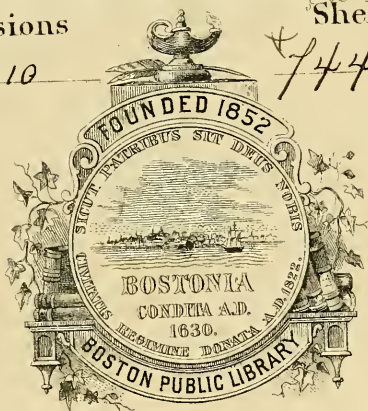


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SEMI-CENTENARY DISCOURSE.

BY

REV. WILLIAM NEILL, D.D.

C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS.

19 St. James Street.

84

A DISCOURSE

R. VIEWING

A MINISTRY OF FIFTY YEARS.

Bel.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM NEILL, D.D.

WITH

An Appendix

OF

ANECDOTES AND REMINISCENCES.

PHILADELPHIA:
JOSEPH M. WILSON.
1857.

C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS,
19 St. James Street.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, November 27th, 1856.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

It is the earnest desire of your numerous friends, that the Discourse which you have recently prepared, to commemorate the fiftieth year of your ministerial labors, should be published. We do not assume to represent them all, but as officers of the church that enjoyed your ministry first in this city, we have the privilege of precedence in making this request. Will you please then, to put it at our disposal to be committed to the press, and greatly oblige,

Yours, with affectionate respect,

JOSEPH H. JONES,
Pastor.

JAMES N. DICKSON,
WILLIAM S. BOYD,

JOHN M. HARPER,
Elders.

To the REV. DR. NEILL.

PHILADELPHIA, December 4th, 1856.

DEAR BRETHREN:

I have your note of the 27th ult., requesting my Semi-centenary Discourse for publication. You shall have it. It is the first draft, and the only copy; hardly fit for the press,—a mere mite; but here it is, and may a blessing attend it.

Yours, in the best bonds,

WILLIAM NEILL.

To the Pastor and Elders
of the Sixth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

DISCOURSE.

"BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I AM WHAT I AM."—1 CORINTHIANS, 15 : 10,

FIRST CLAUSE.

No satisfactory account can be given of Paul's conversion and subsequent course, other than that which is indicated in these words. We have, in his case, effects, palpable and undeniable, bespeaking a cause above and beyond the motives ordinarily actuating mankind, especially in matters of religion, which takes such firm hold of the inner man and is, in our deep consciousness, of more importance than all the world besides. Honest men do not change their religious belief readily; nor do considerate men renounce high places and flattering prospects, without strong reasons, in their own apprehension at least, for so doing. Now, all this and more, Paul did; and, if you ask him why, he will tell you that, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, he could not, with a good conscience, disobey the heavenly vision." The love of Christ con-

strained him, and drew from his inmost soul the strange exclamation: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!" "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Thus it is, that the divine method of saving sinners, humbles the pride of fallen man, and secures all glory to the redeeming Saviour. Our apostasy from God has brought upon us a moral paralysis of *helpless guilt*. We have no self-regenerating power, either of will or wisdom. If left to ourselves, we are undone. Preventing, sustaining, and crowning grace, is therefore our song, now and forever. God opens the deaf ear to the thunders of Sinai; and to the earnest cry, What shall I do? affords efficient aid; and, thus, the sinner believes and lives. So, in the kingdom of Christ, every one is just what the grace of God makes him, both as to his attainments and useful labors. Boasting is excluded, man-worship suppressed, and God is exalted and extolled, as a sovereign on his throne of grace.

With a heart steeped in these sentiments, I proceed to submit a brief review of a ministry of fifty years and some few weeks, which it has been my privilege to exercise, in an humble way, for the honor of my blessed Lord, and the salvation of souls. This I do, not, I trust, for self-glorification, but as preparatory to my

final account, which must soon be rendered; as also for the pleasure and benefit of surviving friends; and to bear my testimony to the grace and faithfulness of God, in building up the kingdom of his Son, by giving efficacy to his *own well-appointed* means. Whatever, of good, may have been accomplished, by my services, is attributable to Divine grace; and all of error and defect, to my sin and weakness. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” We are but the softened clay, applied to sightless eyes and indurated hearts, by the Spirit’s healing hand. “By the grace of God, I am what I am.”

Let me, as preliminary to the main purpose of this service, celebrate the *anticipative* or *preventive* influence of Divine grace. I never would have turned from the paths of the destroyer, or thought rightly of Christ and heaven, had not a gracious power interposed. How could it be expected, speaking after the manner of man, that a child of nature, bereft of both parents, so early in life, as to leave no recollection of either, and, of course, deprived of home training and suitable religious instruction,—living with kind friends, indeed, but uncontrolled, and unwarned of the evil of sin,—would do otherwise, than go, with the multitude, in the broad way to death eternal? And this was *my case*, till the

age of some seventeen years—the most critical period of human life, when the character begins to take type for eternity. Then it was—“Bless the Lord, O my soul!” that the Friend of sinners crossed my path, and drew my attention to “things above.” First, by sickness;—the severest I ever had, and in circumstances calculated to awaken conscience, and elicit prayer. I had left the kindred circle of a sister’s house, resolved to make my way in the world, as best I could. Stopping at Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, I engaged as a boy, with David White, in attending store. Mr. White was a gay young man, and kept bachelor’s hall. He and I, with a hired girl, as housekeeper, composed the family. Here I was laid on a bed of sickness, away from my relatives, with poor attendance;—a physician, resident at the distance of seven or eight miles, calling to see me about once a week. It was a tedious illness of some weeks. A part of the time, I was delirious; but, upon the recovery of reason, I awoke to a sense of my need of Divine help. I cried unto the Lord, and *promised*, if raised and spared, to lead a new life. But, alas, for sick-bed resolutions! On the return of health, I returned, in great measure, to my reckless and godless course. A gracious Providence, therefore, brought me under the faithful ministry of the revered Dr. John McMillan, pastor of the Church of Chartiers, who

sounded forth, alternately, the terrors of the law, and the sweet strains of Gospel grace—not in vain, I trust, in my case. I was, moreover, thrown into serious society,—took to new companionships—attended religious meetings; all tending to deepen my impressions on the great subject of the soul's salvation;—till, on a memorable communion occasion, at Upper Buffalo, some ten miles distant, whither I had travelled, on foot, with a few school-mates of the good old academy, which soon afterwards grew into Jefferson College, it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, with unwonted light and power, as “the way, the truth, and the life;” and, by *his help*, I *did* think, and do *now hope*, though with some fear, from a treacherous heart and a very imperfect life,—that I submitted to his righteousness, and acquiesced in his method of saving sinners, by grace, through faith in the person, and atoning sacrifice of his Son. The primary and instinctive confession of the new-born soul is, as it seems to me, “Grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Such, in brief, is the basis of my religious hope.

And my call to the ministry, if, indeed, I have ever had one, from the right source, was nearly simultaneous, and closely connected with this. It was, summarily, on this wise. The first great question that arose,

in my new relations to God, and which seemed to come from a deep consciousness of my obligations to redeeming love, was,—“What wouldst thou have me to do?” How can I best honor him, who has died for me, and inspired me with the hope of glory? In waiting, not long, for an answer, the ministry of reconciliation loomed up before me, in its peerless import, and divine magnificence. I paused, and doubted, in view of the responsibilities of the work; but, on reflecting that, in the redeeming plan, God, sometimes, chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, I ventured to say, “Here am I, send me.” I made my election, and have not regretted it, as yet: though fully aware of sad deficiencies, and need of pardon, through the blood of Christ, for official sins.

I now pursued my studies, with an object in view, which engrossed my thoughts, in the main, and called forth my best energies.

