

A

MEMORIAL SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church,

MAY 1st, 1864,

Being the 25th Anniversary of his Pastorate,

BY

Rev. S. D. BURCHARD, D. D.



NEW-YORK.

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NEW-YORK, MONDAY MAY 2, 1864.

REV. S. D. BURCHARD, D. D.

The undersigned, in behalf of the officers and members of the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church and Congregation would respectfully represent, that the Memorial Sermon, delivered yesterday morning, as it exhibits the true mission of the Christian Pulpit, and presents a valuable record of the Divine goodness in the history of our Church, is of permanent and general interest, and well calculated to provoke unto love and to good works; and we do therefore request that a copy of the same, may be given us for publication, that its influence may be extended and perpetuated.

Very Respectfully and truly yours,

JOHN W. THOMPSON,	ANDREW LESTER,
WM. WADE,	L. E. JACKSON,
NATH'L ELLIS,	H. H. CHRISTIE,
WELCOME R. BEEBE,	D. GILMOUR,
THOS. H. HERRING,	GEO. W. BEALE,
HERMON E. GIFFIN.	

NEW-YORK, MAY 8, 1864.

DEAR BRETHREN,

Your kind note of the 2d inst., "on behalf of the Officers and Members of the 13th Street Church and Congregation" requesting a copy of my "Memorial Sermon" for publication is before me. The Sermon was hastily prepared amidst pressing pastoral cares and duties, still it may be valuable to my own members, as embodying a brief and summary history of our beloved church; and if it shall "provoke unto love and good works," I shall not regret to see it put in to a more permanent form. I therefore submit the manuscript, as preached, with the addition of two or three explanatory notes, to be used at your discretion. With sincere gratitude for all God's mercies and your past kindness, and with good hopes and prospects for the future.

I am very truly,

Your affectionate Pastor,

S. D. BURCHARD.

To Messrs. JOHN W. THOMPSON, LESTER, CHRISTIE, WADE, ELLIS and others.

SERMON.

“And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified,—And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” 1 Cor. 2d., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

This is the language of Paul, addressed to the church in Corinth—a city distinguished for its affluence, its art, its learning, its luxury and its most abandoned lewdness. Various causes had conspired to bring over the church a moral paralysis, to introduce among the brethren strife and alienation. There was abundant occasion for these two letters from the Apostle, letters full of warning and Apostolic counsel. In the verses selected for our present meditation, he refers to his first coming among them—to the *manner*, to the *matter* and to the *object* of his mission. If you carefully observe, you will perceive that these three points are presented in the text.

We have deemed them, not inappropriate to the present occasion. It is just a quarter of a century, this very day, since I was ordained and set apart to the work of the ministry in this city and installed Pastor of the Houston Street Presbyterian Church; And I think I can truly adopt the language of the Apostle as my own.”

“And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

I. Let me first call your attention to the *manner* or rather to the Spirit of the Apostle's ministry in Corinth.

Though he was learned and eloquent, and could take rank among the first scholars of his age; though he might have wielded the power of logic and used the arts of the rhetorician, yet he came, not after the manner of a philosopher, to theorize and to speculate about questions to no profit. Burdened with the weight of his message and his responsibility as an ambassador of Christ, he determined not to encounter the learning, the idolatries and the corruptions of the city with weapons of man's invention, or the carnal philosophy of the schools. He needed a profounder faith; he must realize the Divine paradox, that "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world, to confound things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not to bring to nought things that are."

This was his chosen philosophy and the manner of his entrance into that polished and profligate city was in perfect harmony. If as an orator he could have played upon the passions of the people; if he could have silenced cavillers by the irresistible force of his reasoning, he preferred to have their faith stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

His manner was simple; his words, though well chosen, were neither technical, nor scholastic. He reasoned, he convinced the understanding; he impressed the heart, but not with the words which man's wisdom teacheth. He spake, but "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." He showed himself a workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of life. Still he was frail and human, and when he canvassed the strong holds of Satan in that city—the

many temples dedicated to his worship, his unscrupulous devotees—the wealth, the learning, the influence consecrated to his service, he felt his utter incompetency and says, “I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.” No wonder, that he should have exclaimed, “who is sufficient for these things?” The erudite Paul was not.

