the displays of his saving grace; yet mightier workings and richer displays are reserved for the future; so that the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former; and that here to many a troubled conscience Jesus will whisper PEACE!

"HERE will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." The primary reference is to the Second Temple. How was the promise fulfilled? Come, tread with me the dark ages, which succeeded the prophesying of Haggai, in which the Earth was so terribly shaken, by the conflicts between Persia and Greece, in the conquests of Alexander, and in the dissensions of his successors, till finally the colossal power of Rome had crushed out all opposition, and the temple of Janus was a second time closed, in the space of 750 years. It was a period of universal peace—fit time in which the Prince of Peace should be born. The Son of God becomes incarnate. He is borne in the arms of his mother

Mary into the Temple in Jerusalem, and there presented to the Lord. O was there not in that hour a greater glory there, than that of the massive pile which Solomon reared, overlaid as its walls were with gold? a glory greater even than that which shone forth in the Holy of Holies from between the Cherubim? **THE SON OF GOD** was there **THE SON OF MAN**! "We beheld his glory—the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And this brings me to the third star in our constellation:

III. The Direction, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The world was by nature in darkness and in ruins. It lay overwhelmed in guilt. But from the day that sin entered it, light from the first promise struggled through the darkness, and saved it from despair. The song of angels had now been heard on Bethlehem's plains. The Saviour had come. A few more years, and, standing by the waters of Jordan, John cries to his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Those disciples had known the pollution of sin, and the burden of guilt. They had trembled in view of the wrath of God. John cries to them, "Behold the Lamb!" This is the victim which God accepts. Go, lay your hands on the head of this Lamb, confessing your sins; and they shall all be taken away. Let his blood be sprinkled upon you, and your guilt shall be seen no more. When you see the day-star in the East, you know that the sun will soon peer above the horizon. That star is its fore-runner. It points to the sun. John was the Day-star; Jesus the Sun. And as John prepared the way of the Lord, and pointed his disciples to Jesus; so does every faithful preacher of the Gospel now. His grand business is to lead his hearers to the sin-atoning Lamb.

When we took leave of this sacred place (Aug. 2. 1863.) the last words which echoed in your ears, before the benediction was pronounced, were, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." These were again the first words, with which the herald of the cross greeted you here to day. I would have them engraven on this pulpit, and blazoned all over these walls, so that, wherever the eye turned, it might read, **BEHOLD**

THE LAMB!! I feel that I have no right to bring before you here any theme, which is not subsidiary to this. I shall be faithful and successful, as a pastor, only as I lead you to JESUS.

The Lamb! the Lamb!! What does a sinner need on earth so much, as the sin-atoning Lamb? Take him away from this Gospel, and what have you left? Cleansing, pardon, salvation, hope—ALL are gone. What does a sinner need in Heaven, so much as the Lamb that had been slain, in the midst of the throne? Take *Him* away, and there is there no light, no joy, no peace: nothing but a Holy God, a Consuming Fire to the transgressor! I would have the words engraven on every heart. I would have them spoken by every tongue. In the hour of joy and of sadness, under life's trials and temptations, to the fallen one, to the hardened transgressor, to the anxious inquirer, to the believer in whatever sphere of action God has placed him, to the dying sinner, and to the saint who stands with one foot just on the threshold of the gate of the Celestial City; I would say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

The atoning Lamb has opened to a sinful and perishing world a fountain of living water. To-day he cries, "If ANY man thirst, let him come to me and drink." My brethren, will you heed

IV. The Invitation!

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! And let him that heareth say, Come! And let him that is athirst, Come! And *whosoever will*, let him take of the *water of life* FREELY." Gracious invitation; how full! how free!! Spoken first by the Lord Jesus; reiterated by the Blessed Spirit; echoed by the Church! Would to God, that I might add,—re-echoed by every one that hears it! Thirsty one, will you come? Sinner, bitten by the Old Serpent, in whose veins the deadly poison is circulating, corrupting and burning out the life; will you come? Guilty, condemned one; will you to-day come to this fountain, and drink, *and live for ever?*

Seven months to a day have passed, since this house was closed for repairs. I need not speak of the changes which have been effected. Its exterior has been improved in appearance. Its interior has been thoroughly renovated. The Committee to whom the Society intrusted this enterprise judiciously employed an

architect, to whose skill in remodeling and beautifying our Sanctuary, we are greatly indebted. I may say of our Builder, and of those who have labored under him, that they have faithfully executed their work. No less should be said with reference to the heating apparatus, and the entire furnishing of the house. Every thing is neat, beautiful and substantial. The work speaks for itself. It would be an easy thing for those of us who have not put our hands to the work, to criticise the plan and the execution at certain points, and possibly now to suggest improvements ; but if we had stood in the place of the planners or the executors, I doubt whether our efforts would have been crowned with LARGER perhaps, NOT with EQUAL success. I bear cheerful testimony to the untiring zeal and industry of the Building Committee. The thought, the time, the personal labor they have bestowed, and the anxious solicitude with which they have watched the progress of the work, are known to comparatively few. Give them the praise they deserve ; give them a grateful remembrance.