Having completed my preparation for College, with the advice and sanction of my religious advisers, I entered the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, in the autumn of 1800, fifty-six years ago, within a few days, more or less. The tone of morals, in the institution, was rather low at the time, though the government was in good hands, and faithfully administered. Dr. Samuel S. Smith, President, John McLean, Professor of

Chemistry, Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy, and William Thompson, Professor of Ancient Languages, with two tutors, composed the Faculty. Some additions and changes were made, soon after my entrance, which the time will not allow me to notice. The Trustees *then*, as *now*, and all along, from the origin of the institution, were chiefly Presbyterian; and a goodly amount of Christian instruction was given to the pupils, on catholic and liberal principles: and, I am happy to know, that this is the case now, with a vast increase of teachers, and religious advantages. It should be so, *always* and *everywhere*, as we would have our youth trained for God, and their country, and both worlds. The principles of revealed religion are indispensable in a good education. We kept up a meeting for prayer and religious conference; and though our number was small, it was the conservative salt of the College. In March, 1802, the Nassau Hall edifice was destroyed by fire, except its massy shell, by a little club of ill-disposed boys, through the immediate agency of a profligate servant, who applied the match to the belfry, when he rung us out to dinner. The business of the College went on, however, and the loss was soon repaired, by the munificence of the friends of learning, under the auspices of the Board of Trustees, in which the late Dr. Ashbel Green and a few others like-minded, took an

active and honorable part. *Then*, the main building was the *only one*; now there are three distinct edifices, besides a chapel, library, and refectory. Mark the progress here in fifty years! What may we not expect, for our country and the world, from an institution of such ample accommodations, manned by a band of some dozen to fifteen working men, of high qualities, and of pure, philanthropic purpose!

I was graduated, at the Commencement in 1803, and, accepting the post of tutor in the College, I performed the duties of that office, in connection with my theological studies, two years; when I was licensed to preach the Gospel, early in October, 1805, by the Presbytery of New Brunswick.—See, how we had to *work* ourselves into the ministry in those days. Now, we have our theological seminaries; *especially*, our mother school of the prophets, at this Princeton, but distinct from the College, with its more than a hundred young men, taught and trained for the service of Christ, by as noble, and as pure, and as well-furnished a corps of instructors, as, for their number, the world can produce. Thanks to God for this change, for the better! He is giving us preachers, in goodly numbers; may they be of his own type, and in augmented force! We need more—many more, of the right sort, to supply the demands of the age. “The field is the world.” “The

harvest is plenteous"—and it is ready for the sickle: "Pray ye, the Lord of the harvest, therefore,"—and be sure to sustain your prayers, by personal efforts and cheerful alms-giving. But, to come back to the narrative.

On the receipt of license, having previously received a virtual call, in a letter from Judge Cooper, from the little Church of Cooperstown, New York State, I repaired to the ground with all practicable speed. It occupied us about a week, late and early, to reach Whitesboro', Oneida County, where, leaving my wife with her sister, Mrs. Carnahan (for I was married two days after my licensure), I went, straightway, to the field of my first ministerial labors. Taken into the domicile of the kind-hearted George Pomeroy, and his equally amiable lady, Judge Cooper's second daughter, I passed the winter, in labors abundant, but very happily, and free of expense. Spring came,—and gathering up my little family,—wife and helper-in-the-household,—I opened house, in a plain way, and, leaving domestic matters where they properly belong, I gave myself to the work; and it prospered, under prayerful culture.

Cooperstown, at the outlet of Otsego Lake, one of the sources of our rugged Susquehanna, then a new and small village, fenced in, east and west, by lofty

hills, with the lake stretching away nine miles to the north, and a fertile, widening valley, on the south, with the superb Cooper mansion, in the heart of the town plot, was the centre of action; but I had preaching stations, all around, in a compass of some six to eight miles, which served as feeders to the church; and as week after week passed, I met the congregated people, on the Lord's day, with the tidings of grace, in the Academy, fitted up for the purpose. In a few months, we had a spacious and beautiful church-edifice, completed and dedicated; and early in September, 1806, with full consent of parties concerned, I was ordained, and installed pastor, by the old Presbytery of Oneida—then the only one, if my memory is faithful, west of Albany. And now, we were organized, and had an open door, ample room, and enough materials to work upon. There were three Elders, of blessed memory, whose names I may not mention for want of time, except one,—Thomas Loomis, eminent for his active piety and meek spirit. His hearing being obtuse, he stood in the pulpit, beside the preacher, with the trumpet at his ear, taking in the words of life, as they dropped from lips of clay. But he and his loved associates died in the Lord, years ago, and are at rest from their earthly labors. While with them, in the church-session, and the house of God, we had sweet fellowship,

—not a jar or a shy look, to my best recollection, ever disturbed our peace. The same spirit pervaded the church and congregation. Additions were made to the communion, at about the ordinary rate. The attendance of the people on public worship, as also at lecture and prayer meetings, was good. Our house was commonly well filled, and we were, for the most part, of one mind, “striving together for the faith of the Gospel.” We had the ground to ourselves, except a few Methodists, and an infant Episcopal Church; of these, we had no jealousy, but hailed them as co-workers, and servants of our common Lord and Master. In few words:—we had tokens of Divine favor among us, and were dwelling together in unity, when I received a call to the First Church in the city of Albany, which, after some serious consideration, was accepted, and my church relations were changed. Of the motives that influenced this change, I will say nothing, just now; but may submit some remarks, on the general question of such removals, towards the close of this discourse.

On leaving the scene of my first pastoral attachment, and as I ascended the long, steep hill that shielded the placid lake and quiet village from the east winds, not knowing what might befall me where I was going, or what would become of the bereaved flock, my reflec-

tions were sad and sorrowful enough. But the deed was done, and the responsibility must be met.

September, 1809, I removed to Albany, my second field of labor, and was received with every reasonable mark of kindness. But, when in the light of the capital of the Empire State, I opened my eyes on the magnitude of the charge I was assuming, my courage flagged, and I would have fainted and fallen, but for the good word of promise: "My strength is made perfect in weakness:" For, although the population of Albany did not, then, exceed ten thousand (now it is said to be sixty thousand), yet it was a place of note, and evidently *to be* a seat of power for good or evil. In the First Church there were men of high position and keen discernment. The Governor was there, with several of the Judges, and some of the strong men of the bar, and of the other learned professions, besides a large body of well-indoctrinated and experienced Christians. Moreover, affliction came, and I soon found myself bereaved, and in charge of two infant children, with no mother to cherish them. These things seemed appalling; yet they were, doubtless, needful to humble the pride of my heart, and lead me to the blessed Fountain of our sufficiency in all duties and trials. But I must waive particulars, and save time for some practical suggestions. The Lord smiled on our efforts, and we

rejoiced in his goodness. We had a good band of helpers; strong, praying men, and not a few women of faith and works,—Hannahs and Marys, Dorcases and Phœbes. We used the ordinary means,—preaching, and catechising, and visiting from house to house. Some seed fell on good ground, and our labor was not in vain, in the Lord. He gave us tokens for good,—gentle refreshings from his presence, as dew on the mown grass. Few, if any, sacramental seasons passed without accessions to the communion;—how many, in the seven years of my pastoral services, I cannot tell; nor is it important that we should know, at present; for all that were born of God, will be found, at last, in the redeemed multitude, which no man can number.

I have just said that I must omit particulars. But, two cases, illustrative of the opposite practical effects of faith in Christ, and libertinism, or belief in nothing revealed, come up so forcibly to remembrance, that I will mention them briefly. An infidel club *had* been making sad work (it was now dwindling away), on the young men of the town. Their way was to discuss certain doctrines of the Bible, and upon pronouncing against them, to tear out the leaves, on which they were written, and burn them. One man, who had, by attending these discussions occasionally, been almost snared, narrowly escaped, through mercy, and making

his way to the sanctuary, soon found the Saviour; and, in due time, was received and numbered with the disciples. He proved faithful; and was, so far as we could judge, a consistent and happy Christian, living, and in death.

