

A

QUARTER-CENTURY DISCOURSE:

DELIVERED IN THE TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,
ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1858.

BY

HENRY A. BOARDMAN, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
PARRY AND M^CMILLAN.
1858.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, November 10, 1858.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

We thank you for the very instructive and impressive Discourses which, as our Pastor, you delivered to us last Sabbath—on the occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of your installation over “THE TENTH CHURCH.”

It is the earnest desire of the congregation, as it is also of a *number* of your ministerial brethren and other friends who were present, that these Discourses should be published. We trust, therefore, that you will kindly yield to our solicitations, and commit them to us for that purpose.

Praying that in entering upon the labors of another Quarter of a Century, you may richly enjoy the blessing of God in your person, and in your great work,

We are truly and affectionately yours,

R. PATTERSON,

HUGH CAMPBELL,

C. B. JAUDON,

J. B. ROSS,

CHARLES GILPIN,

WM. A. INGHAM,

JAMES WARREN,

WM. E. DUBOIS,

W. D. BELL,

JOHN McARTHUR,

A. W. MITCHELL,

W. SARGENT.

REV. H. A. BOARDMAN, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA, November 16, 1858.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :—

I wrote my QUARTER-CENTURY SERMON with the determination not to publish it. It is so much about myself and my church, that I felt that there would be an indelicacy in spreading it before the public. But I have been overruled. My people seem resolved upon having it; and my clerical brethren who heard it, have been kind enough to say that “it *ought* to be printed for the general good.” Under these circumstances, with a grateful appreciation of the friendly terms in which you have conveyed your request, I place the manuscript in your hands, and remain, sincerely and affectionately,

Your friend and Pastor,

HENRY A. BOARDMAN.

To

MAJOR GENERAL PATTERSON,
HUGH CAMPBELL, Esq.,
CHARLES B. JAUDON, M. D.,
and OTHERS.

DISCOURSE.

“SO WILL I COMPASS THINE ALTAR, O LORD: THAT I MAY PUBLISH WITH THE VOICE OF THANKSGIVING, AND TELL OF ALL THY WONDROUS WORKS.”—Psalm xxvi. 6, 7.

As I appear before you this morning, my mind goes back irresistibly to the scene presented in this house on a Friday evening, just twenty-five years ago.* The Presbytery to which the church belonged was convened here, and with them a crowded auditory, who had come together, as might be, to indulge a rational curiosity, or to testify their Christian sympathy in the solemnities of that hour. In such a presence, after an impressive sermon by my venerable predecessor in this pulpit, I knelt in yonder aisle and was ordained to the ministry ‘by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery;’ after which, I was installed

* November 8, 1833.

as the Pastor of this congregation. The aged preacher, yielding to accumulated bodily infirmities, has long since ceased from all active ministrations; and the voice which *charged* you to be faithful to your trust, is silent under the pressure of a living death. Of the hands which were first lifted in response to the prescribed demand, 'Do you profess your readiness to take this man to be your minister?' and then, as the benediction closed, were stretched forth to give me a generous and hearty welcome, many are paralyzed in the grave, and still more are dispersed over the broad earth. Only here and there, as I look around my congregation, do I recognize one who participated in the services of that evening, and went home to offer at the household altar a prayer for the youthful Pastor who had dared, possibly unsent of God, to assume a charge so disproportionate to his years and his powers.

What my own emotions were on that evening, I could not well express. It is, under any circumstances, a transaction of deep so-

lemnity, for a man to be ordained to the sacred ministry. But for a young man to exchange the training and tutelage of the Theological Seminary, for the official care and oversight of a metropolitan church—to enter, wholly inexperienced, and with scant resources of every kind, upon a Pastorate involving labors and responsibilities like this—you may well suppose that such a transaction would stir his nature to its lowest depths and make him feel, with the apostle, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’

You have a right to know how I came to take upon myself a burden to which I was so unequal. I cannot relate it in a sentence or two. Nor can I do justice to the present anniversary, without saying much more about myself than is agreeable to my feelings. There are occasions, however, when a Pastor may be allowed to refer to his own experience as illustrating the mystery of God’s providence. Your kindness will excuse me if, after spending a quarter of a century with you, I devote an hour to the recital of some personal reminis-

cences not altogether alien from your own history as a congregation.

Let me premise, for the information of families who have but recently united with us, a very concise statement respecting the origin of the church. The merit of proposing the erection of a church on this spot, is due to the late FURMAN LEAMING. Mr. Leaming associated with himself five other gentlemen, viz., Messrs. JOHN STILLE, of the Second Church, GEORGE RALSTON and JAMES KERR, of the First Church, and WILLIAM BROWN and SOLOMON ALLEN, of the Sixth Church. Through the liberality and energy of these six Christian men, the work was accomplished. The corner-stone was laid with appropriate ceremonies by the late venerable Ashbel Green, D. D., on the 8th day of August, 1828. On the 24th of May following, the first sermon was preached in the Lecture-room by the Rev. Derrick C. Lansing, D. D. The building was completed on the 7th of December, 1829, and opened for worship on the ensuing Sabbath.

On the 12th of March, 1829, Messrs. Fur-

man Leaming, John Stillé, and James Kerr, were elected Ruling Elders. On the 11th of May, of the same year, the church was received under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. On the 9th of November following, the Rev. THOMAS MCAULEY, D. D., of New York, was elected Pastor of the church, and duly installed on the 17th of December. After remaining here three years, during which period his labors were greatly blessed, Dr. McAuley resigned the Pastorate (in Jan. 1833) and returned to the city of New York. In the Spring of the preceding year (1832) Dr. McAuley had seen fit to unite with the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the ecclesiastical relations of the church were transferred to that body. This Presbytery had been formed by the General Assembly on the principle, not of geographical lines, but of 'elective affinity,' with a view of allaying the controversy, already commenced here, which afterwards culminated in the disruption of the Presbyterian Church. The congregation remained without a Pastor until the autumn

of that year—having, at the time, a communion roll of two hundred and ninety-two members.

Indulge me now with some personal recollections, which I should not think of uttering except in the presence, if I may so speak, of my own household; and some of which will be new even to you.

Having become a student of theology at Princeton in the Fall of 1830, I was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of New York, in April, 1833. Returning immediately to the Seminary, it so happened, that, under the system of rotation then observed at Princeton, it fell to the lot of the venerable Dr. Alexander to preach in the village church on the ensuing Sabbath evening. Knowing that I had come back with my License in my pocket, nothing would answer but that I must take his place. You may well imagine how such a proposal would strike me, and how earnestly I tried to escape from the service. But he was inexorable. I must go with him to the pulpit, and preach my *first* sermon to a

congregation assembled to hear Dr. Alexander. It was not a pleasant ordeal. But as I look over the sermon (1 Cor. iii. 18, 'Let no man deceive himself'), preached then for the first and last time, I have the satisfaction of knowing that, greatly defective as it is in many respects, it is replete with Gospel truth, and addressed to men's consciences with as much point and solemnity as any discourse I have written since.

During the remaining four or five months of my stay at Princeton (the course then closed in September), I had the usual experience of Seminary students in their Senior year, as regards proposals for a settlement. But of the various invitations sent to me from different parts of the church, there were only one or two which occasioned me any serious perplexity. I was urgently pressed by the Pastor of one of the oldest and most important Reformed Dutch Churches in the city of New York, to become his colleague. This I declined. And then, in the face of my personal remonstrances, a call was sent me from one of

our own churches in that city. The circumstances attending this call were so marked, that the congregation felt themselves at liberty to urge the acceptance of it with great persistency; and it cost me several weeks of anxiety, before I could finally decline it.

One thing only I had regarded as settled in my own mind, respecting my future location: At an early period in my theological studies, I had resolved, even should the opportunity present itself, not to go from the Seminary to a large city. I preferred a rural congregation as a matter of taste and feeling; and my deliberate judgment had ratified the preference. But we are all led in paths which we knew not. I had my plans, and God had his purposes. In the end, I did the only thing which I had made up my mind, in respect to a settlement, I would not do.

The Session of this church invited me to supply their vacant pulpit. The first Sabbath I preached here was July 28, 1833. The sermons were from Luke vi. 43-45, and Isaiah i. 2, 3. Three weeks after, August 18, I again

preached for them, from Rom. i. 16, and Eccl. viii. 11. On the 2d of September, the congregation came together, and with entire unanimity and cordiality, resolved to invite me to become their Pastor. Here was a new and most important question to be met. I referred it, after seeking wisdom from above, to our Professors. With one voice they said I ought to accept the call. In the end, I did accept it—not without many misgivings, but satisfied that the pillar of cloud had moved in this direction, and that there was neither peace nor safety except in following it.

It was one of the incidents of my visit to the city in August, that the Rev. Dr. Green waited upon me, and inquired whether I would consent to entertain a call from another of our principal churches here, which was also vacant. I respectfully declined the overture.