To all who have co-operated in the raising of funds for this enterprise, to all who have contributed towards it—the rich from their abundance, and the poor from their poverty—to all who have labored in whatever way, (and the daughters of Zion deserve special commemoration here)—to strengthen and adorn the House of God ; we tender hearty acknowledgments. God reward them for all that they have done for the honor of his name, and the beauty of his Sanctuary. As they gather to worship here, may *he ever meet them with the riches of his grace !* May every name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life !

But while I utter this prayer, most fervently and affectionately, let me remind you (my dear friends), that, in the arrangements of grace, God rolls the responsibility of your salvation on *you*. Jesus has wrought out a full and a free salvation. He has placed it within your reach. He invites, he commands, he beseeches you to take the gift. If you perish, it will be because you reject the offer of his grace. When I think of what so many of you have done for this sanctuary, and then reflect that some of you are to-day without a hope in Christ, a cloud comes over my spirit, and amid these joyous scenes my heart is sad. O, shall it

be, that any of these loved ones, who have aided in repairing and beautifying God's Temple below, shall fail to have a place in God's Temple above? When the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the angry flood rolled its waves higher, and still higher, till the last place of refuge was reached; what must have been the emotions of those, who assisted Noah in building the ark, as they saw it floating securely by, when they thought of their own share in the work, and then of their final exclusion? They were warned. They were entreated. The door stood long open. They refused to enter and it was closed against them by God's own hand. Shall their fate be yours?

The house of God stands to-day renewed in strength and beauty. A beloved brother has well said, This is a gem of a church. God is a lover of beauty. He paints the shell and the flower, and decks the bird of the air. He has reared the temple of nature in grace and beauty. We honor him, when we decorate his Sanctuary. "The house which I build is great;" "for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God." It becomes us to worship the Lord in beauty; in material beauty, as well as "in the beauty of holiness." But the glory of the sanctuary is not in external decorations. Overlay these doors with silver, and these walls with gold. Stud this pulpit with pearls and topazes, with sapphires and diamonds. Gather here whatever is attractive to the eye, and let the richest harmonies of music here resound; and if *God be not here*—if *His* power and grace are not displayed in it, this Sanctuary has no glory. When we enter these doors, let us feel that we come into the presence-chamber of our God. "The Lord is in his Holy Temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him." Say to earth's business, and cares, and pleasures, as you cross that threshold, "Abide ye here, while I go yonder and worship." With hushed spirits bow before your God, and pour your earnest supplications and your high praises into his ear, and muse with reverence on his Word. And to every soul that here draws nigh to Him, may God verify his promise to Moses, "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat." *

* Exod. xxv., 22.

We have brought our offerings, and laid them on God's altar. Have we done it in the right spirit? Does he accept them, and smell in them a sweet savor? We have dedicated this Temple anew to Jehovah. Does He accept it as his? Does fire come down from Heaven, and consume the sacrifice? Does the glory of the Lord fill the House?

When this Sanctuary was first opened for the worship of God, 39 years ago last month, the Pastor in his discourse used words like the following: "Ye have dedicated this House to God. Brethren, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Ye are the Temple of God. Have ye dedicated yourselves to his service?" Ministering in the stead of that honored servant of Christ, to the children of those who reared this House, I say, Christian brethren, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Have you consecrated *yourselves* to-day anew to God? Does his Spirit indeed dwell in you? Do your bodies, your souls, your property, your time, your labor, your influence; all bear this inscription HOLINESS TO THE LORD?

These doors which have to-day opened for you, that you might here worship Jehovah, and behold the Lamb of God, will, when a few short years have rolled away, open and close to you for the last time. Life is short. Eternity advances. Be diligent, earnest, faithful in improving the means of grace, in doing the work of God, in fitting yourselves under the influence of his truth and Spirit for Heaven. And as the scenes of earth fade away from your eyes, may you realize in your blissful experience the promise of the Lord Jesus, "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God—New Jerusalem—which cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and MY NEW NAME."

J.

