

BUILDER  
FORGE

Address delivered Monday 28 April 1843 at the laying the  
foundation stone for a church in Pelham in the presence of his  
Family & Friends.

By Robert Bolton

The practice of building a house for the worship of God is of great antiquity. In the time of the Patriarchs, when his people were very few in number & much scattered, his service was conducted in their own dwellings. They were in the habit, indeed of raising altars in particular places to commemorate some great event of their lives & on which they presented their various offerings. As when Noah went forth from the ark Gen 8.18 &c And when Abraham left his Father's house at God's command & came into the land of Canaan Gen 12.7 &c When Isaac after various removals came to Beersheba Gen 26.24. And you remember the instance of Jacob on his journey when he fled from his Brother Esau & lighted upon a certain place where he lay down to rest & was favored with that remarkable vision & when awaking he exclaimed "Surely the Lord is in this place" Gen 28.16 to end - Thus were all their journeys & temporary residences marked by some devotional exercise which while

I served to mislead the event on their hearts shewed their lively  
sense of their dependence on God & gratitude to him -

But the regular services of religion were performed in the midst  
of their families, at the domestic altar. Here they acknowledged &  
worshipped their common Father in heaven with a daily service -  
Here they remembered his holy day by resting from all their labors  
engaging in suitable exercises. Here their children servants  
were taught the truths of their holy religion & especially to believe  
in the promised Messiah. In all these services the Patriarch was the  
Prophet Priest & King in his own house. In this domestic piety  
Abraham was an eminent example as he was in his faith Gen 18.19  
It was the renunciation of this character by Esau & the consequent  
abandonment of his domestic piety which caused the scripture  
to call him a profane person. And it would be well for all heads  
of families who are living without the worship of God in their  
houses to ask themselves whether they are not acting over again  
this profanity & exposing themselves to a still more awful judgment  
by the God of all the families of the earth, "who will pour out his fury  
upon the heathen that know him not, & upon the families that  
call not on his name." It was in this way too, doubtless, that

The descendants of Jacob maintained the knowledge & worship  
of the God of their Fathers during their long sojourn in the land  
of Egypt. When they were rescued from the house of bondage  
entered the wilderness, they could assemble together as a Congrega-  
tion. Now the whole of that wonderful & instructive journey we  
see the regular service of God carefully provided for & sustained.  
But it was not until long after their settlement in the prom-  
ised land that they had rest & leisure from their wars to build an  
house for the Lord. This honor was reserved for Solomon who as the  
Prince of Peace & the builder of the Temple was an eminent  
type of a far greater who is giving peace to the hearts of his people  
building an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The accounts the sacred writers have given us of the laying the  
foundation of the temple of Solomon, its form, structure & ornaments  
of its dedication all so full of magnificence is calculated to  
impress our minds, as it was intended to do theirs, with the peculiar  
features of that dispensation, which was by sensible objects to lead  
them forward stepward to the still higher things of the spiritual  
dispensation of the gospel & their final consummation in the things  
of the heavenly world itself. When that temple became  
desecrated by the introduction of Idolatry it could no longer be  
honored by the presence of the only living & true God & must therefore

be destroyed, while at the same time the infatuated people were carried into Captivity.

A second time was it built, though under far less temporal prosperity, yet with a far higher design, it was destined to behold within its walls the Saviour of the world. Thus the glory of the latter house was to be greater than that of the former as the Lord had said in it did he give peace & the Lord whom his people sought suddenly came to his Temple." We all know its end. Having subserved the great purpose for which it was intended, it passed away with the dispensation of which it formed a leading feature.

With the coming of the Saviour began the spiritual dispensation of the gospel & an order of services suited to it, which while their aim is to form the life of God within us & to teach us to walk by faith not by sight, yet do not dispense with outward forms & acts of devotion. Since they can & do if rightly used aid us in worshipping God in the Spirit.

Our Blessed Lord himself instituted the outward forms of baptism & the Lord's supper which we acknowledge to be "the outward & visible signs of inward & spiritual grace" we believe that every act of devotion that is consistent with this spiritual dispensation is also acceptable to him. And such we conceive to be the building of a house for his worship, which is the object that has brought us

together this Day.

I suppose this known to every person here present that there is not a building of any description devoted exclusively to the public worship of God in Pelham. There are I know private dwellings in it where he is feared & served by his people but there has been no place where these families could congregate without going to some distance & as the population has increased this want has been increasing.

