

1698.

1898.

EXERCISES

AT THE

BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

PHILADELPHIA.

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SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 13, TO FRIDAY EVENING,  
NOVEMBER 18, 1898.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PRESS OF HENRY B. ASHMEAD.  
1900.

Buttonwood Church the First Presbytery was organized in 1705. Of the one hundred and ten General Assemblies of the church, thirty-eight have convened under the roof of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia—viz., the assemblies of 1790 (the third), 1796, 1797, 1800–1810 inclusive, 1812, 1813, 1815–1818 inclusive, 1824–1832 inclusive. These assemblies were held before the division into New and Old School, which, happily, has now become almost altogether a mere matter of history. When that division took place this church went with the New School branch, and the New School Assemblies of 1839, 1840, 1843, 1846, 1849, 1854, 1863 met in this sanctuary. And here in more recent times, within the memory of a considerable number present to-night, were held two memorable assemblies—that of 1870, when the church was again one, and that of 1888, the Centennial Assembly, which is commemorated by the brass tablet of unique design in the vestibule of the church. Such, most briefly and fragmentarily, as must needs be in this sketch, is the history of this dear and venerable church. “Its past, at least, God be thanked! is secure.” Of its present we may not speak. Nor is it necessary. “Here it is: Behold it and judge for yourselves!” It is standing in its lot, true, we trust, to its traditions, with a strong sense of “Noblesse Oblige.” With a larger membership to-day than it has ever had in its entire history, with a more adequate material equipment than it has ever known, with an endowment fund, which only needs to be doubled in order to enable it to do without embarrassment the enlarging work marked out for it by God’s providence, it is determined by the divine blessing to keep the Presbyterian Banner waving in its strength and beauty in this very part of the city where two hundred years ago it was unfurled to the breeze in the love of God and man!

ADDRESS.—“THE PULPIT OF THE FIRST CHURCH.”

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It would not have been possible for this church to have

maintained itself in influence and prominence during two centuries, if its pulpit had not been filled by a royal succession of powerful preachers of the Word. The pulpit is the brain of a Presbyterian organization. The brain, indeed, needs to be fed by the life blood which circulates throughout the entire body, and which in this case constitutes the faith and piety of the congregation. But the pulpit is the organ of thought, the nerve centre, in a Presbyterian body, the instrument and the master of the believing, confessing, consecrated life of the church. Other churches may depend for their existence upon church establishment, state establishment. Others may depend upon hierarchical pretensions. Others may seek to be supported by richness of liturgical service. But the American Presbyterian Church has and wants none of these supports. If it continue to flourish, it must be because of the vitality of the congregation; and this will be represented in the pulpit.

This celebration therefore would be incomplete if a tribute were not paid to the distinguished men who have constituted the ministry of the First Church. To them, more than to any others, does this church owe the fact that it has been built and adorned in successive generations. They have here preached with great fidelity the truth of the living God, and at their incentive the influence of this church has gone forth for good into city, land and world. It is true that in every generation they have been supported by a loyal people, and oftentimes by persons of conspicuous influence and large worth; but the ministry of the First Church of Philadelphia has organized and commanded and has directed the life of the church. Its history is their history. It is best known by the records which they have made and left behind. They are the most distinct figures as we look back from 1898 to 1698,—some of them clear and freshly cut, as if they were but made yesterday, others of them dim and blurred with time, but all of them, whether near or distant, the impressive representations to us of the vigorous vitality of this long-lived community of saints. We do well to honor the Christian ministry. The history of a pulpit like this is better worth reciting than the

history of many thrones. It is worthy of critical study as well as of reverent praise. I do not come here to-night for the purpose of bestowing upon it mere laudation. I would rather derive from it lessons for the present and inspiration for the future.