My ordination and installation had been fixed for the 8th of November, and so advertised in the public papers. On reaching the city, perhaps the very day before this, I found myself brought at once and unavoidably into

that burning polemical atmosphere which continued to enwrap our churches for several years after. It has already been mentioned, that this church was now connected with the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia. This Presbytery, as comprising the *New School* elements of our denomination here, was obnoxious to the Synod of Philadelphia; and the Synod had just dissolved it on the eve of my arrival. The Presbytery appealed to the General Assembly; and, by the constitutional force of the appeal, its life was prolonged until the case could be finally issued. But the question was, 'Ought I to join a Presbytery, and be ordained by it, which was in this delicate position?' The leading men of the congregation, its founders even, were divided on this point; and some of them displayed a degree of feeling in discussing it with me, amounting almost to acerbity. This was sufficiently embarrassing within twenty-four hours of the time publicly announced for the ordination; and the trouble was not mitigated by a most unexpected visit from the Mode-

rator of the Synod, the Pastor of a country church, and an entire stranger to me, who sought me out at my lodgings, and with many words endeavored to convince me, that it would be extremely unwise and irregular for me to allow the service to go on. You can readily imagine the state of painful perplexity into which I was thrown by these occurrences. Had there been time to hasten to Princeton for an hour, the burden would have lost more than half its weight. But that was impossible, and it was not a day of telegraphs. There was not a single Presbyterian Pastor in the city, to whom I could look for counsel with any hope of obtaining impartial advice. But a gracious Providence relieved me. On my way to the city, I found on board the boat that man of God, whose praise was in all the churches, the late Rev. DR. NEVINS, of Baltimore. He was to spend a day here with his friends. It occurred to me that he would be an unprejudiced judge; and I was sure he would appreciate the difficulties of my situation. I went to him as I would go to an

elder brother, and opened to him my burdened heart. He entered into the matter with a genial sympathy, and counselled me to go forward. This was enough. I conferred no more with flesh and blood; and the tie was formed which, by God's mercy, has now bound me to you for a quarter of a century.

I say, 'has bound me to *you*.' In one sense, this language is sufficiently accurate; for churches retain their identity, whatever changes may occur among the individuals who compose them. But it is one of the affecting experiences of this day, that I should find myself surrounded by a congregation radically different from the one which received me on that memorable evening. No one can be aware, except by giving special attention to the subject, how constant and potential is this law of change which controls the destiny of congregations in large cities. It escapes observation, partly because the process is silent and gradual, and partly because there are ordinarily no social bonds like those which clasp the members of a rural church

together, and make the removal of a family an incident to be known and talked of through the little community. In our country, especially, these mutations go on with a certainty and rapidity which must be unknown in most other lands. Nations are like men: in their childhood, fond of change; in their old age, covetous of repose. A youthful nation like ours cannot be at rest. Never content with the present, its eyes are roving abroad to see how it may better its condition. And with our vast territory, and the countless avenues open to political ambition, to mechanical ingenuity, to commercial enterprise, and to luxurious self-indulgence, the inducements and facilities for indulging this propensity, are too inviting to be resisted. Add to this, the influence of taste and preference, of misfortune and affliction, and of the numerous subordinate agencies which inhere in the social compact and shape its growth; and we shall have an adequate explanation of the changes perpetually in progress in our congregations.

I came in 1833, as just stated, to a church

of two hundred and ninety-two members. Of these there are but thirty-seven remaining. All the Elders who constituted the Session, and their three associates in founding the church, are dead. Of the families I found here, there are but two which death has not entered, and only six in which one or both of the heads have not been removed. In so far as can be ascertained, one hundred and fifty-eight persons in the communion of the church, have died within the period specified. The number of deaths in the *congregation* since Jan. 1, 1841 (there is no record beyond that), has been, of children, sixty-eight, adults, one hundred and ninety-five; total, two hundred and sixty-three—an average annual mortality of fifteen.

The number of additions to the church during this quarter century, has been one thousand and sixty-eight; to wit: four hundred and ninety-three by certificate, and five hundred and seventy-five by examination—an average accession of eleven (nearly) at each of our *one hundred* communions. The pre-

sent number of communicants in actual attendance is about four hundred and fifty.*

The largest additions by examination, have been, in their chronological order, as follows: In March 1835, twenty-three; March 1838, thirty-four; March 1840, twenty-eight; March 1841, seventeen; March 1843, thirty-one; June 1852, sixteen; March 1855, fourteen; June 1858, forty-one. At several of these periods, the Spirit of God has been manifestly present in the congregation, with unusual power. His sacred influences have come down, not as in the fire and the earthquake, but 'like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth.' The souls of his people have been refreshed, and sinners have been converted from the error of their ways. These visitations of the Divine mercy,

* On a careful examination of the church-books, I find that by some oversight, the number of communicants reported has been too high for several years—some being counted in the returns who have left the city, although their names remain upon our Register. I think it just to make full allowance for these, and therefore put down the present number of members in actual attendance at four hundred and fifty.

as will appear by the statistics just recited, have, almost without exception, occurred in the winter or spring of the year. The providence and the grace of God work in harmony. And the result just indicated can surprise no one who is familiar with the social and commercial life of a great city, and accustomed to trace out the religious tendencies of the annual dispersion of the inhabitants in the warm season.

But while we are grateful for these times of refreshing with which it has pleased God to brighten our path, let us not overlook the important fact, that the church has grown rather by steady, gradual accretion than by revivals of religion. This unquestionably is the established plan of the Divine government. He has his set times to favor Zion; and glorious times they are. We should never give over praying for them, until he has established and made Jerusalem a joy in the earth. But we have no Scripture warrant for placing our chief dependence upon revivals. The church has been mainly perpetuated by means of faithful

parental instruction, and through the stated ministrations of the sanctuary. Where these two agencies are duly employed, and sustained by the fervent and habitual prayers of God's people, the work of conversion will be always going on. And it is this constant, healthy growth which every church should desire, and to which every Christian is bound to lend his influence.

The ordinance of Baptism has been administered by the Pastor, to five hundred and ninety-eight children and one hundred and five adults—in all, seven hundred and three persons. He has solemnized the rite of marriage two hundred and twenty-two times. His visits have been from three hundred to five hundred annually—an aggregate, say, of ten thousand during his ministry.

I have no *data* within my reach, which would enable me to present even an outline history of our *Sunday Schools*. But I think I am quite within bounds when I express the belief, that some eight thousand children must,

within the last twenty-five years, have been brought under religious instruction, in the various schools connected with this congregation. Besides the parent-school, the Sabbath School of a declining church in Southwark, was, many years since, resuscitated by the labors of some of our members. A corps of faithful teachers from here sustained, for a term of years, a flourishing school in the North Western part of the city, which was relinquished only because it was found impossible to procure a hall in which it could be continued. The first *Night-school* in our city for the gratuitous instruction of young men, was established, it is believed, by a few gentlemen of our congregation. This laudable example was, after a while, followed by our municipal authorities. Night-schools were, with great advantage to the city, engrafted upon our public school system, and have since been introduced into Boston and other cities. And, to close this series, you have for sixteen years sustained that admirable Sunday School in Moyamensing, which has, within the last

month, expanded into a church, and received here, within these walls, its first Pastor.*

No one may presume to trace the vast and intricate results which must flow from these various efforts. It is matter of record, that they have already, by God's blessing, brought many souls to Christ; and that they have exerted a wholesome influence upon some thousands of others. But there is a different aspect in which the present occasion brings them before us. They indicate the character of the church. They show that, on some limited scale at least, Christian activity has been the law of our household. I dare not say that this has been the paramount law with us:—would that it had been. But I may and do assert, that while as a church we have been very slothful and lukewarm, there has always been a leaven here of the right kind—a body of faithful disciples, of both sexes, who have never forgotten our Saviour's words, 'Ye are

* The Rev. Willard M. Rice was ordained to the ministry and installed as Pastor of the "MOYAMENSING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH," on Monday, Oct. 18, 1853.

the light of the world;' 'Ye are the salt of the earth;' 'It is better to give than it is to receive.' They have not been content, like the arid desert, to drink in the rain and the sunshine of heaven, and make no return. Refreshed with the bread of heaven and animated by the love of Christ, they have gone forth in quest of the needy and perishing, and gathered them into schools, and taught them the words of eternal life. In this work of benevolence, they have not only communicated, but received, benefit. The measure which, in their noble philanthropy, they meted out to others, has been returned sevenfold into their own bosoms. It has kept alive the fervor of their piety, and made them an example to the rest of us; and, so, they have brought back from their rude mission-fields, sheaves of blessing which have relieved our penury and helped us in our warfare. Had they nothing to show for their exertions outside these walls, this church has profited by their labors beyond the power of common language to express. And the lesson which a Pastor must long, in such

circumstances, to impress upon every one of his people, is that familiar but too often neglected one, 'Go, thou, and do likewise.'

It is not essential that I should speak in detail of what the church has done for the cause of Christian benevolence. The pecuniary resources of the congregation have varied at different times, as the disposition certainly has, to devise liberal things for the spread of the Gospel. I may be allowed to specify two instances (the erection of a new church will be noticed by and by), in which your liberality displayed itself in a somewhat pre-eminent way. The first of these was at the semi-centenary commemoration of 1839. Our church then celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of the General Assembly; and the funds collected on that occasion as a thank-offering to God, were applied to the endowment of the Board of Publication. Your share in that thank-offering, amounted to nearly eight thousand dollars; the largest sum contributed by any church in our connection. Again, when it became neces-

sary in 1845 to complete the endowment of the Princeton Theological Seminary—a work achieved by the able and *disinterested* exertions of my tried friend of more than thirty years, who is providentially with me to-day*—you attested your attachment to that revered school of the prophets, and your love for the doctrines inculcated there, by a prompt and generous offering of between six and seven thousand dollars, exceeding that of any church except one in our body. It is grateful to record facts like these. But candor may demand a further statement. We do not always respond in this way even to the most meritorious appeals. Many who were once ensamples to the congregation in this respect, have been taken from us by death or otherwise. It is incumbent upon those who have come in to occupy their places, to see that the standard of liberality amongst us be not lowered. It is a Divine aphorism, ‘He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.’

* The Rev. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, D. D.

It is a remarkable expression, he '*lendeth unto the Lord.*' It will be well for us to inquire into its meaning now; and to ponder also those wonderful words, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Let these truths be once enshrined in our hearts, and there need be no further solicitude about the tone of Christian liberality here.