The other case was a sad one. The man had imbibed the poison,—given himself up to a godless life,—became intemperate, and was prostrated by *mania à potu*. In this state, I visited him, at the request of his poor wife. His appearance and language were frightful. I asked if I should pray with him. He declined, fiercely saying, with momentary intelligence, “when the Holy Trinity has been rejected, and trampled under foot, there is nothing to pray to—prayer is useless.” I did pray for him, nevertheless, while, in his crazed imagination, he was battling with the Devil, who, as he said, “was trying to impale him on a red-hot pitchfork, to carry him off to the bottomless pit.” In this condition he died, and went to his final account. Young men, I beseech you, in God’s name, take warning. The Redeemer’s person and work is not mythology. Heaven is a stupendous reality; and, if you live after the flesh, you will find, to your cost, that hell is no mere bugbear.

In the *machinery* for promoting Christ’s kingdom, in Albany, there were some advantages gained, during my time. A commodious lecture-room (we called it a ses-

sion-house) was erected. Here we held week-evening lectures, and prayer-meetings, and gave instruction to our children and youth. Here I instituted and taught a large Bible-class,—one of the first in our connection. It was well attended by the young men and women of the congregation; and all, I may say, became communicants, and some of them missionaries and ministers of the Gospel. And now, it was felt that there was need of more church-room. Another house of worship was projected (we were, then, the only Presbyterian Church *proper*, in the place). The Rev. John Chester, of honored memory, was looked to as the preacher. The house was built, as by acclamation; respectable outsiders turning in to aid the enterprise. I laid the corner-stone, and preached at the dedication. A little colony of members and officers were set off to begin with. The second church was organized. Chester was installed pastor; and there he labored, with delightful success, till I left, when both houses were comfortably filled. Dr. Chester was succeeded, at his early and lamented death, by the present incumbent, the Rev. Dr. Wm. B. Sprague, whose praise is in the churches. The main body of my former charge, with their children and connections, are now comfortably housed, on Hudson Street, in one of the most sumptuous and tasteful church-edifices in the land, under the pastoral care

of my esteemed brother and third successor, the Rev. John N. Campbell, a man of genius, a good student, a sound divine, and an able preacher. The old house, where I officiated, is now well used, by a respectable Congregational Church, including a few of the former worshippers there, under the faithful ministry of the Rev. Dr. Palmer.

And now, I am done with Albany, save to respect and love it. The churches, not only of our order, but of several other denominations, have trebled, or quadrupled there, in the last forty years. May it continue to prosper heavenward, and be, to the last generation, one of the strongholds of God's anointed!

On invitation, and in the usual way, I resigned my charge, and removed to Philadelphia, to be minister to the Sixth Church, in that city, in September, 1816. This was a new enterprise, growing, under Providence, out of a difference of opinion among good men, about the settlement of a pastor,—the Rev. Dr. E. S. Ely, still living, but laid aside by ill health. The minority, numerically, of old Pine Street Third Church, retired, on terms adjusted, and erected a model house of worship, on Spruce Street, within three squares, however, of the old place. The relations of the parties were not, at first, just what they should have been; but time and forbearance restored benevolent feelings, and mutual

kindness. The competition was brisk. The filling up in both houses, especially the new one, where there was a deal of room, was gradual and quiet. There was, moreover, some *debt* on the concern, which is *repulsive* to people who wish religious privileges at the lowest rate. To assist in clearing away this hinderance, I relinquished \$200 a year of my salary, which was \$2000 per annum; and we lived very comfortably, the latter half of my time, on \$1800 per annum. Our family were, at this time, eight in number. Another obstacle arose, which was a good deal vexatious, though nobody intended to injure us. The First Church, large and wealthy, having occasion to change their locality, fixed on a spot within two squares of us. The forthcoming house was to be a fine one; their minister, at the time, the Rev. Dr. J. P. Wilson, was an able man of God, and a popular preacher. A seat under his ministrations, would be a *desideratum*. So, some families near us waited. Still, the Lord prospered us. The ordinary means and appliances were in constant use. We had no long summer vacations then; it was not the fashion in those days. We wintered and summered together, "in the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace." Our growth, though not rapid, was healthful. Discipline was exercised gently. Accessions to the brotherhood was chiefly by examination. Our number increased

quietly, without new measures, or public notoriety. Here, too, as in Albany, we had a Bible-class, composed of both sexes—large, attentive and serious; comprising the youthful strength of the congregation. These *all*, or nearly all, became communicants, and are now the living epistles of Christ, exerting here, or wherever they are, a benign influence. The people of Spruce Street, Sixth Church, were accustomed to contribute liberally, to all evangelical and benevolent objects; and I am happy to find, on looking at the statistics of the church, that this is still their habit. It should be so in all the churches; then the Lord's storehouse would be full, and a blessing might be expected, such "that there would hardly be room enough to receive it."

The MONTHLY CONCERT.—This observance came into use in the churches, some thirty-five to forty years ago. It originated in the General Assembly, and answered a good purpose, for a time; but it has had its day, like all human arrangements, which dwindle down into mere formalism. To be efficient, it must be brought into the Sabbath. You cannot get the people generally together on a week-day; and to communicate missionary intelligence, and lecture on foreign missions, where the men of means are not present to hear, is beating the air, and wasting time. A portion of one Lord's day, in a month, could not be spent in a more

appropriate manner ; and the result, I am persuaded, would be manifold greater and better. Let us keep the Sabbath *holy*, according to the command, and occupy it, *exclusively*, in matters pertaining to the Lord's kingdom,—and the blessed effects will soon be felt, and celebrated around the globe.

But time passes. I left Spruce Street, in the autumn of 1824, having served there, in word and doctrine, feebly indeed, but happily, eight years. The elders of the church, peace to their memory, were men of prayer and faith,—wise counsellors, and kind friends. They are all, that were in office when I joined them, in heaven now, as I trust, each one singing with Paul in our text,—“By the grace of God, I am what I am.” The trustees, too, were men never to be forgotten. They fulfilled their engagements to me with rigid punctuality, and without grudging ; yes, there was no root of bitterness among us,—we were of one mind ; and I have, to this day, substantial tokens of their regard, received on leaving, which are to be kept in my family, when I am gone, in memory of a generous and affectionate people. For the fourteen years last past, my family have occupied one of the best pews in their house of worship, rent free ; and, during that period, my relations with their present pastor, my third successor, have been, as he will bear me witness, of the

most agreeable kind. Not a *look* of jealousy or suspicion has ever passed between us.

On receiving an invitation to the Presidency of Dickinson College, Carlisle, I accepted it, after some hesitancy, and left this pleasant field of pastoral labor, at the date just mentioned. On the validity of my reasons for so doing, I say nothing now, except that, on reflection, at this distance, they do not appear quite satisfactory to my own mind. We often act under the power of mixed motives, and we are very shortsighted. What I mean to say, in relation to Dickinson, will be said advisedly, and in few words. It is a good locality, in the heart of the Keystone State of our great Republic, and easily accessible from every point of the compass; but it was badly constituted.

1. It was a pensioner on the State, by an annuity from the public treasury, and, by legislative enactment, impliedly during good behavior. This impaired its discipline. 2. It was under the control of men of divers religious preferences, as represented in its Board of Trustees, which gave occasion to jealousy, and strife for the mastery, and which *almost excluded* the religious element from the course of instruction. 3. The Faculty was not represented in the Board of Trustees; which provided two distinct courts of appeal for insubordinate pupils. These were stubborn obstacles to the

full success of the institution; and, I venture to say, from painful experience, they are enough to cripple and ruin any college. We did gain some strength and repute, however, during my five years of toil and worryment there. We had able professors, and a spicing of the charity which "beareth all things." Our number of students increased, and of our graduates a goodly proportion are doing well for their country. But the evil crisis came at last. We were dragged before the legislature, on frivolous allegations against the trustees, and thenceforth we had but little harmony, and made dull progress. At the commencement of 1829, I retired, with the usual testimonials as to faithful service; and, after a further trial of two years under a new set of officers, the trustees *presumed* to transfer the College and its appurtenances to the Methodist brethren, who are now in possession. I intend no reflection on that respectable body of Christians, when I aver that the trustees in question had no right to make the transfer. They never were invested with any such power. The College was founded and cherished by Presbyterians mainly, and ought now, in reason and justice, to be one of our best schools of learning. Let the matter be looked into.