But I am embarrassed, of course, by the necessity which is upon me of describing the ministry of two centuries on a very small canvas. Even without giving the biographies of the pastors of this church—which I certainly shall not attempt to do—the subject would be beyond my compass if it were not for two natural limitations which I may place upon the subject. In the first place, I shall draw a line between the living and the dead; and I am sure that the still living pastors of this church would wish me to do so. They would rather unite with me to-night in paying tribute to those who are the spiritual fathers of our body. In the second place, my theme is reduced in size by the marvellous length of the pastorates of this church. There are really only six men whose names need be mentioned between the beginning of the First Church and the year 1870. There were others who preached here, either as assistants or as stated supplies, but they did not contribute anything to the history of this pulpit. There was, indeed, one memorable exception to the statement which I have made. In the early part of this century this pulpit was occupied for five years by a young man whose ministry was too brief to produce any great impression upon the history of the church, but whose ministry was so brilliant that it should not be passed unnoticed by me to-night. That was John Blair Linn. He was only twenty-two years of age when he was called to be associated with Dr. Ewing in this church. Two years after Dr. Ewing died, leaving him full pastor; but after three years more Linn also passed away at the early age of twenty-seven. He was a poet, as well as a scholar; he was a man of letters, as well as a preacher of the faith. He had begun to study law in the office of the celebrated Alexander Hamilton, but his mind was not of the legal type. He was a man of imagination and feeling; easily depressed and easily exalted; acknowledged by his friends to be a genius, and evidently en-

dowed with the orator's magic art. But his life soon became a pathetic struggle with disease and its attendant melancholy. Had he lived he would doubtless have filled an honorable career in the history of this church. But we need only pause to-night that we may place a wreath of immortelles upon his early grave. With that exception, the pastorates of this church have been singularly long. Here is the roll of honor. Jedediah Andrews, pastor for forty-six years, or, if we include the three years when he was preaching in the Barbadoes Store, for forty-nine years. Robert Cross, who served this church for nineteen years. Francis Alison, who served the church for twenty-seven years. John Ewing, who was pastor for forty-three years. James P. Wilson, who was pastor for twenty-four years. Albert Barnes, pastor and pastor emeritus for forty years. What a record it is of glorious and efficient service! What a testimony at once to the loyalty of the people and to the fidelity of the pulpit! In these days of pulpit instability and of popular mutability, our modern life stands aghast at the staying powers of our fathers, and we wonder whether we, with our swift changes, will be able to make the impression upon our day which they made on theirs. But, at any rate, their long pastorates reduces my subject to-night. There are really only six links in the chain which binds the ministry of the present with that of the beginning, and those six men fall naturally into three classes, which correspond to three periods in the history of the church: the period of establishment, which was marked by the ministry of Andrews and Cross; the period of solidification, which was marked by the ministries of Alison and Ewing; and then what, without disparagement to others, I may call the period of renown, which was marked by the ministries of Wilson and Barnes. At any rate, the pulpit of this church in these three periods, whether I have given them right titles or not, differs distinctly from the character of the pulpit in the other periods, and this may serve to guide our remarks to-night.

The period of the establishment of this church was marked, then, by the ministries of Jedediah Andrews and Robert Cross.