He felt it; he realized that he was alone there in that great city, without human sympathy, co-operation or help. And what could *he* do? Nothing, but to cast himself in his weakness, upon the Divine strength. And now, but for the occasion, it would seem to be incongruous to turn from the Apostle to speak of myself. “And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.” When I came to you, I came a young man, in conscious weakness, without experience, without reputation, without any knowledge of the field I was to cultivate. I came to a feeble church, few in numbers, poor in their pecuniary resources, distracted and torn with the agitating questions of the day, prejudiced and stigmatized as the “pauper church”—the theatre of all extreme measures. This is no overdrawn picture, as all who are acquainted with the facts can testify.

What could I do? The odds were against me. All the circumstances, viewed from the human side, prophesied failure. “I was with you in weakness, and in fear and in much trembling.”

I saw that it was “not by might, nor by power”—nor by mere human instrumentality—not by plans of human devising, that the church was to be raised from its depression and established in its unity and strength. Though fresh from the groves of the Academy and the School of the prophets, yet “when I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God.” I sought not to attract or win the people by art or finesse, by strange or startling novelties. I had no new gospel to preach—nothing but the old doctrines of depravity, legal condemnation, justifica-

cation by faith, regeneration by the Spirit and redemption by the precious blood of Christ. These were all, unattractive to the multitude, hated by the carnal heart, yet "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." Had I adopted a different course, had my speech savored of worldly wisdom, had I preached an easy and attractive morality, overlooking sin, and salvation by the cross, I might have had my reward and secured a temporary popularity, but no arrow would have penetrated the shield of the mighty, no Heavenly blessing, would have descended and no work accomplished, over which, the angels could have rejoiced. I am thankful for the grace given to withstand the temptation and to so far imitate the great Apostle, as to speak and to preach, "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, "not to mix a carnal and worldly philosophy with the pure and simple doctrines of the cross.

Paul's learning was a help; he brought to his work a thoroughly disciplined mind and in speaking of the *manner* of his ministry, we do not desire to be understood, as undervaluing thorough mental training—a mind sharpened by science and philosophy, yet thoroughly penetrated with the spirit of Paul, then the *manner* of the preacher will be like his, *simple* and *earnest* "not with enticing words of man's wisdom," but in demonstration of the Spirit of power.

II. I am to speak in the second place, of the *substance* or the *matter* of the Apostle's ministry.

This is stated in the second verse. "For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

This implies singleness of aim and purpose. The one great theme of his ministry was Christ and him crucified. Whatever other topics he might have introduced, they were related to this, revolved around it, as the grand, central truth, were vitalized and made effective only through it. The *law* he preached but only to make sinners feel their need of Christ; *justification* he preached, but only through the righteousness of Christ; the *necessity* of *good works*, he preached, but only as the fruit of a life in Christ.

It was Christ *in* him, the hope of glory, that made the objective Christ or the Christ crucified so prominent and potential in all his ministry. On the plains of Damascus, he had been smitten to the earth with a sense of sin, and when the burden was heavy and all hope of salvation by the law had died out, Christ appeared to him "as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. This experience gave the key note to his ministry and he determined, from that moment, to know nothing save Christ and him crucified, and whether on Mars Hill in Athens, among the philosophers and judges of the Æropagus, or in the dissolute city of Corinth, he was ever true to this one purpose. The dialectics of the schools, the debates of the Forum, the conflicting politics of the nation failed to kindle the fervors of his eloquence. His mind moved upon a higher plane of thought and grappled with the deep mysteries of God in Christ—*the souls worth and destiny*. Whatever questions in philosophy, science or art which might have interested him, as a man of letters and taste, failed to divert him from the one great object of his ministry. As a philanthropist, he was not indifferent to the enormous cruelties practiced under the huge systems of oppression in the countries, where he preached and planted churches; still his theme was the cross. The great and effectual remedy for all social evils, in his estimation, was the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which bringeth salvation to every man. He sought not to lop off the branches of the Upas; he laid the ax at the root of the tree; he would make the fountain pure. In this regard, it has been my purpose to imitate the Apostle. My first sermon, after my arrival in this city and to my people, was from the text, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Local questions were agitating the church and I was frequently and urgently solicited to come down from the high theme and discuss matters of temporary moment, but my reply was, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And this was a stumbling block to some, and an offence to others, and they became wandering stars, clouds without water, their influence lost to the church.

