

A SHORT HISTORY  
OF THE  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
SCAPEGOAT HILL

BY  
NATHAN HAIGH

JUBILEE SOUVENIR  
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A SHORT HISTORY

OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA

FROM 1776 TO 1876

BY

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## PREFACE.

To trace and record "the story of the past," when that story relates to the formation and development of a Christian Church, is a work both pleasing and profitable. Pleasing, in that it discloses to the mental vision some conception of those who laboured in days gone by, and who by their loyalty and steadfastness have left an example worthy of imitation; profitable, in that it enlarges the horizon, and is calculated to enrich the experience. The task, however, is not without its difficulties, as it requires some discrimination in selecting, from much that is ordinary and routine, that which is entitled to a place of more permanent interest. Should there have been omitted names or incidents that courteous readers expected to appear, the writer would crave their generous indulgence and charitable judgment, assuring them that his object throughout has been to present the salient points of the Church's activities.

A notable feature of the Old Testament history is the insistence with which the fathers were commanded to tell to their children the wonders God had wrought on their behalf, so that the work attempted in the following pages is in harmony with the Divine injunction.

Like several matters mentioned in this book, the "historical sketch" has been long in coming to maturity. Years ago a desire found expression that some such work should be undertaken, and ministers, who had previously served the Church, were asked to kindly contribute reminiscences of their respective periods. For various reasons the work has been deferred, and some who gave their quota to the stock of general information have, in the meantime, been "gathered home." Now, at length, the work takes definite form, and its publication will, after all perhaps, not be regarded as untimely; seeing that it coincides with the Jubilee Celebrations.

Like the building of the temple at Jerusalem, prepared for by David, and erected by Solomon, so, much of the material for this work has been gathered to the writer's hand. To change the figure, the warp and the woof have been largely supplied; so that what remained to be done was the weaving of the fabric.

Of those who have rendered material assistance by written contributions the writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the following:—  
Revs. D. Lewis, A. Harrison, T. R. Lewis and B. Williams—all former ministers. Messrs. O. B. Kenworthy, Edwin Whitwam, Edward Crowther, Edward Blackburn, Geo. Wood and Andrew Taylor. For valuable assistance in obtaining "gleanings from the sheaves" of old records and

minute books, the thanks of the author are due to Mr. J. W. Lockwood, his co-editor; as also to the Committee for their sympathetic co-operation.

While the writer is conscious of limitations, which, more or less, will be reflected in the work; yet, if love for the place and sympathy with the aspirations and ideals for which it stands can in any way be regarded as qualifications for the undertaking, then to these the author would humbly lay claim.