It was the period in which the Presbyterian Church was forming in America, along with her other institutions, and the First Church of Philadelphia was forming with them. It was the period of Presbyterian emigration. The tide was coming mainly from Scotland and from the north of Ireland, but also from the Palatinate and from England, while within the colonies themselves there was constant movement, especially from New England into what are now the Middle States. Mr. Andrews himself came from Massachusetts. He was a graduate of Harvard, and he represented the conservative Congregationalism of Massachusetts, his native town of Hingham presenting an example of a church which was almost as much Presbyterian as it was Congregational. Robert Cross, on the other hand, came from the north of Ireland, and he represented the staunch Scotch-Irish stock which has contributed so much to the making of stalwart Presbyterianism. The work of these two men naturally lay in the building up of the Presbyterian Church in this new country. Especially was this the work of Mr. Andrews. As you have already heard, he was one of the founders of the First Presbytery, and it is a testimony to the large-hearted judgment of the man that, Congregationalist though he had been, he entered so willingly into the formation of a Presbyterian church in the Middle States, instead of insisting upon what would have been an isolated example of Congregationalism. He it was who moulded the mixed company who first met in the Barbadoes Store in this direction of ecclesiastical government. He became one of the leading members of the First Presbytery and of the First Synod, when the latter was formed in 1717. We know also that he was exceedingly interested in watching the growing stream of immigration into this colony, that he made frequent missionary tours into Jersey and into Pennsylvania, and a letter which has been preserved from Mr. Andrews indicates the eagerness with which he felt the necessity of moulding these newcomers into a united ecclesiastical system. But the rapid succession of Mr. Andrews and Mr. Cross in the pastorate of this church is significant of a still larger fact in our American Pres-

byterianism, one that is important for the historian to notice and which describes to us the character of this pulpit. As I have said, Mr. Andrews was from Massachusetts. Mr. Cross was from the north of Ireland, and therefore they represent the confluence of two streams of Presbyterian immigration and of two types of Presbyterian life and thought, which united to form this church, as they united to form the Presbyterian Church in the United States. For I am glad to say that our American Presbyterianism is not a transplantation of any foreign type. It is the complex of several. It is an American product. Its seeds came from the Old World, but it made an American Presbyterian Church, with American ideals and with American history, and the combination of two men like Andrews and Cross in the pastorate of this church in the period of its establishment was significant of the new church which was being formed, to make for a new country a new ecclesia which should better lift the standard of a common Christ. Therefore, Mr. Cross and Mr. Andrews are significant to us to-night of the period of the church's establishment. Both were strongly conservative men. Both were intense in their devotion to Presbyterian doctrines. At any rate, Mr. Cross was the leader of the old side. He was the one who made the protest against what he deemed the extravagance of the revivalists which had then come before the Synod. He was a conservative man. Mr. Andrews sided with him in his conservatism, and this church followed its pastors into the old side in the controversy of nearly 250 years ago. This was proved by the very criticisms which were made upon these men. Dr. Benjamin Franklin, although he often worshipped here, did not care to listen to Mr. Andrews, he said, because he was so polemic, because he was continually proving the doctrines of his sect, which to the ethical philosopher were exceedingly dry and uninteresting. George Whitfield himself tells us that "Mr. Cross lashed me bravely last Sunday morning, and Mr. Andrews preached against me." Let it be said, however, that at a later time Mr. Cross invited Whitfield to preach in the pulpit of the First Church, and the invitation was ac-

cepted; but the criticisms show the type of the pulpit as it then existed. It seemed to these men more important to insist upon binding what was peculiar to the different types of Presbyterianism together, in order that they might establish a Presbyterian church in this place. No doubt they sometimes leaned backwards. No doubt they did not appreciate the good there was in the great awakening, and perhaps they did not appreciate even the good there was in Dr. Franklin's ethical philosophy; but be that as it may, they were so tolerant that they combined the different types of Presbyterianism into one body, and they gave themselves, as wise men should do, to the supreme work of building up on these shores a distinctively American, but a really Presbyterian church, which should here carry on the fundamental principles for which the fathers had bled and fought and suffered beyond the seas.

The period of the solidification or perpetuation of this church comes next. During the last half of the last century we find this church steadily growing in power and influence, until it becomes the influential body which we find it at the beginning of the present century, and this continual growth and solidification was mainly due to the ministry here of two remarkable men, Dr. Francis Alison and Dr. John Ewing. Both of them were scholars, both of them were great educators, and their lives were beautifully intertwined. Alison had come from Ireland at the early age of thirty. He had first been tutor in the family of Governor Dickinson of Delaware. Then he had been ordained, and settled in the town of New London, Pennsylvania; but he had soon become a teacher as well as a preacher, and he had established in New London an academy which quickly sprang into fame, both because of the learning of its principal and because of the many distinguished men who in time came to graduate from it. After awhile, however, he retired from New London to Philadelphia, took charge of the academy in this place, and became the assistant to Mr. Cross. When the academy was changed into the College of Philadelphia, Dr. Alison became its vice provost and professor of moral philosophy, and when Dr. John

