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BY

JOSEPH M. WILSON.

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"In several important respects our departed brother was greatly distinguished. He was naturally of a warm, affectionate, social disposition, and his piety and devotion to the cause of Christ were of a very high order, forming altogether a character of uncommon earnestness. He was remarkably humble, simple and childlike in all his intercourse, and by his holy life every one acquainted with him was forcibly impressed. He was a man of unusual liberality; exercising, too, a constant economy and self-denial that he might apply a larger proportion of the means which God had given him to the relief of the destitute and suffering. His charities were unceasing, and a large part of his time was spent in searching out the poor, the sick, the afflicted in every form, and ministering to their temporal and spiritual welfare. Very frequently his benefactions were concealed, his left hand not knowing what his right hand did. He was wonderfully gentle, sympathizing and compassionate, and everywhere his visits of mercy were welcomed as those of a cordial friend and of a faithful man of God. Of a particularly catholic spirit, he mingled freely and affectionately with his fellow-Christians, and was often in the pulpits of his fellow-ministers of other evangelical denominations. All were dear to him that loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. He began so early himself to follow Christ, that, although cut off in the prime of his usefulness, he might be said to have spent a long life in going about doing good.

"The Presbytery would record, with gratitude to almighty God, their deep sense of the many important services to the cause of religion, and to the Presbyterian Church, rendered by their deceased brother, and would pray for grace at once to improve his Christian example, and to learn effectually the solemn lesson which his unexpected removal was fitted to teach and impress."

SIMONTON, ASHBEL GREEN—Youngest son of Dr. William and Martha (Snodgrass) Simonton, of West Hanover, Dauphin county, Pa., was born Jan. 20, 1833. His paternal grandfather was a physician, and a man of deep piety. His father was also a physician. He studied Latin under the tuition of Rev. James R. Sharon, pastor of the Presbyterian churches of Paxton and Derry, near Harrisburg, Pa., and was a graduate of the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pa. He was a ruling elder of the Derry church, and for four years a member of Congress, his term of office closing in 1843. While in Washington he was a member of the Congressional prayer meeting. The change from active to sedentary life and close attention to public business greatly impaired his health. He died May 17, 1846, in the 58th year of his age.

The mother of Ashbel was the second daughter of the Rev. James Snodgrass, for 58 years pastor of the Hanover Presbyterian church, in Dauphin county, Pa. She was born Nov. 25, 1791. Her marriage with Dr. William Simonton took place in 1815.

When Ashbel was baptized, his father, who was an ardent admirer of the late Rev. Ashbel Green, D.D., one of the presidents of Nassau Hall, now the College of New Jersey, Princeton, N. J., gave him the name of this good man, "in the hope," as he expressed it, "that his son would some day become a Dr. Green."

His classical education began in the Harrisburg (Pa.) Academy, under the tuition of the Rev. Mahlon Long. After two years' preparatory study, he entered the College of New Jersey, where he took a full course, and was graduated in 1852. His scholarship and acquirements were much above the ordinary level. His taste for reading led him to store his mind with the

literary treasures accessible to him in the libraries of the college and the hall with which he was connected.

In the autumn of 1852 he went to the South with his brother James, and took charge of an academy for boys in Starkville, Miss., where he taught with much interest and success for eighteen months. During this period he endeared himself greatly to both his patrons and pupils. They parted with him very reluctantly when his engagement expired. Besides taking a general interest in the welfare of the community, he instructed the young in the rudiments of sacred music, and led the praises of the sanctuary. He here formed acquaintances and friendships which were afterward renewed in Brazil, South America. Among those who became interested in him were several ministers and other pious persons, upon whose minds he made the impression that he ought to abandon the idea of studying the Law, which was then his purpose, and prepare for the ministry.

He returned to Harrisburg, Pa., where the family resided, early in July, 1854, and entered upon the study of Blackstone.

The winter of 1854-5 being a time of special religious awakening among the churches of Harrisburg, he became deeply interested in the subject of his personal salvation. After referring, under date of March 10, 1855, to the transcendent importance of the matter, to the transient character of the impressions made upon his mind during the great revival in the College of New Jersey in 1849-50, and to the motives inducing him to attend the inquiry-meetings, he writes: "I am now resolved in God's promised strength to go forward and endeavor to serve him, whether a bright light shines around my path or not; to confess before men my desire and resolution to forsake the world and seek an interest in the atoning blood of Christ. . . ." March 13. "I believe that for the past three years it has been the uniform desire of my heart to become a Christian. I have seen the reasonableness of serving God, and that in serving him there is great gain, both in this life and in that which is to come. . . . I have read much and reflected often and seriously on these things; and frequently in my lonely walks as I sat overlooking some lovely landscape smiling under a cloudless sky, I have felt that to be able to say that the Creator of so much beauty is my Friend and cares for me would be far higher joy than earth can give; or at night, when only the quiet stars looked down upon me, thoughts of the loved dead and of the bliss of meeting them in heaven, and spending an eternity in loving and learning to comprehend truths here dimly shadowed forth, there clear as noonday, have crowded into my mind and raised it so high that the world and its concerns shrank into insignificance by very contrast. But, alas! such impressions, though frequent, produced only a few weak efforts after this good, and then I relapsed into my former passive state."