On leaving Carlisle, I became Secretary and General Agent of our Board of Education, which office I held

till the September of 1831. I was their *fac totum*: had the office in my dwelling,—kept the records,—wrote the letters, travelled, preached and collected, and prepared the reports, without even a boy to go errands. Besides all this, and harder than all, I had to contend with the American Education Society, and the prejudices of the people against all denominational Boards. In few words, my work was that of a pioneer, toilsome and rough, and sometimes forgotten, when the forces are rallied and marching to the conquest. We made some progress, however, by the hardest. A few hundred dollars were collected, a few beneficiaries registered, and the people began to come slowly under the shadow of their own standard. Contrast *this* with what we are now, with our three secretaries, besides treasurer and book-keeper, fully occupied, visiting scores of Synods and Presbyteries, year after year; our hundreds of candidates, and thousands of dollars, received and applied, to bring forward reapers for the plenteous harvest. What hath God wrought? “Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name be the praise, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake!”

Finding the work too hard for me, and incompatible with my duty to my numerous family, I resigned,—retired to Germantown; and there betook myself to my favorite employment,—the duties of the pulpit. I

found the Church there in a deplorable condition; broken down, peeled, and scattered, with but few symptoms of spiritual vitality. Indeed, it was a sort of hot-house plant, at first; a few individuals seceding from the German Reformed Church, because the Dutchmen would not allow the public services to be performed a part of the time in the English language. A little band of Presbyterians, led on by two or three men of more zeal than practical wisdom, procured a fine lot, built a large house, and placed in it an expensive organ,—borrowed money, and contracted a heavy debt, which sat, as the night-mare, upon them for years. Thus, an injury was inflicted upon Presbyterianism, in the town, from which it has hardly recovered to this day. Their minister had died; there were no session records;—the pulpit was open to any quack preachers, male or female, that might happen to be on hand, and wished to hold forth themselves and their crude notions. In this state of affairs, and under the auspices of our Missionary Board, and at the request of my dear, generous friend, John S. Henry, Esq., whose decease, years ago, we still have in sad remembrance, I turned in to see what could be done; and there I labored and watched unto prayer, eleven years, hoping against hope, for better days. Nor was the labor in vain in the Lord.

The elders, Rittenhouse, Bechtel, and Whartenby, all lived out of town, which was a hinderance to their efficiency as officers of the church. Peace to their ashes! they have all gone to the world of spirits, and are at rest. We used the ordinary means, as best we could; introducing afternoon worship, which was a *new measure* in the place, at that time, but which gained favor with the pious, and seemed necessary to a right use of the Lord's day. We made sundry improvements in the interior of our sanctuary, removing the lofty old *tub-pulpit*, and supplying its place with one of more modern style; gathered a large Sunday school; built a lecture-room, and placed in it a select church library, embracing most of the choice issues of our Publication Board. In few words:—"we strove together for the faith of the Gospel," and, we trust, a Divine blessing attended our efforts, feeble as they were. We had several seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when considerable numbers were added to the communion. But, the population of the town was sparse and fluctuating,—Presbyterian families were few and far between,—and, not having been installed pastor, I felt at liberty to give place to a successor, and determined to leave; in which I perhaps erred: if so, God overruled it for good. Had I been under inaugural engagements, I should, probably,

have remained in Germantown to this day; and I take leave, here, to record my protest against the whole system of stated supplies. It is incompatible with our plan, as Presbyterians; and works badly in many ways. It makes the ministry too much of a jobbing business, diminishes the feeling of responsibility, promotes fastidiousness, and tempts both minister and people to be on the look-out for changes and novelties, rather than growth in grace, and godly edifying. But, maugre our errors and hinderances, some good was accomplished through Divine favor. Souls were gathered into the kingdom, and we were instrumental in keeping the little flock together till the day dawned and the shadows passed away. The tide of population began to flow out from the city just at the time I left; and now, we have two self-sustaining churches there,—the old house, handsomely remodelled, and a tasteful new structure, in the upper part of the town (Chestnut Hill), erected by a spirited few of the old congregation, powerfully aided by the late Samuel Hildeburn and sons; both supplied with faithful preachers. Let not the day of small things be despised.—September, 1842, I returned to Philadelphia proper, where I have been, very much at my own charges, serving as a sort of City Missionary, especially in two of our best public institutions, where I have felt, with deep interest, the

import of that remarkable characteristic of our Divine religion:—"To the poor the Gospel is preached." Here I expect to spend the little remnant of life. When I die, some of my friends will bury my poor body, and cherish the loved ones that I shall leave among them.

PRACTICAL REMARKS,

SUGGESTED BY THE FOREGOING NARRATIVE.

FIRST, as to the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. This is God's great ordinance, for the salvation of our fallen world. Other means there are, indeed, but these are subordinate and auxiliary to the divine institution of preaching the word,—the Gospel,—the truth as it is in Jesus. And we have the reason, from the infallible Oracle:—“After that, in the wisdom of God, the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.” It is God's method of carrying into effect his own stupendous scheme of grace, in harmony with his eternal rights of government and law. Hence, he proclaims forgiveness and everlasting life, through the blood and righteousness of Christ Jesus,—“the name which is above every name, and at which, every knee is to bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.” To preach the Gospel, is to repeat and herald this proclamation, and urge its truth and grace on

men's consciences ; to hold forth God's Anointed, in his fulness of redeeming power, with no co-ordinate agency, on earth or in heaven, to share the glory of saving lost men ; "angels, principalities, and powers being subject unto him." Yes, my brother in the ministry, if you are called of God to this work, you bear the highest office that is, or can be borne, by man, on earth. You are an ambassador for Christ,—called and commissioned by him, to go forth, under the influence of his love, and in the power of his Spirit, to a rebellious and ruined race, "proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ;"—to *beat* on the prison doors, and call upon the prisoners to come out and be free ; to "beseech and persuade sinners to be reconciled to God."

Yes, reconciliation to God, is the grand end and aim of the Christian ministry. In so far as this is effected, the world is redeemed ; otherwise, it is lost. There is one Saviour, and but one ; one, and *only* one way of approach to the Father, and fountain of life ; one sacrifice, that cleanseth from all sin ; one religion, of divine origin and authority, and that is at all adapted to meet the necessities of man. All others are dilutions or perversions, with but faint glimmerings of primitive light and hope. "Christ is all, and in all ;" the seed of the woman, the substance of the types, the spirit of prophecy, the

divinity incarnate, and the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Surely, an institution originating in the love of God for his rebellious creatures,—so benign in its bearing on all human interests,—and with the intent of raising our poor, shattered nature to the fellowship of angels; nay, to a covenant union with the Holy One, is worthy of all acceptation, and ought to be sustained, at any cost. But my conceptions are inadequate, and language fails. Take a few sentences from the Rev. Dr. Robert Hall, one of the lights of the transatlantic pulpit, who, being dead, yet speaketh: “Though it is not permitted us to magnify ourselves, we may be allowed to magnify our office.” “That office cannot be mean, which the Son of God condescended to sustain; for the word which we preach, first began to be spoken by the Lord; and while he sojourned upon earth, the Prince of Life was chiefly employed in publishing his own religion. That office cannot be mean, whose end is the recovery of man to his original purity and happiness, the illumination of the mind, the communication of truth, and the production of principles which will bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. As the material part of the creation was formed for the sake of the immaterial; and, of the latter, the most momentous characteristic, is its moral and accountable nature, or, in other words, its capacity of virtue and of vice, that

labor cannot want dignity which is exerted in improving man in his highest character, and fitting him for his eternal destination. Here alone is certainty and durability; for, however highly we may esteem the arts and sciences, which polish our species, and promote the welfare of society; whatever respect we may feel for those laws and institutions, whence it derives the security, necessary for enabling it to enlarge its resources, and develop its energies, we cannot forget that these are but the embellishments of a scene we must shortly quit; the decorations of a theatre, from which the eager spectators and applauded actors must soon retire. ‘The end of all things is at hand.’ Vanity is inscribed on every earthly pursuit, on all sublunary labor. Its materials, its instruments, and its objects, will, alike, perish. An incurable taint of mortality has seized upon and will consume them ere long. The acquisitions derived from religion, the graces of a renovated mind, are alone permanent. This is the mystic enclosure, rescued from the empire of change and death; this is the field which the Lord hath blessed; and this word of the kingdom, the seed, which alone produces immortal fruit, the very bread of life, with which, under a higher economy, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, will feed his flock, and replenish his elect through eternal ages.