Ewing succeeded Robert Cross in the pastorate of this church, Dr. Alison was continued as his colleague also; for those two men, Alison and Ewing, had long been friends. They were both of the Scotch-Irish stock. Ewing had been Alison's pupil at school at New London. Then, after having graduated from the College of New Jersey, he had gone back to his old preceptor to study theology, and then had followed him to Philadelphia and into the teaching corps of the academy or college in this place. Ewing, however, was evidently the finer preacher of the two, for on the death of Mr. Cross he was unanimously called to the pastorate of this church in 1759. When he became the pastor of the First Church, however, he did not cease his interest in education. This is proved by the fact that he went abroad in order that he might gather funds for the Newark Academy, and on his return in 1779, when the College of Philadelphia became by Act of Legislature the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Ewing was made its first provost and professor of natural philosophy, and these offices he continued to hold in connection with the pastorate of this church. So for half a century the First Church of Philadelphia was held by men who sat in professors' chairs, and by means of their large culture and wide intellectual influence this pulpit was brought to bear upon the best minds of the community about them. Alison was pre-eminently a scholar and man of classical attainments, though widely read in history and in ethics as well. He received degrees from Yale; he received degrees from the College of New Jersey. He was, it is believed, the first man to have received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from a foreign university. What he was as a preacher we do not know. We know that as a theologian he, too, was conservative, and that he joined Mr. Cross in the protest made against revivals in the Synod; but his friend, Dr. Ewing, describes him as a man frank, ingenuous and nobly catholic in his spirit, a lover of liberty to all mankind—how that note is always struck in the men of those days!—and a man who hated bigotry, superstition and oppression. As a preacher, it is said, he was warm, animated, argumentative and pathetic, and, says Dr. Ewing, his

friend and his companion, "There are thousands in this city to-day [Philadelphia] who can bear witness to the earnestness with which he was willing to spend and to be spent for their salvation, and to declare to them the whole salvation of God." But Dr. Ewing was evidently himself the greater man. He was a man of urbane culture and of the widest type of intellectual discipline, with superb health. He discharged for many years the work of pastor, provost and professor. When he went abroad the freedom of the city of Glasgow was given to him. He argued the cause of the colonies with Lord North before the Revolution. He mollified and he made courteous even the irascible and anti-American Dr. Samuel Johnson by the beauty of his reply and the evidence of his learning, and, as the provost of the university and as the pastor of the First Church of this city, in this place he occupied a position of commanding influence. In fact, the language of Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, with regard to Dr. Ewing seems almost too extravagant to be true or for me to repeat. Dr. Samuel Miller wrote, "There is absolutely no one in America who has so wide a knowledge of all the studies which are studied in college as Dr. Ewing. Logic and history, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, metaphysics and philosophy—he is equally at home in them all." And Dr. Miller adds that the provost of the university, who was also pastor of this church, when he was called upon at an hour's notice to fill the vacant chair caused by the absence of a professor temporarily, was able to step in and fill that chair, be the subject what it might, with as much success, and Dr. Miller says with even more success, than the incumbent of the chair could himself. Surely under the influence of two men like Alison and Ewing we can understand the growth of the First Church of Philadelphia. The keynote of this period was education. Both men were recognized as intellectual leaders in the community in which they stood, and if in the period of establishment Andrews and Cross used the pulpit of this church for the making of a definite and real American Presbyterianism in this city, Alison and Ewing, in the period which succeeded, used this church to

link Presbyterianism in that bond of union where she has ever since stood, and where she may ever stand—union with education, the pulpit and the chair, one and inseparable, as it is illustrated in the intellectual power of this pulpit by the vice provost and provost of the university.

