

"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US"

"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." I Samuel 7:12.

There are times when we ought more particularly to take a retrospective view of God's dealings with us, both for the purpose of exciting our gratitude towards Him, and also of encouraging ourselves to trust in Him for the future. Such peculiar seasons are the return of a birthday, or the end or the beginning of a year. Thus, Samuel acted. From a sense of gratitude for special mercies to Israel he erected a memorial pillar and inscribed thereon "Ebenezer," saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This crude stone was a simple and inexpensive device but no monument ever reared by human hands was more pleasing to God. It is well for us on this memorable occasion to imitate his splendid example.

On May 9, 1948 I was your guest preacher. On May 16, at the morning service, you invited me to become your pastor. I accepted the church as it was because I believed it to be the will of God for me to do so. In no way was I responsible for the condition in which I found the church nor for any previous happenings. I came to the pulpit on August 1, 1948. The situation has been difficult and the work has not been easy, but the Lord has been with us and has blessed us.

Through our yielding ourselves to Him, our Lord has accomplished some things:

1. The salvation of souls from week to week.
2. Two hundred and forty-five additions to the church.
3. A weekly radio ministry.
4. An establishment of a mission.
5. The erection of a beautiful and commodious educational building.
6. The increase of one thousand dollars per year for missions.
7. An increase in Sunday School attendance of approximately fifty per cent.

I am grateful to God for His marvelous blessings upon us. To Him be all the glory and praise for it. I am glad to have had the privilege of working with you in this great task of building this educational building. I want to compliment and congratulate you upon this achievement. I rejoice with you over it. This building is a splendid tribute to this congregation and an asset to Murray. No one need be ashamed to bring any guest to see the building. It will compare favorably with similar buildings in our state. We have more for our money than most others do, due to good management, good work and careful buying. I have nothing to say about it except commendation and appreciation. I have no fault to find with anyone or anything. I would like to express sincere and special gratitude to the nine men in the church who have worked faithfully at the task of erecting this building according to plans. They have given their time and work and have traveled at their own expense. There is much satisfaction in knowing that you have had a part in it. I sincerely hope that the church appreciates what has been done.

As members of this church we now dedicate to our Lord this beautiful and commodious building to be used for Him and His glory and for the welfare of all those who may enter its doors through the coming years.