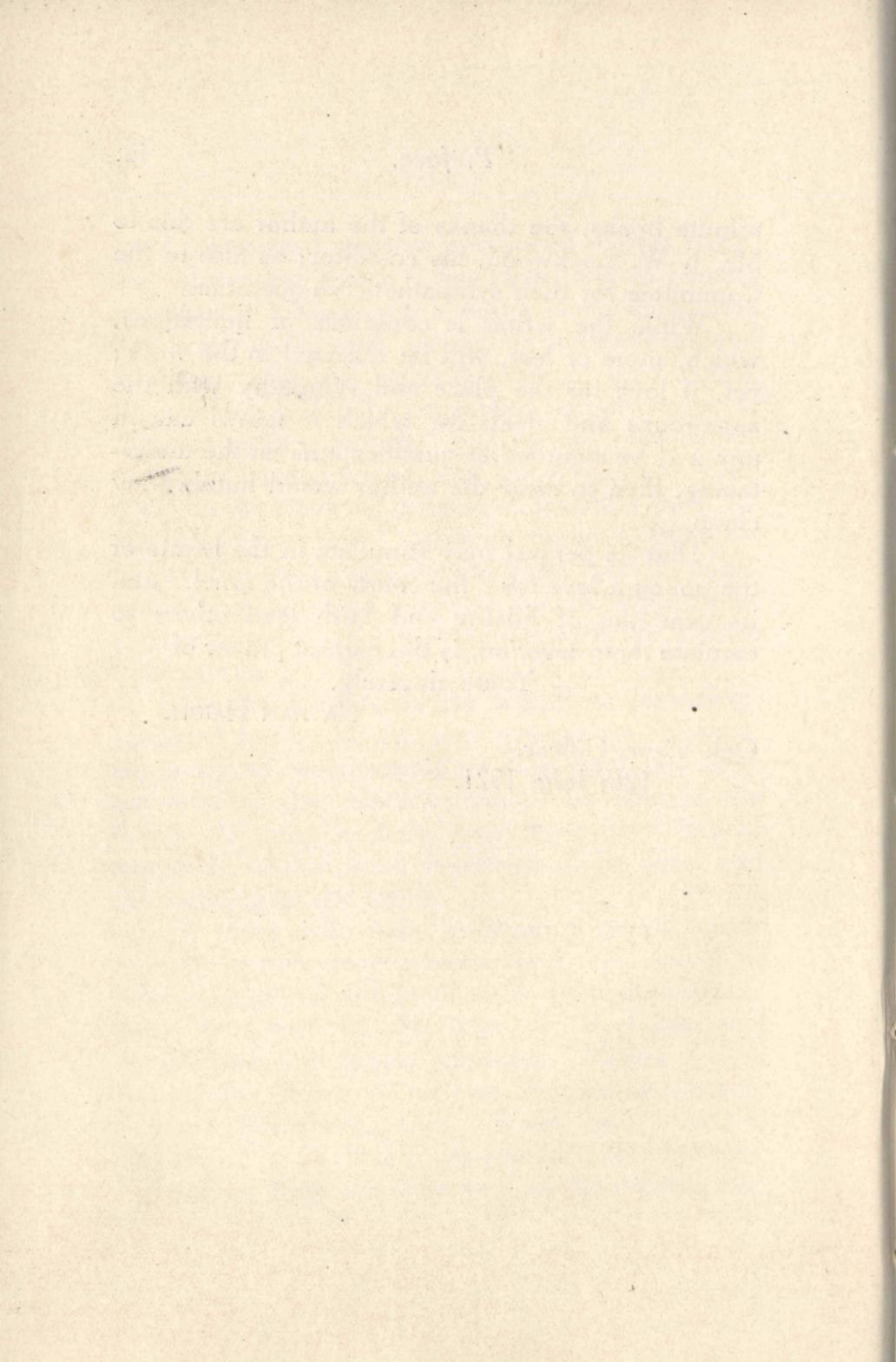
That its perusal may stimulate in the hearts of the young a love for "*the courts of the Lord*," and its examples of fidelity and faith lead others to emulate their devotion, is the earnest prayer of

Yours sincerely,

NATHAN HAIGH.

Oak View, Golcar.

12th July, 1921.



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# A Short History of the Baptist Church Scapegoat Hill.

## CHAPTER I.

### SCAPEGOAT HILL.

ON the eastern side of the Pennine Chain, situated in the West Riding of the County of York, and somewhat removed from the rest of the mountain range—like a solitary sheep that has strayed from the ninety and nine—stands Scapegoat Hill: the subject of this chapter. Unassuming, like its people, this eminence has never claimed to be regarded as a mountain; though its summit is 1152 feet above the sea level.

Although at such an high altitude, being comparatively flat, this elevation has the distinction of being fairly well inhabited; a village of some twelve hundred inhabitants having grown up on its lofty heights; indeed it is said to be one of the highest inhabited districts in the county.

How it came to be known by its present name, it is difficult to ascertain, the derivation being somewhat obscure; yet there are evidences that, like most modern things, it has undergone a change within comparatively recent times.

In the cemetery of the Baptist Church at Pole Moor, there is a tombstone erected to the memory of one, Betty Lockwod, of Slip-cote Hill, who died the first of March, one thousand eight hundred and seventeen; thus showing that only about a century ago its name was not exactly what it is to-day. How the change came about, or what led to the present designation, or what significance attaches to it, are questions about which we can only conjecture. Possibly the change was suggested by some Bible student, who saw some analogy between this isolated region and the solitude of the wilderness to which Moses directed that the scapegoat should be led, to be seen never more,—fitting emblem of the forgiveness that God bestows upon the penitent.