Now our rapid sketch has brought us to the beginning of this century, and we approach what I may, without disparagement of that which has gone before, describe as the period of renown; for Dr. Wilson and Mr. Barnes gave to this pulpit a national and even international reputation. By a singular coincidence, as both of their predecessors were educators, so both of these men had been originally designed for the bar. By a singular coincidence also both of them had been in early life prone to skepticism, and only by a process of distinct rational conviction had they been led to the faith; and by a singular coincidence in both cases the conversion of the man had been the moment of his dedication to the Christian ministry. Dr. James P. Wilson came to the ministry of this church after having practiced for fourteen years, with distinguished success, the profession of the law in the state of Delaware. Graduating from the University of Pennsylvania with the highest honors in 1788, he had returned to his native state and there entered upon his profession. The integrity of his character gave weight to his eminent abilities as a lawyer. He is said to have been the only man at the Delaware bar of that day whom the elder Bayard feared to face. In fact, he became Chancellor of the state. He was in the midst of worldly success, which promised him enormous reputation and vast accumulations of wealth, but all the while the evidences of Christianity had been coming home with greater and greater force upon his mind, and a series of sorrowful circumstances in his own family had turned his thoughts to higher things; and so suddenly, in the midst of his success, the distinguished lawyer confessed his Saviour, and forthwith dedicated his trained mind to the service of his divine Lord.

When therefore, after a few years of ministry in Delaware, Dr. Wilson, at the suggestion of his old friend, Benjamin Rush, was

invited to this church, he brought to it an established reputation and most distinguished abilities. By some means Dr. Wilson had managed to make himself a most learned theologian, as he had been a learned lawyer. How he ever managed it I do not know. What course of training he put himself through I do not know. But the fact remains that he no sooner appears in the pulpit than he appears as a man of profound erudition, and that, too, along lines where we would not have expected it. He is said to have been one of the few American churchmen of that day who had read all the Greek and Latin fathers through, and it is said also that he was accustomed to commend their perusal to his congregation. He was equally familiar with the great writers of the reformed theology. I have in my possession Dr. Wilson's private copy of the *Essay on the Probation of Fallen Man*, and it has been of great interest to read the notes in his own handwriting which he has appended to his own book, and from those notes it appears that he was skilled in the exposition of Scripture in the original languages, and was possessed of an originality of mind and independence of thought which was truly remarkable. In theology Dr. Wilson was a Calvinist, but he had reacted against the hyper-Calvinism of certain New England schools, and he objected to certain current phraseology of the Calvinistic theology. He was also noted for his sympathy with all other branches of Christians. In the days in which he lived he would, I suppose, have been called a liberal. When judged by the standards by which we judge, he was conservative enough, but he was an independent thinker. He was a man who knew what he believed and why he believed it. He was a scholar and a theologian and a philosopher. He was a prince among the preachers of his day, and he was ready to maintain his beliefs against all antagonists. Dr. Wilson was in his glory in the pulpit. As a writer he was never popular, but as a preacher he commanded the attention of his audience. Conversational in style, speaking with but little gesture, for many years of his life sitting in a high chair in this pulpit, he talked to his people as a father would to his family, while at the same time he summed