After the lapse of a few months, and after the blessed Lord had given many precious seals to my ministry, I was ordained by the Third Presbytery of New-York; Rev. DR. ERSKINE MASON, now in Heaven, preached the sermon, Rev. ASA D. SMITH, D. D. delivered the charge to the pastor, and Rev. CHARLES PORTER, then pastor of the Second Avenue Presbyterian Church, now Roman Catholic, charged the people.

The first Sabbath after I was inducted into the pastoral relations, I indicated to my people, what as their Spiritual teacher, they might expect from me, in a sermon from the text, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" In which, I endeavored to show, that Christ is the sum and substance of the gospel, that without Him, it would be a weak and powerless thing, like a magazine without powder, like an engine without steam, like a body without a soul, like a world without a sun.

Since then many of you have been witnesses to the fidelity, with which, I have endeavored to preach Christ. I think I may, without arrogance, apply to myself what Paul said to the Ephesians concerning his ministry among them. "I have been with you at all seasons and have kept back nothing, that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." I have been with you at all seasons—in seasons of depression and sore trial; in seasons of family and personal bereavement, when the shadows were heavy, when the blows fell in quick and stunning succession. I have been with you to speak words of comfort and to hold back nothing that was profitable to you, but especially to exhibit Christ as one ever ready to bear your burden—the burden of sin—the burden of all providential trials—an all sufficient help—a refuge from the tempest—a hiding place from the storm. "I have taught you publicly and from house to house." My pastoral calls, judging from the only two years in which I kept an accurate register, have averaged more than a thousand a year, making

in the aggregate, by this estimate, more than 25,000 pastoral calls during the whole period of my ministry. I have never yet declined to attend a funeral in any part of the city, or to visit the sick when called, unless positively prevented by some previous engagement. If the last two years is any fair criterion, then I have attended not far from 2500 funerals during my pastorate.

True, comparatively a small proportion of these have been among my own people. I have been the poor man's pastor and the neglectors of our sanctuaries and of the great salvation have turned to me for sympathy and official service, when they would bury their dead, and in all *these* scenes my theme has ever been, Christ—*the resurrection and the life!*

I am free from supposing, that my ministry has been faultless. I see many deficiencies; many things to condemn and lament both in spirit and manner; still I am not conscious, that through the fear of man, or any other motive, I have ever kept back any divine truth, or so presented it, as to blunt its edge and prevent its intended effect. My heart's desire and prayer to God has been that my people might be saved, and realizing that to this end, they must know the truth as it is in Jesus, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, whether they would hear or forbear. Though my ministry has been in a most exciting age of the world, when great national questions were to be settled and settled for all time, and though ever true and loyal to my country, yet I have not been diverted from the one great purpose of preaching Christ and him crucified.

When upon the Sabbath, you have come here burdened with a sense of ill desert, you have been pointed to "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." If, at other times and on occasions more secular, sympathy has been expressed for the oppressed, as bound together with them, and free utterance given to the patriotic and struggling emotions of my heart, still, my brethren, you have heard nothing more than I deemed it my privilege and duty to utter, as a man; a citizen and a servant of Christ. Loyalty to Christ, to my con-

science and to my country has been my motto; while I have been sorry ever to have offended any one, yet I should have felt myself degraded to have suffered any man or any set of men to deprive me of this, my privilege and my birthright. Who does not admire the boldness and the manhood of the Apostles, who, when they were threatened by the Chief Priests, the Rulers and Elders of the people and commanded not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, answered and said unto them "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