There is one other department of labor, which it would be inexcusable to pass over, even in this hasty retrospect, I mean the '*Dorcas Society*' of the congregation. The idea associated with this ancient and honored name, is simply that of providing clothing for a certain number of poor women and children. Your benevolence has taken a wider sweep. After clothing all the needy at our doors, you devote the winter's cheerful industry to the families of our faithful and often suffering missionaries at the West: and with what signal, and I may add, unrivalled energy, you prosecute this good work, may be seen by the following statistics. Since the origin of the

Society in 1836, you have provided for destitute children and families at home, ten thousand three hundred garments. The Society commenced working for the missionaries, in 1844. Within these fifteen years, you have sent to these men of God and their families, eighty-nine large boxes, containing about sixteen thousand articles of clothing.* The estimated value of these boxes for the last four years, was six thousand dollars. The total number of garments prepared for both classes of objects, from the beginning, is upwards of twenty-six thousand. I know you will say, 'Give God the glory.' I *do* give Him the glory. But I also 'glorify God *in you.*' I cannot repress the pride and pleasure which I feel, in recalling the munificent fruits of this enlightened and efficient labor on the part of the ladies of my congregation. I am ready to say, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all!' Certainly if the same admirable system

* Of this quantity, one-half, *i. e.*, eight thousand pieces, have been sent within the last five years.

which you pursue, were adopted in any considerable number of the congregations of our towns and cities, not only would every mission-family in our domestic field have its wants amply supplied, but new bonds of sympathy and prayer would link them to the church at large, and greatly augment their capacities for doing good.

Allusion has been made to our *colonies*. The obligation resting upon congregations which God has been pleased to prosper, to extend the means of grace to the destitute around them, and, whenever practicable, to establish new churches, would seem to be too obvious to require argument. It is, no doubt, very pleasant for a people who have a Pastor to their liking, to sit down and enjoy his ministrations without concerning themselves, except by an occasional contribution, about the wants of their destitute neighbors. But this is not 'the mind which was in Christ.' Real Christianity is, like leaven, essentially active, diffusive, and assimilating. And, if needful, it will make sacrifices sooner than forego the

duty and pleasure of sharing its good things with others. It was observed a moment or two ago, that there had always been something of this spirit here. For myself, I may say, it had been for many years my anxious wish that the church should colonize. In the winter of 1846-7, I devoted a good deal of time and attention to a plan for establishing a church on Logan Square. In connection with two or three gentlemen of my church, who entered heartily into the scheme, I explored that part of the city. We selected a lot of ground most advantageously situated. Several conferences were held at my house and elsewhere; and, in the end, the plan failed only because it was not met in a spirit of corresponding liberality by parties residing in that vicinity, and who would have been personally benefited by the enterprise. Thus Logan Square was lost to us. But the *idea* was not abandoned.

On the evening of the 20th of January, 1852, a considerable number of gentlemen belonging to the congregation, met by invitation

at my house, to consider the subject of 'erecting a new church west of Broad Street.' At this conference, it was urged, that our church had been overflowing for several years; that a new church of our order was imperatively needed in the city; that without such a church we could not maintain our proper relative position among the evangelical denominations of the city, nor should we be doing our part towards supplying the spiritual wants of the community; that the signal harmony and prosperity we had enjoyed, demanded this return at our hands, as a token of our gratitude to the Giver of all good; and that there was every reason to believe that a strong colony from our own congregation, uniting with other families in the neighborhood which might be selected, could, by the favor of Providence, accomplish the desired end, without detriment to existing churches, and with large advantage to the general interests of religion. I need not rehearse the sequel. The WEST SPRUCE STREET CHURCH was erected; and the church itself was organized on the 3d of April,

1856. Great praise is due to the colony of thirty-four communicants and their associates, which went out from us on that occasion, and especially to those noble-minded Christian men by whose liberality and zeal this work was accomplished. The hundred thousand dollars they have 'lent to the Lord,' will come back to them and their children with large interest. It is written in the bond, 'that which he hath given, will He pay him again.' And heaven and earth shall pass away, before this pledge can fail.

Our second colony, that of October 11th, has but just left us. They have gone to a different field, but on an errand consecrated by the Saviour's own example—to preach the Gospel to the poor. Difficulties they expect to encounter, but they are not intimidated. They go, as they believe, at the Master's call; and this is all the warrant they demand. They have His promise, 'fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.' Putting their trust here, they expect to suc-

ceed. And I believe, by God's blessing, they will succeed.

You have been instrumental, then, in founding two new churches. Of the manifold means and methods for doing good, none can exceed this. For an evangelical church is God's own institution. It is permanent. It comprehends all other elements and appliances for promoting Christianity. It is a sun which radiates light and life in every direction; a fountain whose living waters will flow on forever. You have done a good work in sending these two half-tribes over Jordan. Never forget that they are still part of the household, and as such, claim an interest in your sympathies and prayers.

As a general rule, no church can be considered as fulfilling its design, which is not endeavoring to furnish some candidates for the sacred ministry. The neglect of this duty on the part of Christian parents, has been one of the prominent sins of the church for the last score or two of years. A better day seems now to be dawning. A throng of young men

have suddenly come forward, with the humble, grateful cry upon their lips, 'Lord, here am I: send me.' May it prove the harbinger of a new and blessed era for the church.

It is pleasant to know, that our own church has not been entirely remiss in this matter. Within the period embraced in this review, there have been fourteen young men connected with the congregation, who have devoted themselves to the ministry. Of these, three came to us, having this object already in view. Three who made their profession of religion here, relinquished, perhaps I might say, brilliant prospects at the Bar, as several gave up other pursuits, in order to become ambassadors for Christ. Two, who spent a considerable time with us—one of them brought hither as a student of medicine, by a good Providence, that he might find a Saviour and serve him in the ministry of reconciliation—are held in high esteem by the Church as learned and laborious foreign missionaries; to whose names, it were ungrateful not to add that of an intelligent and lovely

Christian woman, of our communion, the wife of one of our leading missionaries in China. This band of ministers are preaching the Gospel with ability and fidelity, some of them in situations of great influence and responsibility. To a Pastor's heart, few things could be more comforting than the reflection, that God may have employed his feeble and unworthy agency in raising up one and another to hold forth the word of life to the perishing, after his own lips shall have been sealed in death. God grant that our church may abound, as it ought to do, more and more in this so needful work. And may his choicest blessing rest upon those beloved brethren who have gone forth from us to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

'May they that Jesus whom they preach,
Their own Redeemer see;
And watch THOU daily o'er their souls,
That they may watch for THEE!'

I have stated, that immediately on arriving in this city, I found myself in the presence of that great controversy, which resulted five

years afterwards (1838) in a division of our Church. The theological questions involved in this controversy, had agitated the country for several years. All New England was convulsed with disputations about the 'New Haven divinity.' And as that theology had crossed the border and intruded into our household, alarm and apprehension followed in its train. It was not, as many alleged, a mere war of words. It took hold upon the central truths of the Gospel, such *e. g.* as original sin, the atonement, regeneration, and justification, together with the whole subject of moral agency and human accountability. Sentiments were propounded on these fundamental topics, which contravened the plain teachings of the Scriptures, and which no dialectic skill could reconcile with the Confession and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church.

It must not be supposed, however, that all who arrayed themselves on the side of the '*New School*,' espoused these errors. When the lines came to be drawn, many were carried to that side by local and personal con-

siderations, who had no sympathy with the 'New Divinity;' as others were, who adopted it only in some very qualified form. But unquestionably it was a contest which involved both the purity of our faith, and the integrity of our ecclesiastical polity. Two incompatible systems of doctrine, and two no less irreconcilable theories of ecclesiastical authority and policy, were struggling for the mastery. For five years the issue remained doubtful. The opposing parties marshalled their forces annually at the General Assembly; and with varying fortunes. Majorities vibrated. In place of the harmonious and delightful proceedings which now mark the yearly convocation of our Supreme Judicatory, it was then an arena for fierce debate and parliamentary management. The giants of the church were there; and they were not men to play with foils.

Interpreting the facts by the light of subsequent history, the composition of the two parties, viewed in the aggregate, is equally palpable and significant. Allowing for numerous individual exceptions, it was virtually a

contest between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism; or certainly between those whose training had made them decided and earnest Presbyterians, and others who had adopted our standards in a loose and general way—‘for substance of doctrine.’ Adhering in her maturity, to a policy adopted in her youth simply for missionary purposes, our church had kept open the door into her ministry so wide and for so long a time, that some hundreds of her pulpits were filled by men who, however exemplary in other respects, had no paramount attachment either to her faith or her government. It was in keeping with this character, that they should steadfastly resist all efforts of the Church to foster her own benevolent institutions, as distinguished from voluntary societies. The *Presbyterian* theory was, that the Church should have her own Boards of Missions and Education; Boards of her own creation, and responsible to herself; that she might superintend the training of her ministers and direct her missionary operations at home and abroad. The counter

view was, that all these interests ought to be conducted by existing Societies of a mixed nature, partly Presbyterian and partly Congregational, which, having no ecclesiastical character, were in a great degree independent of ecclesiastical control. This question and that of doctrine, constituted the two cardinal issues on which the contest was waged. It is gratifying to know that after twenty years further experience, our brethren of the other branch of the Church have admitted their error. Their General Assembly has found it indispensable to self-preservation, to establish Committees for conducting the work of Education and of Missions, on the identical principle of our Boards.