up his conclusions with the authority of a judge, and certainly, my brethren, it was learned preaching. Dr. Wilson would delve into a text of Scripture; he would draw the finest distinctions of grammar; he would cite authority against authority, and then he would draw his own independent conclusions. Or he would lead his audience to the finer points of dogmatic theology. He would draw the finest distinctions between contending views, and then he would in order set before them the reasons which led to his own conclusion. He would cite his divine statute book like a lawyer, he would argue with the precision of a logician, and he would sum it up like a judge. It was the movement of a giant mind, and yet it was all done with such clearness of statement and such simplicity of manner that his intelligent hearers were able and were glad to follow him. Mr. Barnes relates that on the only occasion on which he ever heard Dr. Wilson preach he said, "I never was so absorbed in the subject which a public speaker was discoursing upon as I was upon that occasion, and what seemed true of me seemed to be true of the entire audience as well." Verily, there were giants in those days. There must have been giants in the pews, as there was a giant in the pulpit. The discourse was one which compelled thought. Men were used to thinking about theology in those days. They believed theology was a thing to think about, and not a mere thing to feel about. Therefore they were willing to think, and Dr. Wilson made them think; and there was nothing that Dr. Wilson had to say that was of use to them unless they thought. It is true that Dr. Wilson did not always discuss problems of theology. He had his message for the common duties of common life as well, but in the pulpit he was distinctively a man of intellect, and this church never exerted a stronger influence than when that Nestor was at her head.

This brings me, last of all, to the man whose name is associated in the minds of most of us with this pulpit, the man whose new memorial adorns this church, as it ought, and of whom I may speak to-night as a son of his spiritual father. It is not necessary for me to describe the external relations of Albert Barnes

to this people and to this church, even to the extent to which I have described those of his predecessor. Enough to say that he graduated from Hamilton College and from Princeton Seminary. After a five years ministry at Morristown, New Jersey, he was called in 1830 to the pastorate of this church. The first years of his ministry were years of sharp controversy, with which his own name was intimately connected and his own person the object of attack, and through which he passed not only with firm confidence in his own convictions, but with a gentleness and mildness of spirit which was truly beautiful. That controversy has long since died and been buried, and even to allude to it seems like taking up ancient history. Nevertheless we should not fail to remember that to it Mr. Barnes was indebted in very large measure for the notoriety with which he first blazed upon the church of America. Not that he was a controversial preacher at any time. He was as gentle as he was firm. He was as large-hearted as he was positive, and in those days of fierce storm, when the Presbyterian Church was broken into two halves, Albert Barnes never used the pulpit to pillory his opponents. Neither need I dwell, nor can I dwell to-night, upon his wondrous literary activity. He was, as you know, a great maker of books. He was the most popular commentator on the Scripture of his day. He saw the opportunity which was before him, and he improved it, of supplying a series of biblical hand-books which should meet the needs of the growing number of Sunday-school teachers throughout the world, and his book attained a usefulness and circulation which had been equalled by nothing of the kind ever before. To that he added other books on the atonement and the evidences of Christianity, and spread his fame not only in this land, but in other lands, and even into heathen lands as well; and so under him the press was allied with the pulpit, as under Ewing and Alison the school had been allied with this pulpit. It was known throughout the world as the great commentator's pulpit, and strangers came to Philadelphia that they might hear him preach. The same thing has been seen frequently in more recent times, but Albert Barnes was I suppose the first

to ally the power of the pen with that of the living voice. Nor can I venture to trust myself to delay to-night to describe his personal character. Would that I were able to frame a fitting tribute to express the love and veneration that we feel! He was the embodiment of conscience. He never swerved from the path of duty, if he knew it. He was as simple and unaffected as a child. He had the gentleness of a woman and the courage of a knight. He was utterly without pretensions. He was singularly distrustful of himself, so that he was surprised both at his own fame and at the success of his books. His piety was of the serene kind, like a southern sky. His convictions were as deep as the deep sea currents. To hundreds of homes in Philadelphia he was the representative of all that was holy and strong. We revered him, we admired him, we loved him.