The "breaking in of the light" upon his soul was a gradual process. He continued to attend the inquiry-meetings for several weeks, and about the first of May was admitted to the privileges of the Church.

Among the questions asked him at his examination by the session was one with reference to his willingness to preach the gospel if it should appear that he was called to this work. The question is thus answered in his journal: "My feelings in this respect have been remarkable. I was in baptism consecrated to this work, and through life the conviction has rested upon me that I was answerable for the vows assumed for me by my parents, and I have looked forward to the day when I should fulfill those vows. And what is stranger still, it has been one of the strongest wishes of the past three or four years that I might be fitted and called to preach the gospel.

Another thing that has deepened this desire is the interest everywhere expressed in me, and the confident hope entertained that finally I would study for the ministry—at home, among friends, and even among comparative strangers. And now, if it seems to be my duty and privilege to fulfill these expectations, I will joyfully consent, and bless God that he has put such honor upon me.”

On the evening of May 6, 1855—the day on which he first partook of the Lord's Supper—he made a solemn record in writing of the covenant into which he had entered with God in this sacrament, making particular mention of the obligations and responsibilities henceforth to devolve upon him.

His decision to study theology was quickly made. In two weeks after his first communion season he began to take a daily lesson in Hebrew, and entered the Theological Seminary in Princeton at the opening of the scholastic year, early in September. Just before leaving home he prepared a series of rules for his personal guidance and government while a member of the seminary. These have reference to his attendance on the devotional exercises of the institution, the avoidance of besetting sins, devotional reading of the Bible and other works on experimental religion, constant communion with God, cultivation of the gift of prayer, care of health and proper external behavior.

He was led to consider his duty in relation to the foreign missionary work at an early stage of his theological course. A sermon preached by Dr. Charles Hodge on the duty of the Church as a teacher made a deep impression upon his mind. Alluding to this discourse, he writes: “It has had the effect of leading me to think seriously of the foreign missionary field. The little success apparently attending missionary operations had operated to dissuade me from all thought of the work. But I see I have been wrong. That the heathen are to be converted to God is clearly revealed in Scripture, and I am convinced that day is coming rapidly. Those who are now in the field are preparing the way, and God will not suffer their labor to be in vain. . . . I have heretofore taken it for granted that my sphere of labor would be somewhere in our great and rapidly-growing country. It is, however, a matter to be taken into serious consideration whether, since most prefer to remain, it is not my duty to go.”

He regularly attended the weekly missionary prayer-meeting held by the students most interested in this cause. The monthly concert was also an occasion of deep interest to him. At a service held Feb. 4, 1856, a sketch of the work in New Zealand was given, in which it appeared that the history of missions shows that there is a preparatory process employed. In New Zealand ten years; in the Sandwich Islands nearly twenty; and in Siam our missionaries are still after nine years without fruit; but in every case God has crowned the events. They who do this work will share the reward of those who enter into the results of their labor.

With reference to the selection of a field, he writes thus: “At present the missionary work presents, it seems to me, the most urgent demands, not only because of the greater comparative destitution of the means of grace, but because so few are willing to go thither. If the field is the world, all lands and countries must be occupied, and the refusal of some to go to discouraging stations only renders the duty more imperative on others. To leave one's home, friends and country may seem hard, and will be without doubt; but who knows that by consulting his own comfort even for this life, he can secure it? ‘He that will save his life shall lose it.’ The only safety is in implicit submission to the purposes of God. Under his guidance,

the place of danger is the place of safety, and without his presence we can be safe nowhere."*

He returned by way of the Lakes, and resumed his studies in the seminary.

In October, he attended the annual meeting of the American B. C. F. Missions at Newark, New Jersey, with great enjoyment and profit. The discussions, the hearty songs of praise, but especially the missionary prayer-meetings held every morning for one hour, interested him profoundly and greatly intensified his missionary ardor. "To these meetings," he writes, "all returned missionaries with their families, those under appointments to go, and those having in view the missionary work, were invited. These constituted nearly two hundred, I should think, though perhaps, many like myself, were there by questionable right. Whatever were my views, however, in going in, I certainly felt like being a missionary on coming out. The testimony there given to the happy reward returned into the bosom of the faithful missionary was enough to engage even selfish feelings to that work. From all quarters of the globe there was a unanimous voice in favor of God's goodness to missionaries. Winslow, Schneider, Gleason, Bingham, some of them having served in this work thirty years, all declared their gratitude to God that they had been sent to a foreign field. Goodell of Constantinople said he never knew a missionary who had anything of the spirit of Christ repent of his choice of a field of labor, but had heard many rejoice in the privilege of preaching Christ to the heathen. . . . It is, I am persuaded, a good thing to be a missionary; and I believe that if I had the fitness, and saw my way open providentially to go abroad, I would be willing to go. Faith, patience and self-denial are the cardinal virtues with the missionary. . . ."