III. In the third place I am to speak of the object of the Apostle's ministry.

This is stated in the fifth verse, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." In other words, that your religion should not rest upon the deductions of human reason, as a basis, but upon the authority of Jehovah. Whatever may be the verbal exposition of this passage, we know that its practical meaning is to exhibit the end and aim of all the Apostle's labors. He had an object supreme and controlling, stimulating him to the most heroic sacrifices, nerving him to the most herculan toils and prompting him to brave the most formidable perils and to count his life not dear to himself, that he might finish his course with joy and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. What then was his underlying and ultimate purpose? And what is the grand official aim of every pastor and preacher formed on the high Scriptural model? Is it pecuniary gain? Is it, with the eye of a speculator, that he surveys his field, to discover its capabilities for remunerative cultivation, calculating on a harvest of monetary gains, ample profits, ease and worldly advancement? Were *such* his sordid aims, he had better seek their realization in the conflicts of trade, in stocks and merchandise, in either of the other learned professions, aye, even in following the plow or toiling in the work shop. The ministerial profession is not the sphere for the gratification of the carnal and

unsanctified desires of the heart. With what a holy frankness did the author of our text repel any whispered suspicions of such sordid motives, when he said to those for whose spiritual good he labored, "I seek not *yours*, but *You*." What was it that attracted him to the emporium of Asia Minor, the chief city of commercial enterprise, of architectural grandeur, of Pagan liberality? Had he an eye upon the Silver Shrines of Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen? Had it been intimated to him, that in that large field of usefulness, there would be a corresponding salary? None of these, Paul at Ephesus was a self-supporting city Missionary. "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me."

To beloved friends at Philippi, who had expressed, in some tangible form, their appreciation of his labors, he made grateful acknowledgements, adding, "Not that I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." His perquisites, for the most part, lay "in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings." What then was the grand inspiring motive, that sustained the Apostle through all labors and trials? You have the answer in the text. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Paul labored for souls, that should shine, at last as stars in his crown of rejoicing forever. This, to him, was a motive mightier than earth could afford, richer than coffers of gold, more attractive than the plaudits of fame. Never was a man more entirely consecrated to a single purpose. "This one thing I do," was his motto. And this, in substance, is the aim of every christian minister who is thoroughly devoted to his work. He seeks not worldly popularity, nor wealth, nor ease, nor self gratification, but the salvation of souls. Said Dr. McAll. "I have admiration enough; but I want to see conversion and edification; I care nothing what the people may think or say of my

abilities, if I may but be useful to souls." "With me," said the Apostle, "it is a very small thing that I be judged of you or of man's judgment."—With something of this Spirit did I commence my labors in this city. I was not ambitious of position and am not conscious of any other motive actuating me than a love of souls. If ease had been my object, I should not have sought it in this city—if pecuniary emolument, then my ministry has been a failure. During the first years of my ministry I virtually went to warfare on my own charges. But, brethren, I have had a reward richer than ingots of gold. As I have labored for the salvation of souls, souls have been given to me for my hire; "ye are my glory and joy and crown of rejoicing."

I commenced preaching in this city as a licentiate, in the fall of 1838; and the Lord was graciously pleased to set his seal upon my ministry, by giving us a precious ingathering of souls during the winter, so that the church was greatly encouraged, united and strengthened, and the congregation so increased, that the place became almost too strait for us. Every successive year we were visited with revival seasons, and large numbers who had received the blessing were added to our own and to the neighboring churches. The church in Houston St. like Gideon's fleece was always moistened, either by the gentle dew or the more plentiful shower. The eight years on my first field of labor were profitable years, signalized by wonderful displays of the grace of God, and their remembrance comes to us even now as a sacred benediction. The whole number added to the church during my ministry in Houston street, was 844, being an average of more than a hundred a year. Four hundred and eighty-three of this number were on profession of their faith—*the first fruits of my* pastorate. The ordinance of baptism was administered to 293 children, thus putting honor upon the covenant, which God instituted with our fathers.

