

Bethel's Natal Day.

W. R. Thompson, D.D.

Dear Bethel, house of God, so fair;
Bedecked with locks now turned to gray,
We bring love's tribute to thy shrine,
On this Centennial Natal Day.

One hundred years, have come and gone,
And left upon thy honored head,
A silvered crown, with stars of gold,
Which glory through the years will shed;

Symbolic of the souls redeemed,
Who now increase the chorus, grand,
Of those, in white, in ransomed throng,
Who swell the song, at God's right hand.

Historic is the place we meet,
With tender mem'ries redolent,
As by-gone days come flitting past,
Those hallow'd days of sweet content.

Primeval forests, dark and dense,
Where giant oaks their branches spread;
Where red men, unmolested trod,
And sought for food, their meat and bread;

Where bruin roamed the forests through,
And panther's cry broke even'ng hour,
Where whipporwill sang mournful song,
And owl-hoot came from leafy bow'r;

Where rushing streams their torrents sent,
Along the fertile, wooded vale,
Affording crystal waters pure,
To man and beast, 'mid hill and dale.

'Twas here your sires and mothers, brave,
Established homes, where joy might reign,
Where children of a cov'nant God
Were taught to fear His hallow'd name;

From out these forests, dense, they carv'd
Loved homes, which shelter would afford,
Where sacred altar-fires might burn
To God, that One their hearts adored.

From valley deep and fertile slope,
They fell'd the forests, plough'd the fields,
Then sowed the seed, in faith and hope,
That harvest rich the soil might yield.

They likewise heard the call of need,
To sow seed of living truth,
Within the growing minds and hearts
Of sons and daughters, in their youth.

This realized, in high degree,
Began in trust, at parent's knee,
Where word was taught, with pray'r and song,
In love, that these might wisdom see.

They planned not only for their own,
That they might know of wisdom's ways,
But broader, wider was the love
Possessing these in early days:

Hence larger things were then proposed,
With neighbors, schools for all the youth,
Where arts and sciences were taught,
With Bible, text-book, fount of truth:

Yea, seeing that immortal minds,
Would through the generations live,
An influ'nce—should be trained for God,
That nations might Him rev'rence give.

A house of God, 'mid forest's shades,
Where pray'r and song, as incense rose,
Where holy men expounded truth,
Declared men's sins their greatest foes;

That God, in love had sent His Son,
A Saviour for the sin-cursed race,