The entries made in his journal during his second year in the seminary indicate a growing interest in the missionary work, and at times clearly foreshadow his ultimate decision, though this was purposely reserved until near the end of his theological course.

Early in his last session at the seminary he accidentally injured his knee while taking exercise in the gymnasium. After several weeks' confinement to his room, he gave up study and repaired to Harrisburg for surgical advice and treatment. Here he remained for two months, when he returned to Princeton, still suffering great inconvenience from his disabled limb. The effort to reduce the swelling and inflammation by counter-irritants had failed, and fears began to be entertained that he might wholly lose the use of the knee. To prevent so serious a privation, he sought the advice of Dr. Pancoast of Philadelphia, who startled him by saying his "knee must be bent by force, or the joint would become permanently stiff." He promptly decided to submit to the operation. Meanwhile he attended the spring meeting of the Carlisle Presbytery, at Greencastle, Pa., where he was licensed, April 14, 1858.

The week following his licensure, Dr. Pancoast performed the operation of bending his knee-joint and breaking up the adhesions formed in it with entire success. Ten days afterward he returned home, full of gratitude to God that he had found so skillful a surgeon and had obtained so complete a cure.

His missionary interest suffered no abatement during this temporary in-

* After the seminary term closed, he accompanied his brother Thomas to Iowa, where he spent three months as a colporteur of the Presbyterian Board of Publication. He returned, etc.,

interruption of study. As the result of an interview with J. Leighton Wilson, one of the secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions, his attention was seriously turned to Bogota, in New Granada, as a promising field of labor. With a view to become acquainted with the condition and wants of that country, he corresponded with the Rev. Horace B. Pratt, of the mission already undertaken in Bogota, and who was anxious to have him become his colleague with the least practicable delay.

About this time he was earnestly solicited to engage in the pastoral work at home. Several churches in which he had preached were anxious for his services. A theological professor endeavored to dissuade him from going abroad, on the ground that he could secure eminence as a preacher in this country. But having obtained the cheerful consent of his friends, and especially of his mother, he determined to devote his life to the foreign missionary work. This decision reached, the perplexity of mind previously suffered was at once relieved. "It seemed to me," he writes, "that whenever my face was set to go abroad, I enjoyed peace of mind, and whenever I turned to the home field with desire to remain, I was made uneasy under the fear that I was seeking not the will of God, but my own ease."

His formal application to the Board for appointment as a foreign missionary was sent to New York on the 25th of October, 1858. In it he made mention of Brazil as the field in which he was most deeply interested, but committed the final decision of the question to the judgments of the Board. On the 6th of December the Executive Committee of the Board decided to send him to Brazil, reserving, however, the right to designate him to another field in case he found the way was not prepared for systematic missionary efforts in that country. Their expectation was, however, that he should be the pioneer of a numerous company of laborers who should long continue to be a blessing to Brazil.

His appreciation of the difficulties of the work before him, and of his dependence upon Divine assistance, is shown by the following remarks: "What can one or two feeble missionaries accomplish in an empire as large as the United States, and in a city nearly as large as Philadelphia? It will be a great trial of faith and patience. The work is so perfectly hopeless by mere human agency that they who undertake it must either find support by resting upon the power of God, or else despair. If I am indeed called to make headway against all the forces of infidelity, superstition and stupid indifference, may God grant me Paul's experience that when I am weak, then am I strong, and may I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." . . . "Notwithstanding all the difficulties and responsibilities of the proposed mission, I cannot refuse to go. . . . If the Reformation triumphed so gloriously in the sixteenth century when the same state of things existed, may we not hope that the saving power of divine truth will again be displayed in the nineteenth century in South America?" . . .

After the definite settlement of this question, he spent a few weeks with the Rev. W. H. Foote, D.D., of Romney, Va., for the purpose of recruiting his health and extending his acquaintance with the churches. Under Dr. Foote's direction he preached in several neighboring congregations, and made such a favorable impression that he was earnestly solicited to reconsider his resolution to go abroad, and remain in that part of the country.

The time fixed upon for his departure to Brazil was May, 1859. Meanwhile he went to New York, where he spent two months taking lessons in the Portuguese language, and lecturing, as opportunity was afforded, upon Brazil.