These facts involve no disparagement of Congregationalism as such. Nor is it designed to intimate, by this historical review, that Congregationalists ought not to be welcomed to our churches. Some of our ablest and best Pastors have come to us from that body. We have in our communion, thousands of faithful Christians reared in Congregational

churches. I wish we might have tens of thousands more. And I would fain hope that the friendly relations subsisting between most of the Congregational bodies in New England, and ourselves, might be perpetuated. But when it comes to introducing men into the ministry of our church who have no special affection either for our doctrines or our order, the case is widely altered. Such an amalgamation is inexpedient for all concerned; and at the period of which we are speaking, it brought our beloved church to the brink of a precipice. A merciful Providence interposed and rescued it. The division which ensued, was followed by a law-suit. For three weeks the church stood at Cæsar's bar, while the momentous issue was pending, whether she was responsible to the civil power for ecclesiastical acts done by her own proper tribunals and within the scope of her own charters. A 'momentous issue,' I style it; because "it was a blow struck at the root of the great principle of our institutions, viz., that spiritual concerns are not to be interfered with by the

civil power.”* It was not our church only which was on trial, but every church in this Commonwealth. And had the verdict of the jury† been finally sustained, there would have been an end to religious liberty in Pennsylvania. But the Judiciary nobly vindicated the rights of conscience. After a brief six weeks, the verdict was set aside;‡ and the whole case adjudicated on the broad principles of the Constitution under which it is our happiness to live.

How signally that decision has been ratified by a beneficent Providence, in the unparalleled prosperity of our church from the day the case was settled until now, it needs but a glance at our present condition to perceive. But I must not venture upon that field now. Let me return to our own history.

I had been no indifferent observer of the rising contest, during my Seminary-life. The ‘New Divinity’ was my special study. For

* The late HON. JOHN SERGEANT.

† March 26, 1839.

‡ May 8, 1839.

some years I had listened to the preaching of its two great expounders. One of them had invited me to become his theological pupil. I esteemed and honored them both. There were strong personal considerations to bias me in favor of the system. But when I came to examine it by the law and the testimony, I saw plainly that it was less a theology than a philosophy—an elaborate web spun of earth-born metaphysics, not a glorious system of faith deduced from the incorruptible word, and suited to the necessities of a race of sinners. This conviction, the fruit of long and patient investigation, was impressed upon my mind when I came here. But neither my age nor my circumstances would have justified me in taking an early and conspicuous part, as I was urged to do, in the existing controversy. My church, as already mentioned, had been transferred to the new Presbytery. Its influential members were divided among themselves on the pending ecclesiastical questions. I was the friend of all; they were all my friends. They were content to hear

the Gospel from my lips ; and it was one of the earliest of my pulpit-offices among them, to preach an extended series of carefully written sermons on the doctrines of the atonement and regeneration, one design of which was to discuss the erroneous sentiments then prevailing on those subjects. Had I gone further, and made myself a partisan, or prematurely proposed a change in the ecclesiastical relations of the church, the congregation must have been rent in twain. As it was, we remained where we were until the Second Presbytery was dissolved by the General Assembly (1837) and then, church and pastor applied to, and were received by, the Presbytery of Philadelphia. At the meeting of the church held to decide upon this matter, there were some votes against the change ; and a few excellent and useful men withdrew their certificates and united with other churches. But neither then, nor at any other time, were the harmony and tranquillity of the congregation seriously disturbed. When it is remembered, that our city was the theatre where the two great parties

had their annual conflict, and that we were living in an atmosphere surcharged with the elements of strife, this result can be referred only to the special goodness of God towards us. It deserves this day our tribute of gratitude.

If it be asked, why I have introduced this sketch into my discourse, I answer, because it is the most important ecclesiastical transaction which has occurred here during my ministry; and it could not have been passed over with any propriety. I have no desire to re-open the questions then settled; still less, to revive any personal antipathies or prejudices. I do not know of a single minister in our Presbytery, who cherishes the slightest feeling of unkindness towards his brethren in the other branch of the church. I never hear them mentioned except in terms of respect and courtesy, and with satisfaction at the success with which God may be crowning their labors. The controversy is hardly ever alluded to in our clerical intercourse. It belongs now to history; and there we are content to leave it. The land is broad enough for the two Churches

to pursue their respective plans without collision or jealousy. And the only rivalry between them should be, which shall do most for the salvation of men, and the glory of their common Redeemer.

One controversy suggests another. This also belongs to the record of the past quarter century; and as Providence was pleased to assign me some very humble part in it, I may be allowed briefly to speak of it.

I fear no challenge, when I claim it as one of the honorable characteristics of the Presbyterian Church, that however aggressive it may be in its demonstrations against worldliness and sin, and against false religions of whatever name or creed, its spirit is eminently peaceful and fraternal towards all evangelical denominations. It is no part of the ordinary routine of our Pastors to preach against or about other churches. Their peculiarities are rarely mentioned, unless it be in a didactic form, by way of explaining some doctrine or rite of our own. Our readiness in co-operating with them for objects of common interest,

may be seen of all men. And we cordially bid them God-speed, in all legitimate and scriptural efforts to promote the cause of Christ.

But if we are slow to attack, we know how to defend. Dwelling among our own people, and begirt with munitions of rocks reared by no mortal hand, we cannot allow our peaceful heritage to be invaded, without resenting and resisting it. It was so invaded at the period to which I refer—some fifteen or sixteen years ago. The *Oxford-Tract* movement vivified the dormant elements of ecclesiastical pride and intolerance in the Church of England; and the controversy thus originated, soon embroiled the Protestant denominations generally in Great Britain and America. The pretensions put forth by the sponsors of this movement, were monstrous. They reached to the extreme of parcelling off the entire Christian Church, among the Episcopal, the Papal, and the corrupt Oriental Hierarchies. Outside of these limits, there was no church, no ministry, no valid ordi-

nances. The ministers of other denominations were unauthorized intruders into the sacred office, and their churches were schismatical organizations.

These sentiments were not breathed in a corner. They were proclaimed from the pulpit. They were sent forth from the press in every imaginable form, from the stately and learned octavo to the sentimental novel. They were scattered broadcast over the land. With proselyting officiousness, they were thrust, in private life, upon the members of other churches, who, not unfrequently, came to their pastors in perplexity of mind, as members of my church did to me, to seek counsel and instruction.

No alternative was left us. However averse to controversy, it was the most obvious of all duties, to repel these attacks, and protect our people in the enjoyment of their hereditary rights and franchises. The ground which we stood upon, we occupied in common with nearly all the churches of the Reformation. Indeed, at the Reformation, *every* Pro-

testant church rejected the *jure divino* doctrine of Prelacy; the English Church adopted that polity on grounds very different from those assumed by so many of its clergy in later times. To this day, Diocesan Episcopacy probably does not embrace among its supporters *one-fifteenth part* of the population of Protestant Christendom. That any portion of the Church should prefer and adopt it, as the most expedient and suitable system for themselves, is all well. No one will complain of this. We, certainly, who are of the great family of the Reformed Churches, can have no quarrel with them for building their walls on a pattern different from ours. Nor do we readily see why they should have any quarrel with us. We believe that their covenant God and ours is the same; that the same Redeemer died for us; that the same Divine Spirit dwells in both Churches; and that we are all travelling to the same heaven. We see in their communion many of God's dear children, whose piety and zeal would be an ornament to any church. We honor their

church for all that God has done through its instrumentality in behalf of the common salvation. We know no reason why there should not be perpetual amity and fellowship between us. And this, we are persuaded, is the sentiment of growing numbers in their own ranks, who revolt at the idea of their tribe, one of the least of the thousands of Judah, severing itself from the communion of the great body of God's Israel.

But, unhappily, at the period just indicated, an arrogant and denunciatory spirit ran riot for a time through their body; and as it proscribed all other Churches, a general conflict was unavoidable. In common with other Pastors in our Church, I felt it my duty to deliver and publish a course of Lectures, exposing the unscriptural nature of these pretensions, and warning you against the devices employed to seduce you from your ancient faith. With the final results of the contest we are content.

This controversy, also, has now passed into the province of the historian. Let us hope

that a fresh baptism of the Spirit may avert similar calamities, and draw closer than ever the bonds which should unite all, of whatever name, who love the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be time enough for the Churches to war with each other, when they can find no more enemies of their common Master to turn their arms against.

I came to you, as I have related, direct from the Seminary. That twenty-five years should have passed, since that eventful evening, sounds to me like a fable or a dream. It is only when I cast my eyes around me, that I can realize it. An unusual thing it is—too unusual—for a Pastor to spend a quarter of a century with the same congregation. In my own case, it is the more remarkable because of the precarious health which has so often interrupted my labors. The foundation of this was laid in a severe attack of sickness contracted on a necessary visit to the North, only two weeks after my installation. It has repeatedly led to a suspension of my ministrations for several weeks or months together;

and in 1847, under imperative medical advice, I was obliged to spend a year in Europe. I felt that it was due to my congregation, before going abroad, to place my resignation in their hands. I can never forget the kindness with which you returned it to me, and the generous sympathy you expressed in my trial.

If I should say, that various opportunities of a different kind, have been thrown in my way for terminating this relation, I should only relate a common experience among Pastors. Few men, I suppose, spend twenty-five years in the ministry, without being more or less approached with invitations to change their place of residence. Among the suggestions of this sort which have reached me, there have been some of a very attractive character; and one* which came to me so clothed with the authority of the Church, and so enforced by private solicitation, that the

* The appointment of the author by the General Assembly of 1853, to the chair of Pastoral Theology in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, vacated by the death of the Rev. Dr. Alexander.

disposition of it became the most perplexing and painful question I have ever had to deal with. The occasion is too recent to require that I should do more than advert to it in this passing way. Let it suffice to state, that your own earnest and affectionate remonstrances, seconded by a formal appeal on the part of the leading members of the Bar, the Schools of Medicine, the men of science, and the chief merchants of our city (the most remarkable incident, so I regard it, of my whole public life), forbade me to leave you. I have seen no cause to regret my decision. I may not speak with confidence about my charge here; but, in all frankness, I believe that the result has been highly advantageous to the Princeton Seminary, and to our Church at large.