But I am not to speak of these things, but of the pulpit, for that is my theme; and yet, when one comes to consider wherein lay the secret of the pulpit power of Albert Barnes, there is need for most careful thought. He was, both in his manner and in his method, a singularly plain and direct speaker. He was no orator. He lacked in imagination. He had no powers of rhetorical description. He did not make use of illustrations to any large degree. He did not use any of the outward or external helps which most men employ to make their delivery emphatic. His power must have lain in what he said, and in that alone, and if I may be bold enough in this presence to-night to endeavor to analyze wherein lay the power of the pulpit of Albert Barnes, I think I would make it to lie in the following features. First of all, that it definitely and positively represented to the community certain ideas for which he was known to stand, to emphasize, and which his pulpit was the exponent of. Albert Barnes, largely perhaps through the controversy, and through the need of the emphasis, I do not hesitate to say, which was then required to be placed upon these things, emphasized the freedom of the gospel, the responsibilities of the individual *man*, and the universal sweep and power of the redemption of the crucified. It may seem strange to us that such things should have made a

pulpit conspicuous or distinctive, but we live in a different atmosphere altogether. Men came to this church expecting to hear that side of truth emphasized, and they heard it. Men came to this church expecting to hear ringing protestations of gospel freedom, human responsibility, and the everlasting and universal offering of the cross, and they heard it; and there can be no doubt, first of all, that it was the association in men's minds of Albert Barnes with that distinctive emphasis on truth which he gave it, which made him in the first place the power of his pulpit. Then, next to that, his pulpit was conspicuous as a rational pulpit. You listened to him as to a man who had thought out a system of Christianity from premise to conclusion. He never seemed to want to drive or to excite you, but always to persuade you. This was conspicuously the type of his mind. He had a logical mind. His favorite argument was the argument from analogy. He had been much influenced by Thomas Chalmers. Especially, however, in his own personal experience the cause of this lay. He had first been skeptical, and he continued, I may fairly say, to have the skeptical habit to the end of his life. He always felt the power of doubt. He always felt the power of opposing arguments. Unless a thing rationally commended itself to his understanding, rationally commended itself to his comprehension, he would not accept of it. Christianity must seem to him rational, or he could not preach it. This was the second source of his power. There are not many men who like long to listen to mere dogmatism. There are not many men who like long to be fed with the nebulous diet which comes from the hands of the mystic. Neither of those classes were the men that were attracted to Albert Barnes. But the fundamental characteristic of his method of preaching was that it was an appeal to the reason of men, and he believed from his very soul, what some men in our day are foolishly denying, that although Christianity is supernatural absolutely and wholly, yet that it can justify itself at the bar of the human mind.

Then, in the third place, the power of Albert Barnes' preaching lay in the fact that it was expository. This was the result

doubtless of his own commentaries and their influence upon himself. It is one thing to be biblical; it is another thing to be expository. He loved to go through the Bible book by book, or through a book in order, as he did in his own exposition of them. That was the day when this was not common. Dogmatical controversy was to the front, and the consequence of his method of continuous biblical exposition was that his people came to drink, Sunday after Sunday, of the fresh, clear waters of salvation, and of course they came again and again to drink.

But again we add to that, that the power of the pulpit of Albert Barnes lay in the fact that he always emphasized the application of the teachings of Scripture to current social and even political questions. As I have said, his interest was practical and not speculative, through and through, and he had the courage of his convictions. He lived in an age of controversy. It was in 1833, when he had just come to this church and when the storms of theological controversy were upon him, that he preached a brief sermon on the Christian's conformity to the world, in which he levelled his shafts against doubtful amusements and social vices. Then his pulpit stood for aggressive religion and against aggressive iniquity. He lived at a time when the Sunday-school was first coming into being, and, as I have said, his "Notes" were intended to advance that movement. Missions, in the next place, were to the front. The church was just beginning to realize that the gospel was to be preached to the world, and into the missionary movement Albert Barnes threw himself with his old enthusiasm. Next came the temperance question. He lived at a time when men's minds were just beginning to be awakened to the awful degradation of Christendom through drink, and it is noteworthy that he not only throughout his life declared himself on the side of total abstinence against an overwhelming sentiment, but that he had the satisfaction, when in Morristown and a young man, of knowing that through his labors the drink traffic had nearly been driven out of that community. Then came the threatening storm of civil strife. The slavery question was uppermost. Men spoke of it with