He was ordained by the Presbytery of Carlisle, April 14, 1859, at Harrisburg. His sermon on this occasion was upon the words, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." It was an able presentation of the claims of the unevangelized upon the Church, and was published the following summer in Dr. Van Renssalaer's Presbyterian Magazine. The ordination discourse was preached by his uncle, the Rev. Wm. D. Snodgrass, D. D., from Rev. xiv. 6. The charge was delivered by the Rev. Thomas Creigh, D. D., and was fraught with instruction, stimulus and encouragement to the newly-ordained evangelist, about to enter a distant and difficult field of labor. The deeply solemn exercises were closed by singing the missionary chant commencing, "My soul is not at rest," which was a favorite with him.

By the advice of Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, he visited the Western Seminary, at Alleghany, Pa., to make the acquaintance of Mr. Alexander L. Blackford, who had also just been ordained as a missionary to Brazil. A few days' conference of the two young missionaries, afterward brothers-in-law and colleagues, sufficed to establish relations of friendship which were uninterrupted until Mr. Simonton's death.

June 18, 1859, he sailed from Baltimore, Md., in the merchant ship "Ban-shee," Captain Kane, for Rio de Janeiro. His mother and his brother John saw him on board, and united with him in a parting prayer in his stateroom. "I shall often," he writes in his journal, "as I kneel there, feel that I am still in communion with those who lately knelt beside me. . . . It is a bitter thing to part. It would be more bitter still were there not an assured hope of meeting above, where there are no more separations."

As Captain Kane denied him the privilege of holding public services on board, he formed the sailors into a Bible class, and gave them familiar instructions on each Sabbath afternoon of the voyage. Some of them received their first impressions of divine truth from his lips. He prepared two sermons for these weatherbeaten sons of the sea, in which he unfolded the marrow of the gospel in terms suited to awaken interest in their untutored minds. One was from the words, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" the other, "Come, for all things are now ready."

The voyage was greatly enjoyed. Under date of July 12, long. 43° 37', lat. 19° 48', he writes: "I know of nothing possessing for me such interest—even fascination—as a night-watch on deck at sea. The influences of the scene so accord with high and holy thoughts and musings that the soul feels as if refined of much of its grossness. Perhaps it is because the sea in its vastness and incessant movement is to the mind and imagination a symbol of the infinite—of the infinite of active being—of the soul of man—of God himself."

He arrived at Rio de Janeiro on the 12th of August. His first act after landing was to review the mercies of the Lord in vouchsafing him a prosperous voyage, and to consecrate himself anew to his service. "I do feel that he is my only trust and refuge. I have nothing to bear me up, to nerve me with hope and give me patience and comfort, but the conviction and testimony of my conscience that I have come here in obedience to the command of my Lord and Saviour, who is possessed of all power both in heaven and on earth—that I do his work and he is pledged to be with me. Without this I am paralyzed and will labor in vain. Christ within me by his Spirit—Christ the end and inspirer of all I do is my deep want."

He was very kindly received by American merchants and others resident in Rio, to whom he had letters of introduction, and found also warm friends among the English families of the place. A few Christian hearts gave him a peculiarly cordial welcome to their society. The encouragement received

at their hands was highly appreciated and devoutly acknowledged. Their assistance in procuring for him suitable accommodations and in paving the way for commencing his work was of great value.

For some months he preached as opportunity was afforded to the English-speaking population. He took a deep interest in the welfare of the seamen visiting the port, and held frequent services on shipboard for their benefit. But as his great object was to make known the gospel to the natives of Brazil, the acquisition of the Portuguese language engaged his chief attention. Finding that the customs of society denied him the privilege of boarding in a private family, and thus of hearing the vernacular familiarly spoken, he determined to master it without any such advantage. He accordingly studied the principles of the grammar, and then with the aid of the lexicon "saturated himself" with the literature of the country. Keeping steadily in view the great object, a thorough knowledge of the language, he read whatever came within his reach, irrespective of subject or author. By this means he made rapid progress in this indispensable part of his preparatory work.

That he might, as the pioneer of the Board in Brazil, be able to report respecting the social and religious condition and wants of the people, he made frequent journeys into the country adjacent to Rio, carefully observing what fell under his eye. In December, 1860, he ventured farther into the interior, and made an exploration of the province of São Paulo, distributing the Bible and religious tracts wherever he went. After three months thus spent, he returned to Rio, fully persuaded of the magnitude and importance of the field, and satisfied as well that the way was prepared for extensive operations in that province.

He began a Bible class, May 19, 1861, at three o'clock P. M. Concerning it, he writes: "It was with some tremor that I awaited the hour. Two were present and seemed interested. I began with Matthew's Gospel. The second Sabbath three were present, the third more, and on the fourth it was a most gladsome sight to see the room fill up with men and women waiting to be taught the word of God."