There are some considerations pertaining to the responsibilities and duties of a pastorate in a great city, and particularly in our own city, as distinguished from a congregation in the country, or in a small town, which naturally occur to the mind at a season like this, and it may be allowable to devote a few words

to them. I refer, in general, to the wide sphere of labor which a minister in this position is expected to fill; and the variety of objects which invite or demand his attention. Even as regards the composition of his own congregation, there may be peculiarities which have an important bearing upon his ministrations. His people are a constituent part of that concourse of human beings, who go to make every large city a centre of mighty influence; and there may be among them some who have much to do in determining whether that influence shall be for good or for evil. Again, he preaches to numerous strangers. There must be some thousands of visitors and travellers in such a city every Sabbath, a large proportion of whom find their way to the sanctuary. In this way, a Pastor is constantly casting bread upon the waters. They stop long enough to hear a single sermon from his lips, and are gone on the morrow; but who shall say what untold treasures they may not have taken with them? Not only so, but he may have within the sound of his

voice a different class of strangers; not transient wayfarers, but temporary residents. I refer, as you may suppose, to those admirable schools, academical and professional, which every season attract such large numbers of youth to our city—(for it is of our own city, I prefer to speak). I have always regarded the Female Boarding-Schools connected with my congregation, as one of its most interesting and encouraging features. I have looked to them with some confidence, to see the fruit of our Sabbath services; and, by God's blessing, I have not looked in vain. They have shared, I think, in every revival we have enjoyed. And sometimes the dew has come gently down upon those fleeces, when the ground all around has remained dry. It is, let me add, one of the real pleasures of my occasional summer tours through the country, to meet with those—now, perhaps, happy wives and mothers—who hail me with true affection as a *Pastor*, and take me back to their school-days in Philadelphia.

And then, these Schools of Medicine. Here

are one or two thousand of young men pursuing their studies in our city for six months of the year. They are from every part of the Union. Their future influence, social and professional, must depend largely, under Providence, upon the training they receive here. It is no trivial responsibility to be concerned, even so far as their occasional attendance upon one's ministrations may go, in giving direction to a swelling tide of influence like this. That the agency of the pulpit is not always lost upon them, may be illustrated by the fact, that in two instances known to me, young men who came here to study medicine, were led in this house to exchange that profession for the ministry, and are now, one of them, as already noted, an accomplished and eminent foreign missionary, the other, an active and useful Pastor in one of our principal cities.— Why should we not expect beneficent changes like these to occur frequently? There must be many pious young men in these medical classes, who have never even examined the question, whether it may not be their duty to

enter the ministry. And how many are there who, if converted, might become burning and shining lights in the church!

But it is not only in the pulpit that we have to do with strangers. Besides the ordinary claims of hospitality which visitors expect at the hands of the resident Pastors, and which it is our pleasure to recognize, the medical reputation of our city makes it the Mecca of invalids. A very large number of these have been under my pastoral care, frequently for months together. My visits of this kind could be reckoned only by hundreds, perhaps by thousands. And I would not have had it otherwise. For what could I do, should I hear at last those piercing words, 'I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: I was sick, and ye visited me not.' Far from their homes, oppressed with disease, possibly drawing near to death, who would not deem it a privilege to go to these sufferers and, if so it might be, alleviate their sorrows and soothe their anxieties, by pointing them to the Lamb of God? There are no chapters in my expe-

rience as a minister, more affecting than some which relate to this subject. I could describe to you scenes of anguish which would move you all to tears; and scenes of rapture which would thrill you with holy and grateful joy. But I must not detain you with such incidents.

I refer to these things, to illustrate the cares and responsibilities of a Pastor in a great city. But what you have heard is only the beginning. If you would know the whole, you must not only be familiar with his entire congregation, but you must understand his relations with the benevolent institutions of his own church; the time he is expected to devote to the interests of education, and to the manifold metropolitan charities which need and deserve the countenance of the clergy; the endless interviews with the authors or agents of all sorts of good objects in each one of our thirty or forty States and Territories; and the mosaic-like correspondence he carries on with all manner of people from January to December. The sum of the whole, is, that if a Pastor fulfil, even in any tolerable degree, the

ends of his ministry, he cannot lead a *very* idle life. And, again, it should excite no surprise that so many Pastors break down under these accumulated labors,—labors which in the principal churches of the European capitals are always divided among two or three ministers. The Protestant Episcopal Church in our country, is gradually adopting the same system: there are probably some present who will live to see it extensively introduced into our own communion.

There is another view of a pastorate in one of these great cities, to which my long residence here may justify me in adverting. In their social structure, they differ essentially from all other communities. They are the centres, not simply of trade, and of politics, but of talent, of learning, of art, of eloquence. The liberal professions are there in their strongest array. They attract to themselves genius and enterprise of every type, and from every quarter. They are the seat of that great power in a free State, the press; the theatre of books and reviews, and of daily journalism,

the pabulum of the masses. Everything is canvassed—politics, commerce, philosophy, religion—the huge alembic is forever seething and surging. Intense intellectual activity is the law of that miniature world. And within the last quarter of a century, several new agencies have come into play, which have impressed upon the whole mass a greatly increased momentum.

Among these may be specified certain radical events in our political progress (it cannot be necessary to name them), which have conspired to develop more fully the inherent vigor and restlessness of our national character. Again, science has been popularized, to an extent unthought of at any former era. Nor can we overlook, in this connection, the founding of that new social institution, which promises to incorporate itself with our metropolitan life, I mean, Popular Lectures. This has grown, in part, out of a general craving for some species of entertainment more rational, and of better moral tendency, than dramatic performances. The indications are, that we are to have a

body of *Lecturers* as a distinct and permanent Profession. What the ultimate effect of such an institution will be, we have not as yet the requisite *data* for determining. With our limited experience, however, it is quite apparent that it will combine the good and the bad, like most other human contrivances. It is at least certain, that the business will be largely taken up by men of showy parts and facile elocution, the sponsors, often, of grave errors in religion or in morals. Orators of this description will find ready employment at the hands of men who get up courses of Lectures for private gain, and who are indifferent to every question but that of the profits. To them, it is all one whether their rhetoricians declaim truth or error, deism or pantheism, Paul or Spinoza. They would as soon seed the ground with thistles, as with wheat; or have the fountain they open at the very heart of a great city, send forth hemlock, as living water. Like the British opium-dealers in China, their aims are purely mercenary; and

so they make money, it is no concern of theirs who are poisoned, and who not.

That professional Lecturers generally have been, or are likely to be, of this description, is not asserted. The class already comprises men of eminent worth, who never gain the public ear, without pouring into it something adapted to make people wiser and better; and we may hope that such teachers will be multiplied. But we have seen enough to know that the system is susceptible of ready abuse, and may be perverted to the very worst ends. In either case, whether well or badly managed in a moral view, it is exerting a powerful influence upon the social life of these cities, and must not be omitted in forming an estimate of the present position of the *pulpit*.

The idea I wish to present, on this head, as deduced from our very cursory survey of the field, is, that the demands upon the metropolitan pulpit have been gradually rising during the last twenty-five years, and that it needs to gird itself with fresh strength, if it would continue to command the homage of the culti-

vated mind of the country. In saying this, I am far from recommending that the sacred desk should be degraded to an arena for intellectual gladiatorship. I do not forget that the Christian ministry is a divine institution, with its appointed sphere which it may not transcend, and its prescribed themes which it may not neglect, but at its peril. Nor can I question that this institution, so ordained and equipped of God, as his chosen instrumentality for reforming and saving the world, is equal even to the herculean task demanded of it here; that, by God's blessing, it can so restrain, ameliorate, and control, all these tumultuous forces of which we have been speaking, as to work out not merely the well-being of society, but the spiritual elevation and eternal well-being of the individuals who compose one of these mighty Babels. But the point of the argument is this. The preaching of the cross follows the law of all other instruments; to effect its end, it must be used according to the design of its Author. It is not in the nature of things, that the pulpit

should maintain its hold upon this complex, impatient, excited mass of human beings, at least upon the educated portion of them, unless it bring to its vocation competent intellectual vigor and various knowledge, as well as genuine moral excellence. It must keep abreast of the other learned Professions in ability, and general culture. It must be able to present the high themes of revelation in a *manner* adapted to win the respect of a community so constituted, and that, too, without compromising the Gospel in a single point of doctrine, or abating one jot or tittle of its lofty requisitions.

Here, then, is work for the ministry, which will demand the utmost exertion of their powers. It is not to be compassed, without patient study, and persevering toil. They must "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine;" and "study to show themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." However important it may be to keep up a familiar personal intercourse with their con-

gregations, it will not do to allow this, except in cases of sickness and affliction, to take precedence of their public ministrations. No intelligent congregation can be permanently satisfied with pastoral *visiting* as a substitute for instructive preaching. They may tolerate it for a while; but by and by they will begin to bemoan the penury of the pulpit, and to inquire whether it was a purely Levitical ordinance, that “the priest’s lips should keep *knowledge*.” Exhausting work it is, which they ask of their Pastor—far more so than incessant visiting—but they will feel, and they ought to feel that, instead of consuming his time and strength in visiting a few families, week by week, his *prime* duty is, to prepare “beaten oil” for the sanctuary, which may irradiate and cheer his entire flock; and, this being accomplished, to see all he can of them at their houses.

But this is an incidental suggestion. The main idea to be enforced, is, that the sphere of pastoral labor in these cities is constantly expanding; that it demands, and will reward,

the noblest energies, and the most self-denying efforts of any man whom Providence may appoint to the work; and that, when everything is done which such a man can do, nothing is accomplished, except as God may bless his poor instrumentality.