bated breath. They expressed their opinions at the risk of friendship and reputation. Homes were divided. Friendships were broken. Mr. Barnes uttered his emphatic protest against the peculiar institution as a preacher of righteousness, declaring that it was unholy in the sight of God, not as an agitator would, but with the calmness and dignity and profound conviction of a man of God, and people listened to those calm, brief words as they would to a martyr who was ready to die for his faith. In fact, the most pathetic thing about Mr. Barnes' pulpit was the interest which he took in life. He longed to live; he longed that he might be spared to see the onward movement of progress. His intelligent interest was the keenest in the things which were taking place about him; and what gives a pulpit more power, my hearers, than a man whose soul is filled with the truth which has come from God, and at the same time whose life is in the closest touch with the struggles, doubts and questionings of the men and women about him, and who brings that truth and that struggling humanity together? That is what Mr. Barnes did. There lay one great secret of his power. I should not fail to add that he was eminently a hopeful preacher. He was a convinced optimist. He seems to me to have anticipated Browning's words, "God is in his heaven. All is right with the world." Not that but Mr. Barnes, or Browning either, failed to see the shame, the guilt of life, but that he believed in redemption, that he believed in the onward, conquering march of the Christ, and he believed that the world was ever getting better under the influence of Christianity, and therefore he came to his people with this cheering, hearty, hopeful, steadfast faith, which was ever sure to bring peace and joy to their hearts. Such seems to me to have been the secret, humanly speaking, of the power of the pulpit of Albert Barnes.

Many of us remember that Sunday morning when the news sped from home to home that he was gone. Like Enoch, he had walked with God, and like Enoch, he was not found, for God had taken him. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without a struggle and without a pain, and perhaps just because of the

swiftness of his translation, does his life stand before us in its unbroken, massive strength, and he, being dead, yet speaketh.

So I bring to a close, my hearers, my hasty sketch of the pulpit of this church. To sum it up, let me say that from the beginning it has been an intellectual pulpit, dealing with men by the power of great truths, never descending to the trivial or the sentimental; fundamentally believing that thought is the master of the man, and that ideas are the moving power of the human heart. It has been a theological pulpit, never hesitating to explain the articles of the Christian creed, and believing that Christian life can be best fed by specific and articulate doctrine. It has been a human pulpit, in touch with life, sensitive to the needs and struggles of those about it. And, to crown all, it has been from the beginning on, as it is this day, an evangelical pulpit. It has proclaimed man's lost state. It has proclaimed redemption by the crucified alone. It has proclaimed the saving power of the blood of Calvary. Behind these men who have stood in the pulpit of the First Church there has ever been the cross, unseen and yet not unseen; for, with streaming eyes and trembling lips and beating hearts, they have been calling the generations, one after another, to come beneath its shadow, and they have proclaimed that there is no salvation save in him who hung thereon, and therefore in this church thousands have found the way of life. Here children have sung the praises of their Redeemer. Here young men and women have made their confession. Here strong men have bowed and submitted their lives to Christ, and a great host, some of them in glory and some of them still upon the field of battle, are what they are to-day, under God, because of the ministry of this dear old church. Yet we cannot merely honor our fathers. We rather thank God that he gave them unto us. Then we take courage for the future, and we swear as by the altars of our sires that we, too, will proclaim the truth as they proclaimed it, and that we, too, will do it fearlessly and fully as they did it; that we will meet the questions of our day as they met the questions of their day, and that, above all, like our fathers, we will uphold the

cross of Calvary, let men say what they will, and proclaim that atonement for human sin which it has been the glory of this pulpit to proclaim. We will summon the twentieth century to come to the service of their Redeemer as our fathers did the two centuries that are gone. If we have had a great history, may God give us a great future.

HYMN 521. .

BENEDICTION.