A week-day evening service soon followed with an encouraging attendance, and was regularly maintained until Jan. 12, 1862, when a church was formally organized, and the Lord's Supper administered for the first time. One of the persons received was a native of Portugal. His baptism added to the interest of the occasion. In the services, which were conducted in both English and Portuguese, Mr. Simonton was assisted by the Rev. F. J. C. Schneider, a newly-arrived missionary of the Presbyterian Board, and the third ordained laborer then in Brazil. The Rev. Alex. L. Blackford and wife had landed in Rio, July 25, 1860.

It was with sincere satisfaction and profound gratitude to God that Mr. Simonton contemplated the results of his labors up to this time. He was already reaping fruits denied to missionaries in other lands after many years of painful, prayerful toil. "God be thanked," he wrote, "that our feeble faith has been confirmed by seeing that it is not in vain that we preach the gospel."

He had contemplated a visit to the United States toward the close of 1862, when his colleague, Mr. Blackford, should be able to continue in Portuguese the services he had begun. The feebleness of his mother's health induced him to set out earlier in the year. He sailed March 16 for New York, where he landed in the latter part of April.

During this visit he made the acquaintance of Miss Helen Murdock, daughter of William F. Murdock, Esq., of Baltimore, Md., to whom he was

married, March 19, 1863. While in this country he visited the Portuguese colonies in Springfield and Jacksonville, Illinois. He also supplied the church at Ellicott's Mills, Md., while making preparations to return to Brazil.

He sailed with his wife for Rio, May 23, 1863, and after a favorable passage dropped anchor in the harbor July 16th. On the first Sabbath after landing, he was greatly cheered to see the room in which the service was held crowded with attentive worshipers. August 9 there were eight additions to the church, four of them native Brazilians. "It was a joyful occasion to me," he writes, "for I recalled my first landing and the feeble beginnings of the work." Larger accommodations were soon demanded for his increased audiences. A room capable of seating one hundred and fifty persons was rented. In September a Sabbath-school was organized. It began with seven children—four English, one German and two Brazilian. "Sabbath, Oct. 4, celebrated the Lord's Supper. Four were baptized and publicly received."

After Mr. Simonton's return to Rio, it was deemed best to enlarge the operations of the mission by taking possession of the province of São Paulo in the name of the Master. Mr. and Mrs. Blackford accordingly left Rio to occupy the new field early in October. In reference to this change, he writes: "It is an important date in our mission. Mr. B. undertakes a work of responsibility—to teach Christ under the walls of the University of São Paulo. Upon myself mainly will devolve the responsibility of the work in Rio. God grant me grace to do his will."

"March 19, 1864. This is the first anniversary of our marriage—a day of pleasant recollections and grateful feelings. A year of blessing almost unmixed has passed, calling for warm gratitude to God and penitent confession of unworthiness and unfaithfulness."

June 19, 1864, he gratefully records the birth of a daughter—an event speedily followed by an occasion of overwhelming sorrow. This was the death of his wife, which occurred June 28. Only those who have been called to endure a like ordeal of affliction under like circumstances can understand what such a bereavement means. To a missionary in a foreign land it is an incalculable loss. Mr. S. experienced all that sense of loneliness, desolation and giving way of incentive natural to one in his situation, but nevertheless bore the trial with exemplary meekness and resignation to his heavenly Father's will. This is manifest from his own words: "Just when my cup of earthly happiness was full, the chief source of my joy is taken from me. Every waking moment tells me of my loss. I feel a void which nothing can fill save God alone. Thanks to his name for access to him in prayer, and the assurance that he is my Father and careth for me! . . . Thanks to Him who died and rose again for the firm belief that these natural feelings, so wholly rebellious against what has happened, do not tell the whole truth—that there is a balm even for such wounds as these! Heaven is the home of the believer; it is my home. All that is dearest to me is there—father, mother, sisters, wife—JESUS is there."

Care for his motherless child now occupied his thoughts. He first offered her to the grandparents, provided they would make arrangements to have her conveyed to Baltimore under charge of a competent nurse. This offer having been declined, he gave her to his sister, Mrs. Blackford, who accepted the responsible trust and removed the child at once to her own home in São Paulo. Though this arrangement involved the separation of father and child, and was to him a severe trial, yet under the circumstances in which he was placed it was to him entirely satisfactory.

Having made this favorable disposition of his child, he girded himself anew for his work. The lesson drawn from God's dealings with him was that of more unreserved consecration to his service. Instead, therefore, of abating his zeal or giving way to morbid feeling in view of his bereavement, and the consequent reversal of his hopes, he threw himself more heartily into the work of winning souls. In this he found a measure of relief from his burden of sorrow, while the success attending his efforts afforded him occasion for unceasing gratitude.