Not to pursue this topic farther than may barely suffice to lift the curtain for a moment upon the relations and responsibilities of a Pastor established in one of these marts of empire, let us cast an eye beyond our own enclosure. The changes described as having occurred among ourselves, have their counterpart in the records of our own sister-churches in this city, and, indeed, in the history of the various denominations here, for the past twenty-five years. I find myself at the close of this period, among the senior Pastors of the city.

When I came here to reside, the Rev. Mr. Barnes had already been settled as the Pastor of the First Church, for three years, and the Rev. George Chandler as Pastor of the First

Church in Kensington, for a still longer period. The Second Church was vacant, but, a few months after, called the Rev. Dr. Cuyler to its pulpit. Dr. Ely was Pastor of the Third Church; Mr. Potts, of the Fourth; Dr. Winchester, of the Sixth; Dr. Engles, of the Seventh; Mr. McCalla, of the Eighth; Mr. Gibson, of the Ninth; Mr. Grant, of the Eleventh; Mr. Eustace, of the Twelfth; Mr. Patterson, of the First Church, Northern Liberties; Mr. Judson, of the First Church, Southwark, and Mr. Symmes, of the Fairmount Church. Dr. McDowell had been settled the year before, as the first Pastor of the Central Church. The First Church, Penn-Township; the Second Church, Southwark; and the Second Church, Kensington, were vacant. Dr. Skinner, having resigned the charge of the Fifth Church (now Dr. Wadsworth's), to go to Andover, that church was vacant, and so remained for several years. A secession from it subsequently organized the Clinton Street Congregational Church, and invited Dr. Todd to become their Pastor. After spending some years with them,

Dr. Todd returned to New England, and they were reorganized as a Presbyterian Church.

It will be seen, that of the fourteen Presbyterian Pastors I found here, only three remain in the city. With these may be associated the laborious and efficient Pastor of the Independent Church on Broad Street. Several of the churches have changed their Pastors three and four times. The mortality among our ministers has been of a character to excite very solemn and tender reflections. Of those who have resided here, whether as Pastors or otherwise, for a term of years since '33, I can recall no less than twenty-four who have died—some few of them after removing from the city. You will be interested in hearing this list from the necrology of the church. It is as follows:—

The venerable Mr. Potts, Mr. Judson, Mr. Scott, Mr. Dinwiddie, Mr. Blythe, Mr. Eustace, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Loughridge, Mr. Williamson, Dr. Winchester, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Harned, Mr. Hoge, Mr. Douglas, Dr. John Breckinridge, Dr. Green, Dr. Cuyler, Dr. Wm.

A. McDowell, Mr. Manwaring, Dr. Carroll, Mr. Connell, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Rood, and Mr. Ramsey. Of these twenty-four, seventeen were or had been Pastors in this city.

I know of no Baptist minister who has been here for twenty-five years. Most of their pulpits have been vacant and re-filled several times. The same is true of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Several of their older congregations have had two, three, and even four Rectors since 1833. Among the ministers of that church who have passed away, may be mentioned the venerable Bishop White, Mr. James, Dr. Bedell, Dr. Abercrombie, Dr. Montgomery, Dr. Clark, Dr. Boyd, Mr. Fowles, and Mr. Tyng. To these may be added Dr. Livingston, and his late excellent son, and Dr. Ludlow, all of the Reformed Dutch Church; that eminent divine and scholar, Dr. Wylie, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; Mr. Bowers, of the Associated Reformed; and the venerable Dr. Mayer, of the Lutheran Church.

It were well to pause and ponder this record. To a Pastor, it is full of solemn mean-

ing. I would fain have my own heart opened to its monitory teachings; as I would gladly linger, also, to pay a tribute of respect and sympathy to the memories of these excellent men. But the time forbids this: and I pass on to notice changes of a different character.

In 1833, there were twenty churches here in connection with the General Assembly. Now there are twenty-seven belonging to our branch of the Church, and fifteen to the other, making a total of forty-two. In the year 1838, after the separation took place, there were in *our* churches (O. S.) about two thousand seven hundred communicants. Now, we number about eight thousand; the number having trebled in twenty years.

Regarded in itself, this is a very gratifying increase both as to churches and communicants. But the population of the city has advanced from one hundred and sixty-one thousand in 1830, to, say, four hundred and fifty thousand (city and liberties, not including the county) in 1858. In other words, there

are nearly three hundred thousand more people here to be supplied with the means of grace, than there were twenty-eight years ago. In any other country, this would sound more like romance than history. Here it is sober verity. And while, in one view, we may congratulate ourselves at what we have accomplished; in another, we have cause to feel humbled, that we have done so little towards bringing the ordinances of the Gospel within the reach of this vast population. Let us work while the day lasts: the night cometh in which no man can work.

If the time allowed, it would be interesting to glance at the extraordinary progress of our Church at large since 1833, and to spread before you the statistics of our various Boards. But I must content myself with the following summary. The figures in the first column present the state of the whole Church, five years before the separation. Those in the second, are the statistics of our own branch of the Church for the current year.

	1833.	1858.
Ministers	1,855	2,320
Churches	2,500	3,146
Communicants	233,580	233,755
Synods	22	33
Presbyteries	111	159

Adding to these the statistics of the other branch of the Church, the total will be, Ministers, three thousand nine hundred and thirty-two; Churches, four thousand eight hundred and thirty-three; Communicants, three hundred and seventy-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-five.

It were futile to attempt to embrace in a single sermon the reflections awakened even by this very superficial retrospect of the period which defines my pastoral life among you. One sentiment, not so immediately personal as some I may presently express, is too deeply impressed upon my mind to be withheld.

The last twenty-five years has been a time of trial no less for churches than for political institutions. Every important denomination

in our country has been agitated with great controversies. Several of them have been rent asunder. And others, though retaining an external cohesion, are riven with seams and fissures which make their alleged unity a merely nominal thing. The position in which Providence placed me, has not been unfavorable to a calm and comprehensive survey of the working of the various systems of ecclesiastical faith and polity. And I feel it to be both my duty and my pleasure, to say here to-day, that every year's experience has gone to confirm my confidence in the principles which you and I entertain, and to enhance my gratitude to God that *I have had my birth and training and ministry in the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.* I cast no reproach upon other Churches. I challenge no exclusive immunities for our own. But I bless God that *I am a Presbyterian.*

One ground of this is, that in reviewing the period of my pastorate, I find the Presbyterian Church honorably distinguished by the estimate it puts upon *Divine truth.* There is a

system of theology which, however it may be designated by a mere human name, and styled *Calvinism* as a matter of convenience, has been held by the great body of eminent divines and evangelical Christians from the days of the apostles until now. It was embodied in the creeds and confessions of the Reformed Churches, with scarcely an exception. It teaches the sovereignty of God, the foreordination of all events, the depravity of man, the vicarious nature and the efficacy of the atonement, the necessity of regeneration, justification by faith alone, the absolute dependence of man upon the Holy Spirit, the obligation of repentance and holy obedience, and eternal rewards and punishments. Of this system, which so many illustrious theologians and so many renowned churches have deduced from the teachings of Christ and his apostles, I have found the Church to which it is your privilege and mine to belong, to be the special guardian. She has not held it as a mere form—content that it should be enshrined in her symbols and put away out of

sight. She has not overshadowed it with rites and ceremonies, and degraded it to a subordinate place in her ministrations. She has not allowed other incompatible and hostile creeds to come and encamp within her walls alongside of it. She has not permitted her ministers to suppress it, lest, peradventure, certain of its high and holy utterances might offend the pride of the human heart. On the contrary, she has insisted that her pastors should hold it in its plenary integrity; that they should faithfully preach it; that they should repel every effort which might be made to corrupt or dilute it; that they should instil it into the minds of the rising generation; and that they should constantly impress it upon all their people, that a Church is nothing without THE TRUTH; that there can be no real religion separate from the TRUTH; that God has confided to man no treasure so sacred and so invaluable as the TRUTH; and that to betray or even disparage the TRUTH, is to commit a heinous sin against God and to make war upon the only hope of a lost world.

These imperative and pregnant requisitions I have seen maintained and enforced by the Presbyterian Church, with an energy displayed by no other communion. Nowhere else have I observed the same appreciation put upon sound doctrine, or the same stern and righteous reprehension dealt out to the popular sentiment expressed in that infidel sneer,

“For modes of *faith* let graceless zealots fight.”

Taught in a different school, and imbued with a spirit as alien from this as light is from darkness, she has, as occasion called for it, ‘contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,’ and shown herself a living branch of that Church which is ‘THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.’

Had she paused here, however, my reverence for her had been abated. But while insisting upon the truth, I have seen her with equal zeal reprobating a barren orthodoxy; and everywhere teaching that *truth was in order to godliness*. No Church has been more inflexible in enforcing the necessity of a radi-

cal change of heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and of a reliance upon the righteousness of Christ as the only ground of hope for a sinner. No Church has been more faithful in protesting against the three great delusions, of fanaticism, formalism, and a mere worldly Christianity. She has scorned all fellowship with those types of so-called piety, which make religion to consist in dreams and revelations, and vulgar antics in the sanctuary. With the same firmness, she has lifted up her remonstrances against any undue reliance upon rites and sacraments, and iterated it in the ears of her children, that they might emulate the very Pharisees in their outward observances, without knowing the first rudiments of the Gospel. And, again, she has branded as hypocritical and ruinous, any profession of faith which leaves the individual still a votary of the world; which practically aims at amalgamating the service of God and the service of mammon, and repudiates every badge of discipleship but going to the Lord's table. Resisting these several errors, she has

never ceased to inculcate an enlightened and vigorous faith, which shall authenticate itself by a holy temper and life, as indispensable to salvation. And herein she has appeared to me to exhibit another of the marks of a truly Scriptural Church.