“How high and awful a function is that, which pro-

poses to establish, in the soul, an interior dominion, to illuminate its powers by a celestial light, and introduce it to an intimate, ineffable, and unchanging alliance with the Father of spirits ! What an honor to be employed as instruments of conducting that mysterious process by which men are born of God ; to expel from the heart the venom of the old serpent ; to purge the conscience from invisible stains of guilt ; to release the passions from the bondage of corruption, and invite them to soar aloft into the regions of uncreated light and beauty ; to say to the prisoners, Go forth ; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves ! These are the fruits which arise from a successful discharge of the Christian ministry ; these the effects of the Gospel, wherever it becomes the power of God unto salvation ; and the interests which they create, the joy which they diffuse are felt in other worlds." Thus far, the eloquent Baptist ; and now, I ask again, shall not the institution of preaching be sustained and perpetuated ? Yes, till time shall be no longer, and all the sacramental host of God's elect, be gathered into the fold of the Chief Shepherd. But how ? Not by miracle ; but by God's gracious power, acting through his Church, collectively and individually, the subjects of his grace. Not that he needs their help, but that he means to bless them, by

making them a blessing to the world; by giving them good work in his vineyard, to cultivate their taste and fix their habits, for the holy employments, and bliss of Heaven. Christian parents will take part in filling up the ministerial ranks, by teaching their children to set their hope in God, and by directing the minds of their pious sons, when asking, "What shall be my business in life?" to the plenteous harvest, where there is so much room, and such a pressing demand for service in a most useful and honorable profession. Pastors and the Eldership will, also, lend a hand, in upholding the ministry, by looking up, and bringing forward young men, of the right spirit, to be trained for the work. Schools, of all grades, in which religion, as is meet, holds its proper place, in the course of juvenile instruction, with their precious revivals, will furnish pupils for the seminaries of theological learning, where they will be taught how to interpret, and how to preach the word of God. By these and the like means, under Divine favor, there shall not be wanting working men to cultivate the Lord's husbandry, to break up the fallow ground, to sow the seed, to reap the harvest, and bring in the sheaves, with rejoicing. "When the Lord gives the word, great shall be the company of them that publish it." The word is pledged; and it is a word of high

command, and infallible promise. "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, and lo, *I am with you alway*, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Here is the strong ground of our confidence, that the preaching will be continued. How shall the work be best accomplished; what is the spirit, and what the method of preaching most likely to reach the end in view?

2. On this great question, I wish to submit a few suggestions; and I trust my brethren and fellow-servants in the Lord, will regard them *as suggestions*, and *not dicta*. I claim no authority; and the remarks will be as likely to conflict with my own practice, as that of others. The object is to give the results of some experience and observation, to be used at discretion, by survivors and successors, in this department of the Lord's service.

First, then, I would say, we should prefer and practise the duties of the office, from a conviction of its Divine authority, and intimate relation to the glory of God, and the good of man. This conviction is to be arrived at by prayer, and close, candid investigation. It is indispensable to thorough-paced and successful effort; otherwise, our endeavors will be languid, faltering, and of doubtful issue, in our own minds. We must *feel* that we are on solid rock,—a divine platform; that we are working in a right direction, in the direction of a divine

purpose ; that God is with us, and, this being the case, that no earthly power can prevail against us.

Secondly, we should hold in view, and keep at the peculiar business of our calling, viz., to preach Christ crucified, risen, and reigning God over all, to give repentance, and the remission of sins. This is our grand central theme ; this we are to study and pray over, and look into, as do the angels ; to this we are to bring all the stores that we can collect, in the fields of science, literature, and art, for illustration and enforcement. Other topics are well enough in their place ; but they are not for us, especially when in the pulpit, except in so far as they can be made auxiliary to our chief aim and purpose, which is, or should be, to bring men to repentance, and a good hope in Christ. We are to be men of one leading idea. We are working a mine of untold wealth, which we are to bring out, in its various aspects and bearings, for the adornment of the soul in the beauties of holiness. We publish and propagate an *old* Gospel ; older, in the Divine plan, than creation ; for, in Christ Jesus, there was a fulness of grace provided for us before our apostasy, and before the world was made. The covenant of grace dates anterior to that of works ; the former being established in anticipation of the foreseen violation of the latter, and its dreadful effects. Salvation by Christ is not the expe-

dient of second thought, in the most Holy One, who is always of one mind. He never designed to save the first Adam, or his descendants, ruined by his fault, in any *other* way, than through the mediation of the second Adam,—the Lord from Heaven. But in *this, his own chosen way*, he does design to save all who acquiesce in it, by faith in his Son; so that believers, in whose hearts Christ is enthroned, are more secure than was unfallen man; yea, more secure than the holy angels, for they are kept by the power and covenant of the unchanging God, through faith unto eternal life. Here, then, is our great theme: “God, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” This reconciliation of the world to God, is the main object of our mission. Let us keep to our text. The subject is vast, deep as the sea, broad as the earth, and high as heaven. Here is ample scope for the strongest intellect, the liveliest imagination, and the warmest zeal. Why should we ever descend from our lofty stand-point, to deal in the small ware of wit and worldly wisdom, partisan politics and idle speculations about things unrevealed, while souls are perishing, and the fearful controversy between heaven and earth is unadjusted, the day of grace passing, and the disastrous issue approaching, with portentous signs of wrath and fiery indignation, that shall devour the adversary? Oh, it is preposterous! Let us, then,

Thirdly, give ourselves wholly to our appropriate work in good earnest, with the confident hope of success, through the power of the Spirit. Let us preach Christ, as the personal embodiment of all that is great and lovely, in God and man; and this we cannot do, honestly and cordially, unless we have some experimental knowledge of his grace and ability to save to the uttermost. To preach "the Christ of history," merely, will not do. In that case, our discourses will partake of the flimsiness of our creed. We are not to place him in competition with other religious teachers, but, pre-eminently, as *the Teacher* direct from Heaven, as God's anointed prophet, priest, king, and Saviour—outside of whose gracious dominion sinful men cannot be saved. This view of our calling will stir up within us the latent fire of love and compassion, which, going forth in our appeals, must tell, with some effect, on the hearts and consciences of our hearers. We don't forget that, plant and water as we may, it is God's prerogative to give the increase. But, my dear brethren, if we would win souls for Christ, and be a savor of life unto life to them that hear us, we must weep and agonize, as did Paul, the apostle. Impelled by the love of Christ, we must be willing to go to Jerusalem, or to China, if need be, without knowing what shall befall us, "so that we may finish our course with joy, and

the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Our work *is, or is designed to be* engrossing. It should fill head, hand, and heart. Necessity is laid upon us. Our mission must be fulfilled, whatever else may be neglected. The world's redemption hangs upon its success.