The time had now come for the employment of a new agency in the dissemination of the truth. The mission had thus far no printing press under its control. The labors of the brethren were confined to teaching, preaching and colportage. Under the conviction that light might be widely diffused, and many intelligent minds reached which could not be induced to attend a Protestant religious service, he took the lead in the establishment of a semi-monthly paper, through whose regular issues the influence of the mission might be greatly extended. It was called "*The Evangelical Press*" (*Imprensa Evangelica*), and first appeared in November, 1864. Concerning it he writes: "Yesterday morning three friends came to our house to receive the original articles for the first number. . . . I feel more the responsibility that attaches to this step than anything else that has been undertaken. We first knelt in prayer and committed our enterprise and ourselves to Divine control and direction. The way seems to be prepared, and we can only go forward boldly."

The three persons who at first assisted him in the management of the paper were native members of the church in Rio. The greater part of the labor of writing for its columns and superintending its publication devolved upon him until September, 1866, when Mr. Schneider was transferred to Rio, and became his assistant. Although the demands made upon him of an editorial character were severe, in addition to preaching thrice per week in Portuguese, and generally once in English, yet they were met *con amore*. Having acquired facility in the use of the language, he composed with great ease and pleasure to himself. Educated Brazilians acknowledged their surprise at the elegance and force with which he wrote in their native tongue. The unanimous persuasion of those who read his leading articles in the *Imprensa* was that they were characterized by great ability, clearness and comprehension of the subjects treated. His controversial papers were models of fairness, logical, strong and incisive, ever commanding high respect, even where they failed to carry conviction to an antagonist.

The *Imprensa* continued to be with him a favorite means of spreading the truth among the native population of Brazil. And during the three years of his connection with it much good, it is believed, was effected through its instrumentality. Its circulation increased, and more and more attracted the attention of thinking Brazilians. The Roman Catholic organs, which at the first scarcely deigned to notice the unpretending little journal, ere long found themselves forced to change their tactics or allow their cause to suffer.

Toward the close of March, 1865, he made a missionary tour into the province of São Paulo, accompanied by George Chamberlain. Among the places visited was Brotás, where they spent ten days. Of what occurred here he writes: "A Capuchin friar had just finished a protracted meeting, and the friends of the gospel were somewhat intimidated. The attendance at our meetings was better than we expected, and the effect of the truth very manifest. Nearly all who came—and among them were some of the principal men of the village—were gained over as friends. I never so realized the excellence of the gospel and its perfect suitableness to convince and save

those who are in earnest to know the truth. The interest of these days, in explaining the word, answering objections, etc., was most absorbing. I found more of heart and of religious earnestness in this community than elsewhere, and conceived great hopes of the rapid propagation of the gospel in Brazil."

He returned to his post in Rio early in May. The news of Lee's surrender, of the suppression of the great rebellion, and of the assassination of President Lincoln, reached that city in quick succession. When it was no longer possible to doubt that the last-mentioned sad event had occurred, he was requested to preach a sermon to the American residents upon the occasion. He consented, and with only one day for preparation, wrote a discourse which was delivered at a special service, on Sabbath, May 21, 1865, to the largest assembly of his countrymen he had seen in Rio. It was founded upon Psalm xlii. 1-3, and gave such general satisfaction that a copy of it was asked for publication. The discourse was remarkable for its breadth of view, its philosophical tone, its enlightened and ardent patriotism, and for the force and eloquence with which it set forth the duty of trust in God under the overwhelming calamity that had fallen upon our beloved country. In enforcing this high obligation upon his countrymen he only marked out for them the path in which he was himself accustomed to walk. At no time, not even during the darkest hours of the rebellion, did his faith in the final issue of the contest fail him. He confidently believed that God would deliver his country from all the efforts its enemies could put forth for its destruction or dismemberment.

It was his habit to visit his sister and brother-in-law at São Paulo once a year, and spend a few weeks with his child, in whose favorable development he took parental pride. These visits afforded him also opportunity for needed relaxation from his ever-increasing and exhausting labors in Rio. Constant writing for the *Imprensa*, multiplied preaching services in both Portuguese and English, acting as treasurer of the mission and general correspondent for its book and tract operations, in addition to numerous pastoral cares made heavy demands upon his time and strength.

During his visit to São Paulo near the close of 1865, the Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro was organized, and Senhor Conceição, a converted Romish priest, was ordained. The Presbytery now consisted of four members: The Revs. A. G. Simonton, A. L. Blackford, F. J. C. Schneider, and the newly-ordained Senhor Conceição. Its next meeting was held in Rio in June, 1866, when Mr. Geo. Chamberlain was ordained, making a fifth member of the body.