We must remember, however, that this was in the early part of the last century, before the sound of a railway engine had broken the stillness of the valley below, and when the adjacent district of Longwood, now thriving and populous, was what its name implies—an extensive forest. Assuming this theory to be correct, it will readily be seen that the name Scapegoat Hill has lost something of its former appropriateness; particularly so when we take into consideration the developments of the last fifty years; though, in the matter of accessibility, there is still room for improvement. Like most names, however, it serves its purpose as a distinguishing appellation, and its scriptural origin has

doubtless rendered it inexpressibly dear to the people whose history we shall endeavour to trace.

Viewed from an utilitarian standpoint, this neighbourhood may not present many attractions to an outsider. It cannot boast any flourishing industry. For the most part its inhabitants are engaged in the woollen manufacture, carried on in the far-famed Colne Valley which lies immediately below. For the rest, there are small farmsteads, the holdings of which have, by dint of arduous toil, been reclaimed from the primitive moorland.

Perhaps the most historic spot in this locality is a place where four roads meet, known by the name of "Standing Stone." Here is erected a plain, but substantial stone pillar, some five feet in height and four feet in circumference.

Somewhat defaced by age, this rude monument bears the date 1756. It is a kind of land-mark, or travellers' guide and, like a sentinel on duty, it stands four-square, waiting to direct the pedestrian, whether he comes by night or by day. Could the genius of some poet enable it to articulate after the manner of Tennyson's "Brook," or Burns' "Brigs of Ayr," its story would, doubtless, be full of instruction and romance.

Here, in the summer-time, open-air preaching services have been held, and earnest evangelists have published the glad tidings of redeeming love, further reference to which will be made in a subsequent chapter. As a trysting place it has oft-

times been suitable and appropriate. Friends arranging a day's outing would say to each other "We will meet at Standing Stone," and, when returning, perhaps late at night, weary and tired with the day's journey, many a cheery "Good-night" has been exchanged as the dissolving company have taken their several ways from this converging point.

Sir Walter Scott, in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," tells us that:—

"If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight."

While it may seem presumptuous to refer to the magnificent architectural beauty of the ruins of Melrose Abbey in the same connection with the obscure region we are now considering, yet we would venture to suggest that each has a charm peculiarly its own; and if the one is revealed by the silver glory of the night, the other perhaps might be seen with advantage by the golden glory of day. Not in its immediate environment will the visitor find much to attract, but regarding it as a point of vantage, he will at once realize how comprehensive is the view.

Away to the north-west, just upon the horizon, may be seen Studley Pike, built upon a craggy summit overlooking Todmorden, and not far removed from the Lancashire border, a distance of some ten miles as the crow flies. More direct north

is the town of Halifax, seated among the hills, with its lofty monument at King Cross, serving as an ornament to the town, and enabling one to locate it at a considerable distance. Looking east is to be seen the pleasant town of Huddersfield, the commercial centre for the woollen industry of the district, while far beyond the town, on rare occasions, when the atmosphere is exceptionally clear, you may see the dim outline of Ossett Church, only about three miles from Wakefield. Turning south, your range of vision is also expansive. Nestling under the shadow of the mighty hills which serve as a gathering ground, is to be seen the Blackmoorfoot reservoir, which supplies the town of Huddersfield, while far beyond there rises peak upon peak, composing part of the extensive watershed of the North of England.

In every direction, except the west, you have, for a considerable distance, an uninterrupted view, and in this direction you have a continuation of the plateau which forms part of the summit, but which is beyond the confines of the village. This is partly under cultivation, while the rest is an extensive moorland. To the lovers of solitude, this affords a congenial retreat. Here, you may occasionally listen to the cry of the lapwing, or hear the cackle of the partridge. Now and again you may see a flock of black birds, of the raven genus, assembled in noisy conclave; while ever and anon the sweet notes of the skylark are poured forth, as it soars into the blue

vault of heaven. Well nigh surrounded by moor and sky, with fleecy clouds overhead, and the purple heather beneath your feet, shut out from the noise and the tumult of the city, you may find time for reflection, and incentives to gratitude and praise.