How, then, fourthly, shall we *deliver our message to the best advantage*? Shall we read it? or shall we give it, as the lawyer gives his plea, to court and jury, with tongue, eye, and hand in unison, as if from heart to heart? This is a difficult question; not to be settled wisely, without looking at both sides; and, perhaps, a fixed rule, to be applied in all cases, would not be for edification. There is a diversity of gifts; and every man should try to find out his own, and exercise it in the best way, *for him*. Study and prayer, we regard as indispensable, whatever be the mode of delivery. Examples of good preaching, on both plans, are not wanting. But, certainly, the close use of notes was not the primitive method. Christ and his apostles did not read their discourses; they could not, in their circumstances. Missionaries do not generally read: if they did, their hearers would leave them. There is moreover a pretty strong prejudice against the practice, in most minds, and in all countries. Said a Scotch gentleman, on hearing a popular preacher, "That was a capital ser-

mon;—but he seemed to read a good deal of it, slyly.” “Ah,” said an observant maid, from the gallery, “if you had sat where I did, you would have seen the *roguery* of it.” The writer read his Sabbath sermons, rather closely, for forty years; but, during the last ten years, he has not shown paper in the pulpit, except on special occasions; and this latter way he prefers, as well on the score of personal satisfaction, as for the obvious effect on the hearers. After all, he would not dictate to others. There is a great difference in the manner of using notes; some, taking due care to know, beforehand, what they contain, seldom need to refer to them, while others are so intent upon them, as rarely to give the audience a look of respectful and affectionate regard. There may be purity of purpose, and some good accomplished, in either way; but close reading is, in appearance at least, too perfunctory and listless. Committing to memory and delivering verbatim, is slavish and puerile, and must want solemnity. What we plead for is, earnestness, and agonizing in the preacher, as ready to die under the burden of souls, and intent on their salvation. That is the best method which gives scope to these feelings. If we would see sinners weeping over their sins, we must weep over them, pointing them, doctrinally, to the Lamb of God. Hear John Calvin. In a letter to one of the dignita-

ries of the Church of England, he says, "The people must be taught in such a manner that they may be inwardly convinced and made to feel the truth of what the Bible says, that, 'the word of God is a two-edged sword, piercing, even, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' I say this to your highness, because there is too little of lively preaching in your kingdom, sermons, there, being mostly read and recited. I understand well enough, what obligates you to adopt this method. You have few useful preachers, such as we have, and you fear that levity and foolish imagination might be the consequence, as is often the case, of introducing a new system. But all this must yield to the command of Christ, which orders the *preaching* of the Gospel. No possible danger must be permitted to abridge the liberty of the Spirit of God, or prevent his free course among those whom he has adorned with his grace, for the edifying of the Church."

In regard to ministers of the Gospel, as a body, I will submit a few remarks, briefly, and dismiss the subject.

5. In the general, they are to be regarded as an essential element in Christian society;—the Saviour's eminent ascension gift,—“for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of

the body of Christ." Ephes. 4. But, as they appear among men, we find some, upon trial, unfit for the office, and others reckless of its sacred obligations. Hence, the necessity of discrimination and discipline. Those who may have mistaken their calling, should, as it seems to me, be allowed to demit the office, without censure, and serve God in some other way; and such as prove pertinacious, in error, or neglect of duty, must be deposed. It is incumbent on the Church, for the honor of Christ, and the advancement of his kingdom, to keep her servants as pure, and as closely at their appropriate work as may be, in this imperfect state. There should be no sinecures, or absentees; but workmen, that cause no shame, rightly dividing the word of truth. Now, these laborers in the vineyard, giving themselves wholly to the work, must be supported; so the Lord has ordained: "They that preach the Gospel, shall live of the Gospel." "We must not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." How is this best to be done? In one of two methods: either on our plan of free-will offerings, which is precarious and unequal in its operation,—some being amply provided for, while others are sadly stinted;—or, as in the Free Church of Scotland, from a common fund, applied, equitably, to all in the connection, as circumstances may require. But as this whole matter belongs, primarily, to the

eldership and people, we leave it to their sense of justice, with one earnest request: that the *disabled* and *their families*, whether by sickness or age,—and also those who, for no fault of theirs, are without charge, may not be overlooked. These two classes, if faithful, should be cared for, by the Presbyteries, more than they are, generally. Let us help the needy in their affliction; and, for such as are able, and have a mind to work, let us try to find places, where they can earn their bread and do good. Vacant churches should employ these worthy Christian brethren more than they do, when they want supplies, instead of sending to a distance for preachers, who have full employment at home.

6. A few words on the frequent dissolution of the pastoral relation. Our system of church polity contemplates its *continuance*, except in cases of grievance, which will arise occasionally. When a minister finds that a portion of his people are dissatisfied with his services, and, consequently, indisposed to sustain him, he will probably, in most cases, act wisely in leaving;—if a majority wish his removal, the case is clear; for the people have rights, as well as the minister. But, where the relation has been established recently, in encouraging circumstances; when the pastor is just settling down into the confidence of his flock, and they

are rallying around him, and looking up to him as their chosen instructor, and spiritual guide, to rise up, and leave them, on receiving a flattering call elsewhere, and for reasons not apparent to other minds, seems to indicate a fickleness of purpose, to say the least of it. To make *full proof* of our ministry, *in any place*, requires time. Besides, such changes unsettle grave relations,—disappoint pious hopes,—occasion, to all concerned, a serious waste of time and means;—and, what is still worse, impair public confidence in our ecclesiastical arrangements, relaxing the attachment of some to the sanctuary of God; and, thus, souls are damaged, and Christ is wounded in the house of his friends. If we do our work well, where the Master has placed us, he will take care of our little temporal interests. “Seek, first, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and other needful things will be added unto you.”—And now, in closing these remarks, on the best means of success in the ministry, I have a few words for the young men of the Church.

7. My dear young friends, you are objects of intense interest to the Church in which you were born and baptized. She expects you to fulfil her best desires, by honoring Christ. Your parents have laid you under covenant obligations to God; have you taken these obligations upon yourselves, personally, now that you

have reached the proper age for doing so? Have you responded favorably to the still, small voice of your Father in heaven, "My son, give me thy heart?" If not, your souls are in jeopardy every hour. You are in the seedtime of life; and you are warned of God, that if you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption,—if to the spirit,—life everlasting. Your characters are taking shape, day by day, for the final judgment, and the future world. I ask you, then, in God's name and as his ambassador, have you given your hearts to Christ? If not, you are in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. Not a step have you taken heavenward; and your sins, aggravated by your advantages, are going before, to meet you at the judgment. Think of it in season. Now is your time,—and, it may be, your only time. "The night cometh." But have you,—have *any* of you tasted that the Lord is gracious, and felt the Redeemer's power to save? Do you feel that you are not your own, but bought with a price, "all price beyond?" And have you asked with Paul, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Having attained to a good hope, through grace, for yourselves, you must, sometimes, be painfully affected by the condition of the multitudes of your race, that are without God, and without hope in the world. What say you, then, to the proposition, that you offer yourselves to the Lord, in

the work of the ministry? Have you looked at this office in all its aspects? In its great design, its dignity; its joys as well as its sorrows; its glorious results and high rewards? Will you credit the testimony of one who has grown old in the service, and who assures you that if he had a thousand lives to live, he would not wish to change his calling? True, it is a work,—but a noble work; Heaven’s chief instrumentality for the regeneration of man in ruins. And we know it will succeed; for the Divine decree has fixed it, and the Divine power attends it; “our sufficiency is of God.” As we are to work out our own salvation, and are sure of success, because God works in us, so would we join the Lord’s people, everywhere, in working out the salvation of the world; and, knowing that he *works* through means, we call in all such agencies as he sees fit to use in accomplishing his own blessed purposes. Now, “faith cometh by hearing;” but how shall the millions of earth hear, without a vast increase of preachers? Why, for our own branch of the American Church, alone, we need, now, a thousand ministers more than we have; and, for the rescue of the six hundred millions, that grope their dreary way to eternity, in pagan darkness, we want—I cannot tell you how many; I only know that the harvest is plenteous, and the laborers few; and I beg you to consider, seriously, whether you are not

called of God, to take part in gathering in this great harvest of souls, that are ready to perish through lack of vision. Our recruits must come chiefly from your ranks. Will you not, then, as you love the Saviour, and desire that his kingdom should come in power; will you not offer your service to *him who died for you*, in the ministry of his life-giving, and ever-blessed Gospel? I lay the question on your conscience. May the Spirit of the Lord conduct you to a right decision!