At the close of this year, which was one of incessant devotion to his work, we find the last entry made in his journal. After his customary review of the state of the world, he closes thus:

"In the retrospect of my own life during the year, I feel self-condemned. I can point to some labor performed as best I could, but have I progressed heavenward? Here it is that I feel myself lacking. I cannot get beyond the prayer of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

After the death of his wife in 1864, and the consequent breaking up of his home, frequent removals and changes in his domestic arrangements became necessary. Relief from these perplexities was sought in more intense devotion to his work. In order to facilitate his operations, he took a house in the heart of the city, and more immediately in the neighborhood of his church than any heretofore occupied. The situation was on this account deemed ineligible as a residence by some of his friends. To their remonstrance he replied that foreign merchants lived in that part of the city for

the purposes of trade; foreign missionaries ought to be equally self-denying.

It was in this locality that the last few months of his life were spent in absorbing zeal for the promotion of his Master's cause. Here his overtaxed energies began to give way under the gradual approaches of the disease which for ever ended his earthly activities. Unable to continue his labors, he determined to make his annual visit to São Paulo earlier than usual, and accordingly left Rio the last week in November, 1867, hoping that a twenty-four hours' ride in a steamer would induce sea-sickness and relieve his bilious system. The sea was, however, so calm that the expected nausea and relief were not experienced. He arrived at São Paulo on Wednesday, Nov. 27. Though far from well, he complained but little, feeling assured that rest and a change of climate would soon restore him. Anxious to complete an article for the *Imprensa* before taking medicine, he wrote a few pages, but was compelled to desist in the midst of an unfinished sentence. The subject of the article on hand was the Sacrament of Baptism, and the last word traced by his untiring pen was the Portuguese for Holy Spirit—*Espírito Santo*. He complained of severe pain across the forehead. The best physician within reach, an American and a man of eminent piety, was called in on Friday. He prescribed for him, and left with the remark that he expected to hear him preach on Sabbath. The next evening (Saturday) he took a warm bath and felt better. Before retiring for the night he said he "prized the blessing of health more than formerly." Another remark was that he had "often felt curious to see the revelations of the future." Sabbath morning he arose as usual, though still complaining of severe pain in the head.

The doctor was again sent for, but was visiting patients in the country. When he returned in the afternoon, he was surprised to find him in a high fever and that his prescriptions had not produced the desired effect. Feeling that the case was one of a serious and even critical nature, he directed the attendants to watch him closely through the night and administer the medicines with regularity. On Monday evening the doctor pronounced him better, but he soon afterward became restless and was very ill all night. The next day he was easier and slept for a time, but grew worse as the evening came on. On Wednesday a consulting physician was called in, and, with the attending physician, was at his bedside every day until he died. Toward the close of Wednesday, Mr. Simonton inquired of his sister whether it was not the prayer-meeting evening. When told that it was, he said: "It would be well for Mr. Blackford to request the prayers of the meeting for me that I may have patience to endure my sufferings." On Thursday his mind wandered, and Friday he was so much deranged that the doctor prescribed a cold-water bath. This afforded him so much relief that it was repeated on Friday night, but with less favorable results. About two o'clock on Saturday morning he was thought to be dying. The household assembled around his bed, prayer was offered and his soul commended to God. After his sister had withdrawn from the room under the supposition that he had expired, her husband still entertaining a hope that he might even yet be spared, followed her, saying, "We must intercede for his life." A fervent prayer was accordingly offered. Soon afterward he revived, warmth was restored to his extremities and he fell into a gentle sleep. When he awoke in the morning, he was quiet, calm and natural. Overjoyed at the faint prospect of recovery thus afforded, yet fearing a relapse and fatal termination of the disease, his sister embraced the opportunity presented by this lucid interval for making some inquiries: "Had he any message for the

friends at home?" "Nothing special," was the reply. "Tell them I loved them to the end." "Had he any message for the Board?" "Tell them to go on with their work." "Any message for his church in Rio, where he would be so much missed?" "God will raise up another to fill my place; he will do his own work with his own instruments." Seeing his sister convulsed with emotion, he said: "We can only lean on the everlasting Arm and be quiet." He also committed his child anew to her care.

This was the main conversation had with him during his illness. So strong was the desire and even persuasion that he should recover, and so imperative the direction of the physicians that he be undisturbed, that little effort was made to elicit an expression of what was passing within the hidden mental and spiritual realm.

