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THE WAY  
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BUILD A HOUSE  
OF  
WORSHIP.

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FOR THE PEOPLE HAD A MIND TO WORK.  
Nehemiah, 4th Chap., 6th Verse.

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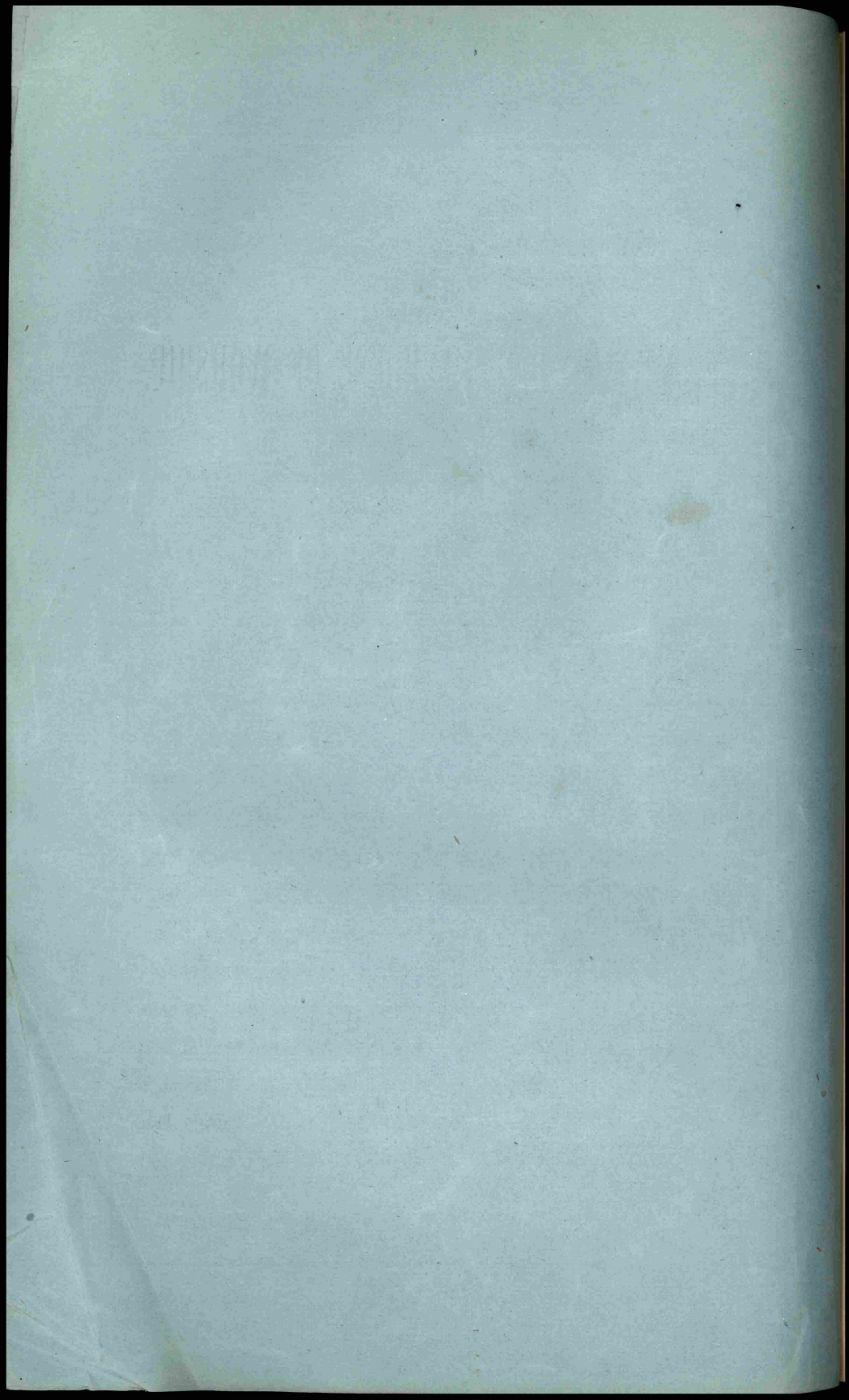
PREACHED AT BEVERLY, N. J.,

April 10th, 1870,

BY REV. CHARLES E. LORD.