I will now conclude this review, already too long, though far from being complete, with two reflections: the one joyous and encouraging; the other, sad and self-abasing.

First, the progress of our Lord's kingdom, in the last half century. This has been more than a hundred per cent. over its advancement, in any like period, since the Protestant reformation. Our field of action in this country has more than doubled; it now extends from ocean to ocean, and from the inland seas of the north, to the Isthmus of Panama, on the south. In spirit and in power; in means and apparatus; in missionary efforts; in church-planting and extension; in Bible and tract distribution; in schools, and the right use of the press; in associations for evangelical purposes; in zeal, for the prevalence of divine institutions, and a healthful influence on social life, in all its departments; we

have increased, beyond a parallel, perhaps, in the history of the world. I mean, here, to include all evangelical denominations of the American Church. In foreign countries, Pagan and Mahomedan, the barriers to progress are giving way; the nations are being brought, practically, almost within speaking distance, by railroads and telegraphic wires; so that men, munitions, and intelligence, may be readily conveyed in every direction; and the peopled world, as we *may* and *will* hope, shall, ere long, become one great brotherhood, under the chosen and blissful dominion of Messiah, the Prince of Peace.

But there is yet much to be done, much land to be possessed. We want men to work, and means to sustain them. We can have both by prayer, harmonious action, and systematic contribution to the Lord's treasury. But we must feel that we are stewards, and that we are held to account. The Lord is at hand. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments—shake thyself from the dust." It is the Lord's high behest. Hear it, all ye people. Let us take courage and go forward, my brethren, and let us speak to the people to go forward, if it should be in the face of a Red Sea. When the Captain of our salvation gives the word, the waters will divide, and open us a way to the glorious prototype of the promised land. Reasoning

from the past to the future, we may hope that ere another half century shall have elapsed, millennial light will dawn upon the world, and all flesh see the salvation of our God. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and all nations flow unto it." "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Our closing reflection is on the weakness and imperfection of the human agencies employed in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom. Here is one of the proofs of the Divine origin of our religion,—that it prevails and prospers in defiance of the failings and sins of its professed friends. It may be questioned, whether the Gospel has not been more hindered in its progress by the faults and foibles of its friends and ministers, than by all the machinations of its avowed enemies. This is humbling enough, and should lay us in the dust. We forget that our life-springs are in God, and then, arrogate to ourselves the credit which is due only to the strength Divine, made perfect in weakness. Alas, how many of our boldest standard-bearers have fallen, in an evil hour, through pride and flattery, and reluctance to give glory to God! We should sympathize with Paul the apostle, when he says,—“I am less than the least of all saints,—not worthy to be called an apostle; —I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live: yet

not I, but Christ liveth in me. I can do all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me. By the grace of God, I am what I am." Let the preacher stand behind the cross, in presence of the people, and be willing to be nothing, that God, the Saviour, may be "all, and in all." From the deep depravity of man, and the free grace of God, in redemption, it follows, as an indisputable inference, that, "no flesh should glory in His presence."—If the writer might adduce his own case, in illustration of this inference, he would frankly confess, that the review of his ministerial course brings up to his remembrance much cause of humility and self-abasement. So little faith in God,—so much self-seeking—such faint expectations of success in his work,—such a perfunctory way of going through his ministrations,—so many fine opportunities neglected, or poorly improved,—so much fickleness of purpose evinced in changing his locality too often, and for doubtful reasons;—in a word, such selfish motives, in all his movements and performances, are calculated, on the recollection, to bring him to the foot of the cross, and to say, with the Psalmist, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand!"

Let it not be supposed that these reflections are useless, and rather disparaging to the clerical profession. They are certainly not so intended, and are not so, in

fact. The Christian ministry, to say the least, embraces, in proportion to its numerical strength, as much talent, as much learning, as much integrity, and as much devotion to the glory of God and the good of mankind, as any other class in human society; but their efficiency lies in the seeming paradox, that, "when they are weak, then are they strong." This is divine philosophy. The lower we get in our own esteem, the nearer we approach to the fountain of redeeming power. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds." Paul "gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him." And no man, I think, of a faithful conscience, can review his spirit and conduct, for a single year, whatever be his calling, without finding occasion to humble himself before God, and implore forgiveness; while, at the same time, he may rejoice in the hope, that, where sin has abounded, grace shall much more abound. Thus it is with ministers of the Gospel. On looking back, from time to time, upon the manner in which they have fulfilled the duties of their office, they are, often, constrained to acknowledge their short-comings; ay, and sometimes to fear, lest, after having preached the Gospel to others, they should themselves be cast away. The late Revered and beloved Joseph Patterson, of Alleghany City, one of the

most godly men I ever knew, said, with emphasis and emotion, on a review of his pastorate of twenty-seven years, "And now I feel, that for the sins of every day of those twenty-seven years, I need pardon through the blood of Christ;" and yet, this venerable man had strong faith in God, was a happy Christian, and cherished, to the last, unwavering confidence in the stability and ultimate triumph of the kingdom of Christ; and when, having attained to a good old age, he was summoned, suddenly, away to his home in Heaven, he said, calmly, but with great solemnity, in the hearing of a few friends near him, "The time is come; Lord, help!" The truth is, all men sin; the best of men sin, and change and die; but the Lord liveth, and changeth not. Let us, therefore, while we confess our weakness, and have no confidence in the flesh, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. "In due season, we shall reap, if we faint not."

APPENDIX.

ANECDOTES AND REMINISCENCES.

CANONSBURG, PA.

THIS was the scene of my first serious impressions ; and here I became acquainted with the Rev. Dr. John McMillan, one of the first few Evangelical Pioneers of Western Pennsylvania. He was educated and ordained on this side of the Alleghanies ; and was a man of intelligence and ardent piety, though blunt and unpolished in manner. My first interview with him was unexpected and brief. It was a day of religious observance, which I, as a careless lad, did not feel bound to regard, and was therefore out shooting wild pigeons, near the road that led to the village, whither he was going to preach. As I stood near the pathway, loading my fowling-piece, he approached ; and looking at me sternly, for a moment, said, "What are you doing here?" The reply was, "Trying to get some of these pigeons." After another short pause, his eyes still fixed upon me, he added, in a grave tone, "It is a sad sight, to see a sinner going to hell, and amusing himself by killing

innocent birds on his way." So saying, he moved on. I had no opportunity to respond ; but my first emotion was that of indignation at the rude assault. This was, perhaps, an ill-judged style of address to a thoughtless boy ; but it roused a slumbering conscience, and led me to think on my ways, and on the danger of neglecting the great salvation. I became a constant attendant on the old gentleman's ministry, and, in due time, he admitted me to the communion of the Church. Dr. McMillan was a man of note, in his day. Those who would like to know something reliable about him and his compeers, will do well to procure a copy of "Old Redstone, or Historical Sketches of Western Presbyterianism : " by Joseph Smith, D.D. ; published lately, by Lippincott, Grambo & Co. of Philadelphia, a very interesting work, especially to Pennsylvanians.

Colonel Canon, the founder of Canonsburg, was an active, intelligent, and gentlemanly man. He died, when but little past the meridian of life, leaving a widow and several children. Mrs. Canon was regarded as the Lady of the place, and deservedly, for she was eminently pious, friendly, and generous. Her house was the seat of hospitality, the favorite resort of Christian ministers and serious students. She and all her children are dead, except Mrs. Patterson, widow of the late Rev. Robert Patterson, a lady of quiet worth and attractive social qualities.

THE OLD ACADEMY.