Across this moor the "pilgrim fathers" of a former generation wended their way to worship at Pole Moor Baptist Chapel—not inaptly termed St. John's-in-the-Wilderness. This was in the days prior to a cause being formed at Scapegoat Hill, although some few have continued to attend there "*unto this present.*" When we take into consideration the distance they had to travel, it will readily be seen that it required more than ordinary enthusiasm to sustain their fidelity, through summer's heat and winter's cold.

Incidentally it affords us a glimpse of the type of character of the early founders of the Church whose history we are about to consider. Men of conviction, devotion, sincerity, self-sacrifice, faith; these undoubtedly were some of the characteristics they brought into exercise. Simple in habit, frugal in fare, constant in purpose, they pursued the even tenor of their way, leaving to posterity the legacy of an holy example, and the memory of a conscience void of offence.

While, speaking geographically, Scapegoat Hill is but one, yet, in consequence of the fact that the boundary line dividing two separate townships runs directly across its centre, it has to some extent

a dual significance. Like the tribes of Israel, part of whom settled on the other side of the Jordan, while the rest entered into the land of Canaan, so this small community, though socially, industrially, and religiously they are one, yet municipally they are twain. The northern portion, known by the name of Nettleton Hill, lies in the township of Longwood, and is part of the borough of Huddersfield; while Scapegoat Hill proper is in the Golcar township, and belongs to the West Riding Area.

In many respects this is a distinction without a difference, yet there are occasions when this dual form of government cannot be ignored and raises problems not always easy to solve.

On the tableland there is little to indicate the division between the two townships; but on the eastern slope of the summit there rises a small stream, which eventually forms one of the minor tributaries of the river Colne. Here, there is a deep declivity, known by the name of Bunny Wood, and in former times this was one of the beauty spots of the district. On one occasion it served as the subject for a landscape painting by the Rev. A. Harrson, a former pastor of Scapegoat Hill Church, who was artist, as well as preacher. Of late years, however, many of the trees have been cut down, the claims of beauty having been sacrificed for considerations of utility, with the result that the glen-like appearance of former days has been well-nigh effaced.

The village itself consists principally of one main street, composed of cottages built, for the most part, during the last century; while here and there, in addition, are small groups standing at various angles, yet in close proximity to the rest. The old chapel formerly stood at the west end of the village, and, close by, the open-air baptistry—still in existence—occupied a most commanding position, where large crowds could witness the solemn rite from the highway. Since the building of the new chapel, however, the old sanctuary has been removed, and the site utilized for building purposes, so that, apart from the baptistry in the adjoining field, there is little to indicate the place made sacred and memorable by the christian activities of former years.

The present chapel is built on a plot adjoining the school premises, at a short distance from the old meeting-house. The grounds surrounding the building are fairly extensive, and the approach to the main entrance presents a pleasing appearance.

And now, having briefly glanced around this neighbourhood and its environs, we will not further detain the reader in the outer court, so to speak, but introduce him to the temple proper, and in the following pages endeavour to trace the growth and development of the Christian cause in this locality, and review the labours of those, who, though no longer with us in the flesh, yet "*whose works do follow them.*"

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY DAYS.

Long before any place of worship was erected on Scapegoat Hill, many religious influences had been exerted and much good accomplished.

In great measure this was due to the earnest and faithful labours of the Rev. H. W. Holmes, who for forty-five years was pastor of the baptist church, Pole Moor, Scammonden. Untrammelled by the confines of any geographical diocese, this "mountain missionary," so far as was physically possible, "*went everywhere preaching the word.*"

In the year 1894 the Rev. T. R. Lewis—then Pastor of the Scapegoat Hill church—published a small booklet, giving a brief account of the life and labours of this worthy minister of the gospel, to which we are indebted for a fuller acquaintance with his estimable character and manifold usefulness.