When in the Providence of God, I was brought into this neighborhood, the duty of providing such a place seemed to devolve upon me every day tends to confirm my conviction of its importance & necessity. Indeed so sensible was I of the destitution of my own immediate neighborhood vicinity that as soon as I entered my own dwelling, as is known to many of you, I commenced a public service in it which has been continued for the space of about 3 years. For I felt something as David did when he said "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up unto my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to <sup>mine</sup> eye-lids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." And we have felt that it was indeed a high honor to which we were called in having our house thus employed for his service - And as we

the Case with Obed-edom, in whose house the ark continued  
3 Months. "The Lord blessed Obededom & all his household because  
of the ark of God." So we have found it. God has greatly blessed  
me & mine. I feel a holy jealousy of the Church about to be  
built here. I should by no means have consented to the loss  
if I had not believed that by bringing the service into a  
suitable church we were likely to gain & do still more good.  
To accomplish this great object but little effort has been  
necessary. If I could have effected it by my own means I  
should most cheerfully have done so. But Christian friend  
ship & liberality have anticipated to a considerable extent  
our wants & the readiness with which we have been  
aided in this good work, has made the humble part we  
had to perform a source of pleasure. I avail myself of  
this first public opportunity I have had to acknowledge  
their uniform kindness. May they reap spiritual things  
both here & hereafter -

I sincerely hope that our motives in this undertaking will  
not be misunderstood by any one. I could have wished that  
the site had been more central, but as there was none such

to be found, we must be thankful for what we have.  
If your earnest desire shall be our study & endeavour not  
to interfere with other Churches in neighboring Parishes.  
In any single instance we appear to do so we hope they  
will feel assured that it must be a case over which we have  
no control. We aspire at no higher name than that which  
I Isaac gave to his well, Rehoboth. The said farm the Lord  
hath made room for us here shall be fruitful in the land-  
Gen 26. 22. We ask no more than to be allowed to enter in  
the holy race of serving God & doing good to our perishing  
Fellow Creatures -

We hope too that other Denominations of Christians  
around us will not look on this undertaking as an act  
of hostility towards them. Hostility among Christians from  
whence could such a feeling arise? Out of the sacred word  
of God? No does the word of the God of Peace & Love. Could it  
arise from the Spirit of Christ? No his holy fruit is love & peace.  
It must be an enemy that could do this. The Lord's command  
to his family is "be at peace among yourselves." As much as  
lieth in us we will follow peace with all his people. Let

Let them remember that preference is not exclusion.  
That while we are sincerely attached to our forms of  
worship it is only as to forms & not as to essentials, because  
we deem them important, not indispensable - Because  
that importance arises, from estimation from scriptural  
authority & sanction - But while we hold the unity of the  
faith it is in the bond of peace, our motto of prayer is "Peace  
be to the Brethren" - Come with faith, from God the Father & the Lord  
Jesus Christ - Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ  
in sincerity.

With regard to the doctrines we hold & which by God's grace,  
will be preached in the church, the foundation of which  
we are this day laying, we wish it to be clearly & distinctly  
known by all, that they are those alone which are derived from  
God's holy word - which were taught & exemplified by our  
beloved Lord himself - which have ever been held most precious  
by Patriarchs, Prophets & Apostles - They are those for which the  
Martyrs shed their blood & which have been from those days  
of trial & purification of the church the doctrines of every  
sound Protestant - I may sum them up in a few words

The total fall & corruption of our nature - Our complete  
redemption through the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ  
& the renovation of our hearts & lives by the Holy Spirit the Lord  
& giver of life - From these every other doctrine of the gospel  
radiates & in them it centres -

We presume not to go beyond the sacred bounds of scripture  
in our faith & practise - for here only are we safe & here only are  
we invincible - With "the sword of the spirit which is the  
word of God" in our hands we go forth in the holy war against  
the works of the devil, which are sin ignorance selfrighteousness  
& superstition, to bring the lost sinner to renounce himself  
& all creature dependence & to rest alone on divine grace  
for his salvation -

We maintain, therefore, supreme & inviolable, the perfect  
word of God & the right of private judgment, according to the  
divine institution & authority "Search the scriptures" - for in  
them ye think ye have eternal life & they are they which  
testify of me - "I shall claim for our church no higher distinction  
of a part of the blessed company of all faithful people  
than that of a congregation of faithful men in the which the  
pure word of God is preached & the sacraments of Baptism & the

Lord's Supper) are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." In these principles we hope too to instruct the children of our Sunday School, as we ever have done, that we may train them up in the way they should go - in the ~~sure~~ <sup>safe</sup> administration of the Lord."

And now Right Rev Sir & my Brethren in the ministry & friends with such motives & principles we were emboldened to invite you to be present & take part in the proceedings of this day. Actuated by these we can earnestly implore & confidently hope for the divine blessing on our undertaking. We can & do entreat your prayers for us that the word of the Lord may here have free course & be glorified, that so there may ever be "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, & good will toward men." The glory in excelsis was then sung -