So called because, in its incipency, it was the first classical school established west of the Mountains. It ori-

ginated with Dr. McMillan, mainly, and was designed chiefly to be a Presbyterian school, to qualify pious young men for the ministry: and, although it was not taken under the care of Presbytery, in form, it was so in fact; as it lived and prospered by Presbyterian patronage. It was opened with religious solemnity; first in a log cabin, about the year 1785; then, in 1790, the stone Academy was erected, in the village, to which the pupils were transferred, and the cabin abandoned. The Academy served the double purpose of church and school. Here public worship was kept up statedly, and the duties of the school carried on jointly, by the same men, under the general supervision of the venerable man just named, and with whom both church and school originated.

Jefferson College was chartered in 1802; so that the log cabin, the Academy, and the College may be considered as one and the same institution, under progressive forms of expansion and usefulness. And a blessed institution it has been, and is now, to the country. Some hundreds have here received their elementary training for the ministry,—to say nothing of the other professions. To me, it is a hallowed spot,—a place of sacred memories,—where religion, in my time, was the ruling principle, and chief concern. May a blessing ever attend it! Jefferson is now a respectable and effective seat of learning. It has a spirited rival at Washington, only seven miles distant. What pity it is that they were not long ago united. Together, they have men and means enough, to make one noble institution.

As it is, their forces, and the public patronage around them, are divided, and a spirit of jealousy is kept up between them, which is injurious and unseemly among brethren of the same family.

CHANGE IN CHURCH USAGES.

In the old Church of Chartiers, there were no means of warming the house in winter; yet we could join in a service of two hours or more, without complaining of the cold. Indeed, it seems to renew my youth, to recollect, with what pleasure I used to walk two miles through the snow, and stand up in front of the pulpit, to lead the music,—parcelling out the old version of the Psalms, two lines at once, while the congregation praised God, with loud, though untutored voices. And in this way, we had devotion and earnestness in the absence of refinement. In summer, the house was too small, and we assembled before a tent, under shade of a clump of tall trees, where we continued in acts of worship, commonly, from five to six hours, with an intermission of some thirty minutes between services. On communion occasions, we used tables, and had successive sittings, which prolonged the exercises, sometimes to a wearisome length. At these sacramental seasons, many persons from neighboring congregations, with their ministers, attended; which increased the interest, and promoted a high degree of excitement. In the autumn of 1803, when the great revival, attended with bodily prostration, prevailed extensively, in the western country, I was present at a communion service,

in Washington County, and witnessed a scene which was, to me, novel and appalling. A promiscuous multitude were assembled, in a dense forest, after nightfall. The tent was filled with preachers, and lighted by candles; lights were fastened on the sides of trees, in all directions. The exercises began in the ordinary style, and apparently without any effort, on the part of the speakers, to produce effect; yet, in the progress of the service, the people fell, in great numbers, as if a volley of grape-shot had been fired upon them. The fallen were supported by those who were near them, or quietly removed to the family tents, where they usually recovered, in a short time. I examined into a few cases,—and was satisfied that the physical disability was not feigned, but real and involuntary, however it might be accounted for. One thing is particularly worthy of remark: the falling was not confined to those who were under conviction of sin, or deeply concerned about the salvation of their souls. Some, who were prostrated in body, came to the meeting out of mere curiosity, and went home as careless as ever; so that, the bodily exercise was not essential to genuine conversion, though in some cases connected with it.

Of the character of the remarkable work referred to in the foregoing statement, I forbear giving a decided opinion. I attended but the one meeting, and had no opportunity of seeing the effects that followed. But, excepting extraordinary cases, where houses cannot be had, I object to camp-meetings in general, as furnishing occasion to great evils. Amid the bustle and excitement which they produce, the

object of assembling for worship is apt to be lost sight of, and mere feeling mistaken for religion. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Here is the ground of a good hope. God's truth is to be received in love, and obeyed in faith, if we would attain to that peace of God which passeth understanding, and the hope that maketh not ashamed. Now, large assemblages of people in novel circumstances are unfavorable, alike to a faithful presentation, and a just apprehension of the Gospel message. In our endeavors to advance the kingdom of Christ, we need the wisdom that is from above and profitable to direct. There is, between a heartless formalism and impulsive measures, a wise medium which it will be safest and best in the end for us to pursue in our efforts to promote religion and save souls. "Let your moderation appear unto all men ; the Lord is at hand." "Our God is a God of order, not of confusion." The voice of free grace is a still, small voice. These great gatherings in the woods, for religious purposes, are going out of use. The lessons of experience are against them. The best substitutes for them are,—

CHURCH EXTENSION AND COLPORTAGE.

These are worthy of all favor. We want plain houses of worship in our large towns, as also in the destitute districts of the country, free and open to all who can be induced to attend worship. We want a great increase of domestic missionaries, to preach statedly in these houses, visit the people in the neighborhood, and organize Sunday Schools. And

we need an army of pious and judicious colporters, to distribute religious books and tracts, in all parts of the land. By these means we may reach the masses quietly, sow the seeds of Divine truth beside all waters, and lay the foundations of numerous self-sustaining churches. Let there be harmonious action and systematic contributions, in support of these benevolent operations, and the result will be glorious.

COOPERSTOWN AND ITS FOUNDER.

This beautiful village, briefly described in the review, bears the name of its projector, Judge Cooper. He was a man of noble bearing—enterprising, public-spirited, and generous to a proverb. Though of Quaker origin and habits, he was a good friend to me, and to Gospel institutions and order. His two youngest sons, James F. and Samuel, were inclined to be idle and neglect their books. At his request, I gave them, for a time, daily lessons in the elements of an English education. James soon discovered a taste for literature. He read novels incessantly. After a while he conceived the idea of making one of his own. The thought was carried into effect. He devoted himself to study, became a good scholar; and, in the course of a few years, produced the “Pioneers,” in two volumes. This is one of his best productions. The scene is laid in Cooperstown, and the surrounding country. Judge Temple, the hero, is his father. The descriptions are vivid and true to nature. Encouraged by the rapid sale of this work, he went abroad,

travelled and wrote, till he became quite distinguished as a writer. He is now deceased, but lives in fame, being generally spoken of as "the great American Novelist." His works have been published lately, in a handsome series of *thirty-three* volumes, 12mo. A remarkable instance this of a lad's making himself a man of distinction, by seizing upon a bright thought, and pursuing it with ardor and perseverance.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

When this institution was formed, in 1810, the writer happened to be a delegate to the convention that met in the city of New York, to organize it. The Rev. Dr. John M. Mason was there, *in his prime*, and made a powerful speech. In reply to some feeble objections that were offered to such an organization, he remarked, "that, wherever the Lord built a church, the devil would try to put up a chapel; and that he had no doubt, his Satanic Majesty was present, on this occasion, with pen in the inkpot, ready, not to ratify, but to blot out whatever might be done in behalf of the Bible."

THE GREAT SCHISM OF 1837 '38.

Nothing has been said on this important event in the review, for sundry reasons. First, because, to treat it properly, would have required more space than could be allowed for any topic, not directly in the line of my purpose.

Secondly, the subject has been fully discussed, and nothing new can be said upon it. And thirdly, the history of it has been written, on both sides, and the public are tired of it. Let us profit by the lessons it has taught us; and endeavor, by a strict adherence to our standards of doctrine and discipline to avoid the like in future. The subject is introduced here, mainly, to suggest whether, after the lapse of eighteen years, we might not, without any compromise of principle, hold correspondence with our New School brethren, by an exchange of delegates, as with other evangelical bodies. Are we to remain apart forever, and like Jews and Samaritans, have no intercourse, while professedly holding the same faith, and acting under the same form of government? The question is submitted for consideration, and prayer.

Since the division, Providence has smiled upon us. Let us be thankful. Let us be of one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. The time is short. We must soon give an account of our stewardship. God help us to be faithful unto death, that, through grace, we may receive a crown of life!

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