Being, in the truest sense of the word, in the "Apostolic succession," this saintly man of God consecrated himself wholly and unreservedly to the service of the Master. Constitutionally strong, mentally vigorous, prolific in imagination, and devout in spirit, this worthy hero, thus endowed

both in mind and heart, laid his gifts on the altar of sacrifice. Having received the Divine call, expressed may be through the voice of His people, he, like one of the old prophets, had responded and, if not in word, yet by the surrender of his life, had exclaimed, "*Here am I, send me.*"

After exercising his ministry in various places for a period of years, he eventually settled at Pole Moor, which subsequently proved to be the sphere of his life work. Radiating from this centre, the light of his ministry extended in almost every direction, both far and wide.

Among the places so visited was Scapegoat Hill, where cottage prayer meetings and preaching services were regularly conducted on week evenings, the services being held alternate weeks on Scapegoat Hill and Nettleton Hill.

While there were certain cottages that were specially regarded as places for prayer, perhaps owing to the fact that they were larger and more commodious than others, or possibly because the residents were more in sympathy with the aims and aspirations of the worshippers than the rest, yet it appears that at times it was customary for the services to be held at the cottages in consecutive order. In adopting this method the preacher, doubtless, had in mind the illustrious example of that noted apostle, who, when called upon to vindicate his faithfulness, declared, "*I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have*

*shewed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house.*" Here was a display of similar fidelity, and the fruit of those efforts who can estimate? Always foraging for the pulpit, possessing deep spirituality of life full to overflowing, being mighty in the scriptures, and having an ardent love for the souls of men, together with a ready flow of language, this old-time evangelist composed sermons with ease, and preached with facility sometimes as many as six sermons a week. He could "*reprove and rebuke,*" as well as *exhort with all long "suffering and doctrine."* He was a man who almost instinctively read the signs of the times, and his discourses were prepared accordingly. He was therefore seldom at a loss for a theme, and his deliverances possessed the quality of containing within them a message for the hour. At holiday and feast times he would especially inveigh against all manner of excesses, and any tendency towards epicurean practices would call forth his severe denunciations. His abstemious mode of life gave weight to his utterances, so that while he was loved and revered by those who received his councils, his example and general demeanour was a standing rebuke to evil-doers. Thus, silently and unostentatiously the good seed of the kingdom was being sown, and the gospel faithfully proclaimed.

Not always, however, did the worshipping band meet with that cordial reception which was their general experience. On one occasion at least, there

was an exception to the rule. In the course of their systematic visitation of the homes of the people, they came to the house of a family who, perhaps though not hostile, yet had little sympathy with, or interest in, the things pertaining to religion. The house was made ready for the meeting, a good fire burning in the grate, and a candle, together with Bible and hymn book, placed on the table; but, lo and behold! the inmates had disappeared. There was no one to bid them welcome or listen to the preacher's exhortation.

Nothing daunted, however, the people quietly assembled and the service proceeded. We can imagine, perhaps better than describe, the intensity of feeling that must have characterized that assembly. Doubtless ardent prayers were offered for the absentee members of the household; that they, having opened their house for prayer, might eventually be led to open their hearts to Him who says "*Behold I stand at the door and knock.*"

In contrast with the foregoing, however, there were other houses, as we have already indicated, where the faithful few were always welcome. Notably among these were the homes of George Shaw, Joseph Singleton, John Lockwood, Nathan Townend and John Eastwood.

The three former lived on Scapegoat Hill, while the two latter resided on Nettleton Hill. Thus was the whole district provided for by a wise and representative arrangement.

The heads of these households, if not all actually members of the Pole Moor Church, were yet more or less connected with it, so that the worshipping company held their services amid sympathetic surroundings and in a congenial atmosphere.

From these humble beginnings the work grew, until eventually it was decided to build. The way in which the latent desire for a place of worship of their own crystallized into action was, according to the testimony of one of the oldest inhabitants, on this wise. A number of friends had gathered, one beautiful Whit-Monday, on the brow of the hill, at a place known by the name of Whitwam's Banks, to watch the children of a neighbouring Sunday School walk in procession. "Why cannot we have a School for our children?" someone presently asked. The question was unanswerable; for surely no barrier was insuperable in view of so laudible an enterprise. It is interesting to note that great movements have sometimes been able to trace their inception to circumstances apparently trifling. In the life of General Booth there is a striking passage that describes how the Salvation Army came into being. Mr. Booth had laboured for some years as an evangelist, having been associated with the Wesleyan Methodists and kindred Connections. The time, however, had come for independent action, and he and his colleagues were preparing their annual appeal, in which the work

of the Christian Mission was described. "What is the Christian Mission?" was a question put in the circular.