On Sabbath morning he was composed, but very weak. When asked if he knew what day it was, he said "it was the Sabbath." Mrs. Blackford read a Psalm, and a colored member of the church led in prayer. He slept at intervals during the day, and strong hopes that he might recover were again entertained. But as the evening came on he became restless, and gradually grew worse as the night advanced. On Monday morning, between two and three o'clock, it was evident he was dying. Many friends besides his sister and brother-in-law were gathered around his bed. Perceiving that all hope of recovery must be abandoned, the doctor, who had scarcely left the house for nearly a week, said, "Let us pray." The company kneeled in solemn yet subdued grief, while the doctor from a full heart poured out a fervent prayer, not for his life, but for a peaceful and speedy death, if it were the Lord's will. He continued unconsciously to sink until half-past four o'clock on the morning of Dec. 9, 1867, when his ransomed soul entered into the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

His friends would gladly have removed his remains to Rio, that they might lie by the side of his wife, but this the law would not permit. It required interment within twenty-four hours after death. He was accordingly buried on the same day that he died. At half-past four o'clock in the afternoon the lifeless form was taken to the room used as a place of worship by the little church of São Paulo, two Englishmen and two Americans officiating as pall-bearers.

After addresses in Portuguese by Mr. Blackford and the Rev. Emanuel Pires, and singing the hymn,

"Fallamos do mundo feliz."

"We speak of the land of the blest,"

a large procession of friends, English, American and members of the missionary church, was formed, and proceeded to the Protestant cemetery, where, "upon a hillside, overlooking the city of São Paulo, toward the plain where Brazil's cry of independence was first uttered, and still echoes," they committed the corruptible body to its kindred element in hope of a glorious resurrection. Says Rev. George Chamberlain of the Brazil Mission, "No fitter resting-place for that temple of the Holy Ghost, whose presence on thy soil, O Brazil! was a blessing; whose burial in it is a bereavement. The voice is hushed that would have taught thee true freedom, for 'where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'"

The original endowments of the deceased were of a high order. He possessed a clear, penetrating intellect, a sound and discriminating judgment, united with great strength of will and tenacity of purpose. His powers of mind were symmetrically developed and disciplined by diligent study, reading and reflection. He was an accurate, independent, comprehensive thinker,

and a lucid, forcible writer. Many of the articles written for the *Imprensa* would grace the best religious periodicals of the age. As a controversialist he was candid and ingenuous, but energetic and severely logical. He had remarkable facility in seizing upon and presenting the salient points of his case, and setting them forth in the strongest and most convincing light, while from the ample stores of a well-furnished mind he drew an array of fact, history and argument overwhelming to his antagonist. He excelled as a preacher of the gospel. His colleagues, his countrymen in Brazil, and all who were accustomed to hear him frequently, bear united testimony to the superior character of his discourses. One who enjoyed ample opportunity of forming a correct estimate of his pulpit performances, says, "As a sermonizer he had few if any superiors." Mr. Blackford "considered he had no superior as a preacher." He appeared to great advantage in discussing the grand fundamental truths of the gospel. Of these he took hold with a firm and comprehensive grasp, and set them forth in their proper relations to each other and to the wants of his hearers, in a style at once simple, natural and accurate, and yet at the same time wonderfully charming and effective. His later pulpit services were characterized by a tenderness of feeling and pathos of expression which clearly evinced the sanctifying effect of bereavement upon his spirit. This rendered his preaching eminently useful and comforting to the sorrowing, the stricken and the troubled. Speaking from the fullness of a heart that had drunk deeply of the waters of affliction, he was pre-eminently a son of consolation.

His manner in public was quiet, unaffected, dignified and self-possessed. His voice was clear and full, and when he spoke from manuscript his delivery was rapid and his tone commanding. Of medium height, with a good though rather slender figure, a well-proportioned head, regular features, an intellectual and animated expression of countenance, his appearance presented an assemblage of attractions highly prepossessing.

In the relations of private life he was frank, genial, social, affectionate and noble-hearted. He loved his friends—"loved them to the end." In the midst of his constantly-increasing missionary labors and cares, he rarely failed to write to his immediate relatives by the monthly steamer. He was a lover of good men, and remarkably free from motives of envy or mere ambition. He loved the missionary work, for which he was eminently fitted by nature, culture and grace, and labored from first to last with unabated zeal, energy and engagedness. So far as is known to the writer, not a quarterly communion season passed without accessions to the membership of his church in Rio, and up to the time of his death eighty persons had been received as the fruits of his labors in that city.

He possessed many of the qualifications of a leader, being at once comprehensive and practical in his views, bold, aggressive and far-reaching in his plans; and with these were combined the courage and perseverance requisite to carry them into execution. He loved Brazil—his chosen field—and gave himself to the task of her evangelization with a faith in the divine promise and an assurance of success which sustained him at first as a lone pioneer of the Board, and through all the tribulations connected with the loss of his wife and the desolation of his home. Above all, he loved his blessed Master, at whose command and for whose service he left his native place, a father's grave, a mother's warm embrace, brothers, sisters and friends of every degree, and all the endearments of home, that he might bear the message of salvation to an empire which had hitherto suppressed Protestant missionary effort, but which he found ready to receive the gospel at his hands.