Again, I have watched the working of this Church, and found its influence to be good, and only good, and that continually. It has seemed to me to combine in a pre-eminent degree, the opposite elements of strength and flexibility. It is neither a petrified image of orthodoxy, nor a flaming meteor consuming itself and everything it touches with unhallowed fire. At once conservative and progressive, it has readily affiliated with every agency adapted to elevate and improve the race, and as instinctively arrayed itself against every demonstration hostile to the happiness of mankind. The friend of civil and religious liberty, it has gone forward to their rescue on emergencies which awed the resolute and made the prudent falter. Animated by a robust and generous patriotism, it has with

one hand scattered spiritual blessings over our land, and with the other poured oil upon the surging billows of faction, and employed its majestic powers in holding the incensed and alienated sections of the Union together. This I have seen; and loving my country, I cannot but love my Church, which has, under God, done so much, first, to achieve the independence of my country; secondly, to foster all its vital interests; and, last of all, to preserve its integrity and perpetuate its blessings.

For these reasons—not to specify others—I am grateful to God, after twenty-five years' experience, that He was pleased to cast my lot in the Presbyterian Church. I feel that 'the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places,' and that I have 'a goodly heritage.' It is of all others the place where I should choose to deposit my best earthly treasures. No human foresight can guard against every contingency. And our beloved Church *may* hereafter become venal and apostate. But in looking over the country and reviewing the last quarter of a century, there is no guardian-

ship to which I would so soon commit my children and the friends who are dearest to me, as hers. I believe they will be safer, there, than anywhere else. I believe they will be exposed to fewer noxious influences, and surrounded by more of the associations which are favorable to virtue and piety. I believe it will be most conducive to their present happiness, and to their eternal salvation—that, so to speak, there will be a greater probability of their getting to heaven, and of children's children following each other there from generation to generation. And, believing this, I must be false to every parental instinct, false to the sacred claims of those who may come after me in long succession, false to the sainted dead whose principles I have inherited, and false to that Saviour whose mercy I have experienced and whose most unworthy minister I am, if I should neglect any practicable means for inspiring my own household and the families committed to my care, with the love I cherish for our Church, and the inflexible purpose never to abandon it. And in this

particular (certainly not in others), I may say without indelicacy, and in all sincerity I do say, 'I would to God, that every parent in my congregation, and all who hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am.'

I have glanced at a topic here, too important to be dismissed without a sentence or two more—I mean the duty of training up our children in the principles which we ourselves profess. It is too much the case in this age of precocious childhood, when the relations of the parties seem often to be inverted, that children are left to wander away from the fold to which their parents belong, wherever caprice may carry them. Numerous agencies are conspiring, at least in our country, to foster a premature independence on the part of the young, and make them impatient of all wholesome control. The compact family organization, with its paternal priesthood, its orderly habits, its secluded, confidential intercourse, and its stated convocations for instruction in the Sacred Scriptures, is rudely invaded

from without, and its defences are in imminent danger of being broken down. The whole spirit of this bustling, officious, money-making, *impertinent* age, is hostile to the very idea of HOME, and to all its sacred duties and pleasures.

Then, again, this is a period of great latitudinarianism in religion. Every body wishes to be deemed religious, and of course, as the carnal mind is just as much 'enmity against God' as ever, the only way in which this can be brought about is, to bring religion down to a level that shall make it palatable to the unrenewed heart. Truth, therefore, is little thought of. The piety which insists upon the 'washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' upon the sprinkling of the blood of atonement upon the heart and conscience, upon faith in the Redeemer as the only medium of pardon, and upon a holy life—this sort of piety is 'too fanatical.' A decent deportment will be conceded, and a sound creed, and a punctilious ceremonial: but here you

must pause. If you venture further, you become 'precise' and 'puritanical.'

Now what are we to do, with dangers like these threatening our children on every hand? Are we to let the world come in, and confound our domestic ties, and sweep away our sons and daughters into the great vortex of frivolity and impiety? Are we to abandon them to their own capricious impulses, and let them throw themselves into the stream of fashionable formalism? We cannot do it. That is, we cannot do it without betraying the most sacred trust God has confided to us. We are bound by every consideration of duty and interest, to cherish their household virtues; to bind them close to our hearts and keep them there; and, above all, to pour the *truth* into their minds; to keep them within the reach of the Gospel; to show them the excellence of that system of faith and order which we hold; and to train them to love and cherish it for their own sake and for ours. If a quarter of a century has shown us anything more of the power and preciousness of this

divine system, let us manifest it by teaching our families to prize it also. If it has been a blessing to us, it will be no less a blessing to them. To lodge it in their hearts in its transforming and saving efficacy, is God's prerogative, not ours. But we *can*, ordinarily, keep them from casting it off. We can do much to link them in inviolable bonds to our beloved Church, to surround them with influences favorable to their conversion, and, by God's blessing, to prepare them for a useful life, a peaceful death, and a glorious immortality.

You will readily suppose that on the recurrence of an anniversary like this, my own mind reverts with interest and anxiety to the *general tone of the ministrations* with which we have been occupied here. To express all that I feel in recalling the deficiencies and weaknesses, the mistakes and sins, which have marred these services and impaired their usefulness, would neither be decorous nor profitable. I will only say, that there can be no individual here whose impressions on this

point are stronger than my own; and certainly none whose retrospect of the Sabbaths we have spent together, can awaken so many sad and reproachful emotions. But the scene is not all dark. It is an unspeakable satisfaction to me to reflect, that, with all its imperfections, the preaching you have listened to has been, not deism, not philosophy, not mere morality, but the GOSPEL OF CHRIST. According to my ability, I have set forth before you that system of truth of which I have just been speaking, as the burden of prophets and apostles, the glory of the Reformed Churches, and the peculiar jewel of our own. When I came to you 'in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling,' it was with the determination to 'know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.' I have never interpreted this to mean that a Pastor was to confine himself to the iteration of the Saviour's name, or to the exposition of a few leading doctrines of the New Testament. I regard it, rather, as importing, that the preacher is to take his stand at the cross, and

to bring forward the whole circle of revealed truth as surveyed from that position. Such I find to have been the apostle's own explanation of the rule, as interpreted by his practice. For there is scarcely a topic in divinity or in morals which he has not handled; and they who would circumscribe the pulpit to a few common-places in the evangelical system, will appeal in vain to Paul for an authority. How difficult a task it is 'rightly to divide the word of truth,' is known only to those who have attempted it. Examine the Bible. See what an inexhaustible treasure-house it is, in the extent and variety, in the grandeur and importance, of its themes. Consider its histories and biographies, its prophecies and doctrines, its precepts and promises: then look at the endless diversities of human character and condition; the multifarious variety of wants and woes, of dangers and duties, of relations and responsibilities, which meet, often, in a single congregation; and decide whether it can be a trivial matter so to select and adjust the topics of the Bible, as to insure

to every individual of this mass 'his portion in due season,' and to bring about, in a protracted ministry, the best possible results. All that can be fairly exacted of a Pastor, is, that he should aim at this, and do his best to accomplish it. That your Pastor has grievously failed in very many particulars, he has not the least question. But I *have* endeavored to preach to you the Gospel of Christ; and 'I have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to you all, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'

For the candor and kindness with which you have listened to these instructions, I owe you many thanks. For the efficacy which it has pleased the great Head of the Church to impart to them, neither you nor I can be sufficiently grateful. We have reason, I certainly have, to be deeply humbled, that these twenty-five years have passed away, and left no more fruit. But some fruit there is; and for this we may lay our thank-offering upon His altar. You can recall 'times of refresh-

ing from the presence of the Lord,' when you felt this to be the house of God and the very gate of heaven. To many among you this is consecrated ground. It will be said of our humble church hereafter, 'This and that man was born in her. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.' Here God has met you. Here, when you came up to his courts careless and giddy, His spirit opened your hearts to the truth, set your sins in order before your eyes, pierced your bosoms with anguish, and sent you home with the cry, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' And here he has again met you, taken off your burdens, and dismissed you with that peace which passeth understanding. This has been the place of your espousals to Christ, and here you have for the first time sat down at his table, and commemorated his dying love.

But no pen may attempt to delineate the scenes which must occur in any church where the Gospel is preached, and which have doubtless occurred here, during a period of twenty-

five years. The influences proper to a place like this, are too powerful not to tell upon the characters of those who are brought within their reach. What fierce inward conflicts have there been here between the flesh and the spirit! What upbraidings of conscience! What stifled convictions! What struggles against the truth! What wrestlings with sin! What noble resolves! What cries for deliverance! What yearnings after pardon! What anxious looks towards Calvary! What triumphs of Satan over awakened souls! What victories of contrite and believing penitents over Satan! How many led captive by sin! How many conquerors!

Here, in the sanctuary, is the great battleground on which heaven and hell are contesting the possession of the soul:—

“The soul of man—Jehovah’s breath—
That keeps two worlds at strife;
Hell moves beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life!”

Nor does the conflict cease with the surrender of the soul to Christ. The whole in-

ward life of the Christian is compounded of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, sinning and repenting, doubting and trusting, striving and halting, cleaving to earth and soaring heavenward. And the sanctuary is, of all others, the spot where the adverse elements which enter into his character, are stimulated into intense activity, and produce their most decisive effects upon his conduct.