"A Volunteer Army" was the reply. Pausing for a moment, Mr. Booth picked up his pen, passed it through the word "Volunteer" and wrote above it "Salvation." Thus, by a stroke of the pen, so to speak, the Salvation Army sprung to birth, with all the complexity of its organism, and its potentiality for national and universal service. So here, in a lesser degree perhaps, the idea had been conceived, which, from this time forth, hastened to maturity and complete accomplishment.

Next to the task of raising funds, the question of primary importance was the procuring of a suitable site on which to build. In this quest, the Committee were singularly fortunate. Mr. Joseph Shaw, an inhabitant of the neighbourhood, and one who subsequently took a deep interest in the new school, being the owner of a somewhat extensive plot of freehold property, generously offered to give them as much land as they required. This, the Committee gratefully accepted

According to tradition, the old man measured the ground in primitive fashion; counting the number of yards required, by so many strides. Be this as it may, sufficient land was secured, and building operations commenced. This was in the year 1849.

The Revs. John Stock, L.L.D., Salendine Park, and H. W. Holmes, Pole Moor, were the principal

speakers at the stone-laying ceremony. At Easter, 1850, the opening services were held, and from that time until the present, the principle of evolution has continued to operate, and the cause has gone forward "*from strength to strength.*"

The original structure was four-square, measuring twelve yards by twelve. The front of the building was facing south, with the entrance in the centre; immediately opposite which was the pulpit, or superintendent's desk.

The school was arranged into twelve classes: six on the east for boys, and six on the west for girls; while running across the room from east to west, was a central aisle. In those early years, when corporeal punishment was considered more efficacious than now, it was the custom for one of the staff to be specially deputed to parade the aisle with a long stick, for the maintenance of order, and "woe betide the youth who was found conducting himself or herself in a disorderly manner."

The School was managed by four superintendents, and a teacher for each class: these attended once a month. As the office of superintendent was a permanent institution, these respective days came to be known by the name of the individual in charge; as for example, one Sunday would be regarded as James Thewlis' day; another as Thomas Whitwams', and so on. While many were willing to lend a helping hand in the noble work of training the young, it sometimes happened that those

who were engaged as teachers, were not in membership with any particular church; and the superintendent occasionally found himself in the position of having no one upon whom he could call to engage in prayer; thus indicating some of the difficulties with which the early founders had to struggle.

The children of the school assembled for instruction morning and afternoon, sabbath, by sabbath; in addition to which preaching services were held on Sunday and Tuesday evenings. The Sunday evening services were generally conducted by lay preachers of the district; together with an occasional visit from Revs. H. Watts, Golcar; or H. W. Holmes, Pole Moor. Mr. Holmes invariably preached on Tuesday evenings; and in order to do so, travelled from his distant home "in all weathers." Occasionally, he would be wet through, when he would change his raiment at the house of Mr. George Shaw, preaching in Mr. Shaw's clothes, while his own were put to dry, ready for the return journey.

Such deeds of heroic self-sacrifice need no eulogy; they are more eloquent than speech, and reveal to us something of the intense earnestness this good man displayed for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Thus, the work of evangelization was established, the moral and spiritual tone of the neighbourhood was raised; the darkness began to scatter;

and the dawn of a brighter day was ushered in. What though the building be small and unpretentious, with little of structural elegance or artistic beauty; these are more than compensated for by the consciousness of a glory Divine; and the experience of many of those early worshippers, doubtless, is expressed in the language of one of the anniversary hymns: often sung with gusto and fervour:—

I have been there, and still would go,  
'Tis like a little heaven below:  
At once they sing, at once they pray,  
They hear of heaven, and learn the way.  
Hallelujah!