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# THE WAY TO BUILD A HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

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“For the people had a mind to work.”—NEHEMIAH, chap. iv., 6 v.

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BY REV. CHAS. E. LORD.

**Preached at Beverly, New Jersey, April 10th, 1870.**

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It is surprising to see, when there is a good cause to be carried out, what an immense difference there is when the people have a mind to work, and when they do not. Nehemiah experienced this 445 B. C. Jerusalem had become a waste place; the walls of the city had fallen down; the temple was in ruins. Not that this edifice was so badly off that no place in it could be found to protect the people altogether from the rain—not that it was so old and dilapidated that the house of God was the poorest-looking building in the whole city—not that other edifices abounded, so costly and beautiful that the temple had hardly any look at all in comparison—not that the location and

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the surroundings were so mixed up with the general lot of poverty stricken houses that nobody could tell the difference, except by its air of greater inferiority—not that the Jews had got up five different synagogues in their city, and this was the poorest of the whole lot—not that the clergy officiating were so small of stature, and so weak of utterance, and so indifferently clad as to correspond exactly with the outward appearance of the temple—not that Nehemiah was pained every day when he noticed more glorious edifices springing up like magic over the place—not that a Christian Association was born in the city hardly a year ago, and yet so full of pluck, and zeal, and hope and energy, as to make everybody believe that the child was considerably smarter than his mother, to say nothing of his more comely features and engaging airs—not that their temple did not have a choir that discoursed most excellent music upon Sabbath days and other occasions, *but simply this*: the people had a *mind to work*. Two things were perfectly agreed upon; 1st. It was an imperative necessity to the religious prosperity of the Jews and the glory of Jerusalem, that there should be a new temple. 2d. They were all, every man, woman and child, resolved to have the temple *now*. There were some reasons that made it very wise for them thus to feel and thus to think, and thus to have a mind for the work. The times were favorable. Nehemiah had got a decree from the king that the work should go on, and he had a good season of the year to work in. He well knew that no building could progress with

any comfort or security in cold, frosty days, or when snow and rain made the workmen wish for a fire to dry their clothes or warm their fingers. He had seen how slow work progressed when the frost was just coming out of the ground, and the days were so short and the nights so long, that poor humanity was much more inclined to the labor of eating and sleeping than to that of building and watching. Again, the people had a mind to the work, because they had a good prospect of foreign assistance to help with their own labor. The people of Jerusalem were, as a mass, neither rich or numerous. Some there were who did not care a copper whether the building was put up or not; some there were who enjoyed the sight of the temple as it then was, with the crumbling-down walls, to any change whatever; and some whose eyes positively ached to see the work go on, and said, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." But all this made no difference with the people, except that they worked all the harder to carry out their purpose. The little foxes might eat up as many grapes as they pleased, but they could not, if they tried, masticate the big stones that were industriously piled up in their way. And so the walls did go up, and the mortar did abound, and the workers were active, although such persons as Sanballat and Tobiah, and the Arabians and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites were displeased. Another reason why the people had a mind for the work was their great charity and good feeling towards Nehemiah. They saw in

Nehemiah a man full of hope and energy, showing a spirit of self-sacrifice, and a love for the temple, and able and willing to do his best to help on the enterprise. And although some thought Nehemiah quite impatient, and wishing to hurry up matters altogether *too soon*, yet they were willing to let him have his own thoughts about matters, because this did not interfere with their liberty in having also their own thoughts; but there was another reason with the people to encourage Nehemiah about this building: they knew time was short, and that a bird in the hand was worth twenty in the bush; delay might result in the loss of all their opportunities, and as the future was uncertain, so, also, with more truth the present was certain, and therefore, in a material sense, it might be said as it is always said in things of a spiritual nature, "Now is the accepted time." This was literally true in an earthly signification with Nehemiah and the people in the erection of the second temple. Nehemiah had seen too much of the uncertainties of life to feel easy or secure while the temple was simply a thing talked about and not a thing *decided upon*—a thing in *contemplation*, and not a thing in action—a thing in *theory* and not in fact. Nehemiah also knew very well how easy it was to *talk a thing to death*, and that a time must come with every successful enterprise when talking must cease, and deliberate and persevering action must commence.