For twenty-five years these latent processes, seen only by that eye which sees all things, have been going on here, in hundreds of bosoms. Let God be praised that there have been results which we can all think of with complacency. He has met the hungry here and fed them with the bread of life. He has given to mourners in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He has given strength to the weak, and to them that had no might he has increased strength. He has sought that which was lost, and brought again that which was driven away, and bound up that which was broken, and strengthened

that which was sick, and made them and the places round about his hill a blessing. He has extracted the sting from wounded consciences, bound up the bruised reed, and revived the smoking flax. He has enabled mourners to say, where they thought they never could say it, 'Thy will be done!' He has given his people strength to endure trials which they had believed must crush them. He has disclosed the pillar of cloud and of fire to the perplexed and the timorous. He has laid his hand upon the presumptuous, and held them back from sins which must have destroyed them. He has brought scoffers and sensualists and washed them from their pollution in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. He has shown the amiable and the moral the insufficiency of their own righteousness to bear the scrutiny of a holy God. He has stirred up parents to greater fidelity and children to greater reverence, and opened in numerous families sources of pure and rational enjoyment such as they had never dreamed of. He has touched the hearts of

young men, turned them aside from their chosen occupations, and sent them forth one after another as ambassadors for Christ.

These, and such as these, are the benign offices he is carrying forward here, as in other churches. And when we reflect upon the results involved in these merciful dispensations continued among a people without interruption through a quarter of a century, or for thirteen hundred Sabbaths, the children of Zion may well 'be joyful in their King.' Like the Hebrews at the dedication of their temple, you may 'go to your tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord has done for Israel his people.'

Standing where we do to-day, it is impossible not to call to mind our trials as well as our mercies. The ministry I have fulfilled among you, as already remarked, has not been without its interruptions, some of which have threatened to bring it to a close. But in *your* view, my attacks of sickness have been simply Providential afflictions which called for sympathy and succor; and you have not only

submitted to them without complaining, but made every recurrence of the trial an occasion for heaping upon me fresh kindnesses. I repeat that I am not insensible either to your affection, or to the mercy of our Heavenly Father in restoring me to health so often and permitting me to resume my work. There is no employment in this world which I love so much as preaching the Gospel ; no office which I feel to be so honorable or so useful as that of a Christian pastor. And I am never laid aside from its duties temporarily, without being filled with sorrow in reviewing the manner in which I have met my responsibilities, and penetrated with gratitude to God for the favor he has shown to my unworthy labors. Nor do I regard it as the least memorable token of his paternal care, that the congregation has been kept in the same united and flourishing condition in my absence, as when I have been with you.

But *your* trials—and especially your *bereavements*—how they come thronging around us on an occasion like this. What a chasm has this

quarter of a century made in the congregation assembled here on the evening of the 8th of November, 1833! Here and there, as I look along these aisles, I meet a friendly face which greeted me, a *stranger*, then; but with a very few exceptions, the gentlemen who sat at the heads of these pews have disappeared. Numerous families have been entirely broken up by death. And some of you have had breach upon breach in your fireside circles, until every step of the way to the cemeteries has been wet with your tears. The mortality already mentioned has included all classes and ages: death is no respecter of persons. We have seen many hoary-headed saints gathered into the garner, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Infants that have lingered here just long enough to entwine themselves around loving hearts; daughters in the pride and loveliness of opening womanhood; wives whose nuptial ceremonies proved the harbinger of their funeral pageants; mothers whose clustering virtues shed the radiance of heaven over happy households; young men panting

for the contests of life, like the war-horse for the battle; and men of business immersed in the cares of an extended traffic,—all have vanished from our eyes, and the places which knew them, know them no more. By far the larger number of those who are gone, I have visited in their sickness—not to speak again of the frequent instances in which I have been called to minister consolation or instruction to strangers whom Providence has brought here to die at our hotels. Death has become a familiar spectacle to me; and I have seen it under many forms. I have seen it when it came like a demon attended by the furies of hell. And I have seen it when it came like an angel of mercy with its retinue of seraphs, to convoy the departing spirit to the skies. I have watched the lamp of life go out, when the harrowing thought has struck a chill through me, that, in all probability, life and *hope* must expire together. And I have watched its flickering flame with the joyful assurance, that after a momentary eclipse it would be re-enkindled before the sapphire

throne. I have stood by the dying when it was too painful to be endured, except under an inexorable sense of duty. And again I have stood by the dying, when the chamber of death seemed like the very vestibule of heaven. It has been my allotment, by turns, to teach in the presence of death, and to be taught; to point to the Lamb of God, and to have the Lamb of God held forth to me; to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and to hear Christ crucified preached with an eloquence and a power unknown to my poor ministrations; to encourage desponding souls, and to see some 'Great Heart' going forward to the last encounter, with a majestic faith which gave certain presage of victory. For the most part, those who had borne an exemplary Christian character, have died in peace. Even where they have long had a peculiar horror of death, and felt that they *must* be overwhelmed in the waves, they have been mercifully relieved of this fear as the hour approached, and at length, on going down into the river, the water has been so low and still that they have passed over all

but dry-shod. To my own mind, this is one of the most expressive and touching of all the tokens we have, of the faithfulness and tenderness of our Heavenly Father—his condescending kindness towards humble and doubting Christians, in the prospect of death. It is a spectacle of true moral sublimity, to see such a Christian—a delicate and refined female, perhaps—losing her timidity as she loses her strength, gaining confidence amidst the decays of nature, her faith waxing stronger as she draws nearer to eternity, and finally exclaiming, as she grapples with the last enemy, ‘Thanks be to God which giveth me the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!’ I know of nothing adapted in an equal degree with scenes like this, to confirm our faith in the divine authority of our holy religion, or to arm the believer against the fear of death. I would counsel you, therefore, not to shun such scenes. There are lessons there for you, which you will get nowhere else.

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileg’d beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heav’n.”

And when your turn comes to meet the destroyer, it may greatly nerve your faith and hope to have frequented this 'chamber,' and seen how God has supported even the feeblest of his children and brought them off more than conquerors.

But there is one aspect of this subject peculiarly solemn to the mind of a Pastor. He looks over his congregation and finds, it may be, that several hundred of the individuals who once sat under his ministry, are now in eternity. What report have they borne with them as to his fidelity? Did he set life and death before them? Did he admonish them of their sins? Did he tell them what they must do to be saved? Did he, on all fit occasions, urge them to make their peace with God? Did he caution them against false grounds of confidence? Did he endeavor to establish them in the truth and build them up in holiness? Did he labor to bring out their resources, to show them how they might be useful, and how they might make the most

of their influence in promoting the success of the Gospel?

These are very serious, as they are very natural, questions. The dead are now beyond his reach, and the ineradicable impress of eternity is upon them. Happy is that Pastor whose conscience acquits him of blame in this matter; who feels in respect to all who are gone, that he did everything he could for their salvation. Alas, my brethren, who of us, Pastor or people, can say this concerning the dead! How many are gone with whom we ought to have labored more to bring them to Christ! How easy would it have been to speak to them oftener on the subject, to place some suitable book in their hands, to invite them to the sanctuary, to remove their prejudices against religion, to do a score of things, any one of which might, by the blessing of God, have been useful to them!

I feel all this as a Pastor. There are doubtless parents here who feel it keenly as to their deceased children. Every one must feel it in respect to companions and friends

who have been summoned away in an unexpected hour. Let us see to it, that the lesson is not lost upon us. We may go to the graves of the departed and bemoan our unfaithfulness to their souls; but the best tribute we can pay them, is to perform our duty to the living. There are others still around us who may die as suddenly and with as little preparation. These we can reach. And if the slumberers could burst their cerements and come back, they would bid us cease from wasting our posthumous regrets upon them, and address ourselves to the saving of those for whom salvation is yet possible.

But I trespass too long upon your patience. A single thought more, and I have done.

The past and the future blend imperceptibly together. While we review the years that are gone, the imagination busies itself about the years that are to come. On the evening of that ordination service, the scroll on which the events of this quarter-century were to be recorded was, to our eyes, of virgin whiteness:

no mortal hand would have presumed to draw the faintest hair-stroke of the annals to be inscribed upon it. To God's eye, it was all written over then, as it is now to us. But who could have conceived what characters it was to reveal? Who among that vast assemblage could have believed, had the idea been suggested, that twenty-five years would work *such* changes in this congregation, as those we have been contemplating? Another scroll lies before us to-day, unsullied as the Alpine snow. It is to receive the history of these coming years, and bear it to the judgment seat, and then onward through eternity. When at the close of another quarter-century, that too faithful chronicle shall be spread before the congregation then worshipping in this house, it will doubtless be like the one we have been reading. It will tell of changes possibly as great as those which are past. It will relate the joys and the sorrows of many a household; the dispersion of families; the achievements of sin and the victories of grace. It may state that of the four hundred and fifty

communicants now here, only fifty remain in the Church; and that of the families to which those fifty belong, there are not four which have escaped the inroads of death. It may speak of times of refreshing when many were born again; of other colonies gone forth to plant new churches; and of young men here dedicated to God in baptism, who have become able and godly ministers of the New Testament. It may contain some humble memorial of successive *Pastors*, who have stood here and published the Gospel of the kingdom.

There is an absolute certainty that many who are now here, will be written in that record as among the dead. There is little probability that I shall be here to witness its unrolling. Even with fewer years, my precarious health would forbid that expectation. But I am willing to leave that event with Him who has crowned my life with unnumbered mercies. My times are in His hand. Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; and I cannot distrust Him for the future. But I must and do distrust

myself. I fear for my own soul. And, my beloved people, when I think of the subtlety of sin, and the mighty hindrances which obstruct our salvation, I fear for *yours* also. I tremble, at times, under the weight of this burden which God has laid upon me. I shrink with anguish from the thought of meeting you at the bar of Christ. I entreat you, for my sake, if you can be heedless about yourselves, to be reconciled to God. Whatever may be my lot in that day, wherever I may stand, I cannot bear to see any of *you* at the left hand of Christ. Oh, GIVE YOURSELVES TO THE SAVIOUR, while you may. And cease not to pray for *me*, that I may be faithful unto death, and so, through the unsearchable riches of Christ, 'may have right to the tree of life,' and may *with you* 'enter in through the gates into the city.'

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