And now, my friends, the application to these thoughts is simply this: For a long time the Presbyterian Church and congregations have felt the want of a new edifice, and that, as a child emerging into manhood, has outgrown the clothes he wore in early youth. So, also, there has been in this church edifice an outgrowing of the people. It has been felt that it was not such as was needed, and that the religious prosperity of the society would suffer without a new building. Some weeks ago, at a regularly called meeting of the trustees and elders of this church and society, there was a full attendance, and the conclusion was definitely and unanimously arrived at, without a dissenting voice, that efforts should be made to procure the means for a new church edifice; and this week another meeting is to be called to decide whether the work shall go on or not. It ought to be borne in mind that a very liberal response was made in the very commencement of this enterprise by some individuals, and that through their encouragement and co operation there appears to be a good prospect of the success of the contemplated church-building. But, my friends, no one, or two, or three, or even four persons should be called upon to shoulder the most of the burden, or to bear a disproportionate part in carrying forward the work. They have a right to look to the people to give adequately also of their means and perform their part, and unless the people have a *mind to the work*, it must not be expected that they will do *their work* for them. The only correct rule to go by

is this: Every one should give as God has prospered him, and every one should sacrifice his individual preferences for the public good. This makes all work easy, especially with a united support and encouragement. Soon this church edifice will be put up, and then you all will feel it strange that you were so long content with the present structure. And one thing in conclusion should be said: This Presbyterian Church has stood up long and perseveringly under many discouragements and many things that conspired to depress it. For one I am not sorry that the building where we worship in is both old and leaky. The Presbyterian Society deserves a better building, and its prosperity is seriously impaired just so long as there is nothing accomplished effectively for a new edifice. And we should not overlook Beverly, with its noble Delaware river and growing population. The eyes of the great city of Philadelphia are turned towards it. New Jersey, if it cannot boast of the mineral resources or large farms of Pennsylvania, can at least feel happy that it is the great highway of New York and Philadelphia, and that she has by location the most commanding position in the country. Beverly is one of her most beautiful towns, healthy and accessible beyond any town in the State. For one, I feel this Presbyterian Church and Society should in its place of worship be fully up to the times. \$10,000 with good judgment will go just as far and accomplish just as much towards an appropriate and substantial edifice of wood, as an outlay of \$20,000 or \$30,000 in another

direction, because for years to come it will be a building that will be all that reasonably we should either expect or want. This coming May there will be in Philadelphia the great Assembly of the United Old and New School branches. We ought to get at the auspicious time the help of the Church Building Fund, and as much of it as we can, because I believe all aid secured will be most wisely and usefully appropriated. The people here have a mind for the work, and if so, what may we not expect will be the future prosperity of this Presbyterian Church and Society? There is a sense in which religious prosperity very nearly depends upon activity and self-sacrifice as to the disbursement of the purse. Some might say, what has religion to do with a place of worship? Very much to do with it, and sometimes very much to do with the redemption of the soul. A good house of worship is an expression of appreciation of the Gospel; of love for the Great Cause; of attachment to that which helps on the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and of suitable co-operation with the minister. David, and Solomon, and Nehemiah, and Ezra all felt that the prosperity spiritual of Jerusalem and the nation, depended very much upon their sacrifices, to erect a place of worship worthy of the people and the city. And should we not thus feel? Will not the success of this enterprise in contemplation be of great benefit to us? and does not all depend upon the favor of God and the fact that the people have a mind to work?

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At a joint meeting of the Session and Trustees of the Presbyterian Church, held in Beverly, N. J., Tuesday Evening, April 12th, at the house of J. T. Henderson, Esq. :

It was unanimously *Resolved* to add the names of Rev. Chas. E. Lord and J. T. Henderson, Esq., to the Committee for obtaining subscriptions for a New Church Edifice.

The Committee now consists of

F. S. HOVEY,  
CAPT. W. B. BAILLEE,  
SAMUEL WORK,  
J. T. HENDERSON,  
REV. CHAS. E. LORD.