After I had served the church as pastor for eight years, it was deemed advisable by the congregation "to lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes," and to establish themselves in a better position and with better surroundings. A commit-

tee was appointed to dispose of the property in Houston St. and to invest whatever surplus might remain after paying the mortgage, in lots farther up town. These lots were then purchased, but their remote distance, being regarded as then quite out of town, discouraged a portion of the people, and it was decided to let the property and the church there remain, and those who were *disposed*, to come, and occupy the new field, as a colony. The old church retained the property and the colony took the pastor and were constituted into a church by the 3d Presbytery of New York, May 27th, 1846, composed of 180 members; none of whom were wealthy, but they were earnest and united and determined, with God's blessing, to establish a church for the Redeemer in this section of the city. Preparations were made for erecting a suitable edifice, and in the meantime, and for nearly a year, the congregation worshipped in the small chapel of the New York University. In May, 1847, we entered the basement, to the mutual joy of us all, and on the 3d of Sept. succeeding we were permitted to enter and consecrate our new temple to the worship of Almighty God. After bearing our own burdens and amid prophecies of failure, you may well conceive, that it was a day of gladness to us—the coronation of our hopes.*. Our property had cost us 30,000 dollars, and we were left with an incumbrance of some 24,000, but God was with us helping us, blessing us with increase and strength, and our debt gradually melted away like a snow wreath until it was reduced to 7,000 dollars, and now we felt happy and secure in our nest; but God saw that we needed to be humbled and purified by trials; and hence on the 8th of Jan. 1855, the terrible disaster came, and “our holy and our beautiful house” where, on the day previous, we had worshipped in blessed fellowship, was utterly consumed by fire. If a thunderbolt had fallen from the clear sky, the effect could not have been more stunning. The people had been taxed, as we had supposed, to their utmost, and we were apprehensive of utter paralysis and discouragement; but while as yet the flames were doing their worst, a cluster of heroic

*See Note 1st.

men, who had borne heavy burdens and had never wearied, might be seen, on the opposite pavement, encouraging each others' hearts, and resolving at once to rise up and build. The year previous, the congregation had passed through an ordeal of trembling and anxiety in the unwonted and protracted sickness of their pastor, an ordeal that developed the purest sympathy and the most devoted affection. I should do violence to my own feelings and injustice to you if, in this Memorial Sermon, I should fail to mention, with gratitude, the unceasing care and sympathy and watchfulness of my devoted people during those long months of weakness and weariness and unparalleled physical suffering. While hope and fear, disease and death were darkly struggling together, your faith triumphed, your prayers were heard, and your pastor, purified, as we trust, by the fires of the furnace, was brought back from the very gates of death to your loving embrace, to speak to you of all the wonderful things which God had wrought. For just twelve months to a day, he "was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, declaring unto you the testimony of God," when the fire came; and fearing its effect upon his but partially restored health, you sent him abroad to travel, not as the Apostles were first sent, without scrip or purse. He visited most of the countries of Europe and returned, with renewed health, to a church and a people ready prepared to receive him.

The present edifice was dedicated with appropriate service to the worship of our God and Saviour on the first Sabbath in October, 1855; but with an indebtedness increased to nearly 22,000 dollars.

Notwithstanding the frequent removal of families to distant localities, our church has continued full, and from our surplus income, every successive year found us with a diminished debt, and within the past month, *the whole has been removed*; so that, for the first time, during my whole ministry, we may say, we are *free*, and may now re-dedicate the entire property to God without the incumbrance of a dollar or a dime. We have now reached a point in our history, to which I have looked with anxious desire. It is the culmination of my hopes, and I

can now feel that the church will survive me and live through the generations, as a benediction to posterity, long after I shall have completed my earthly labors and gone to my rest in heaven. I thank you, my people, for the liberal and cheerful manner, in which you have relieved a burden from the heart of the pastor, by removing a debt, which might soon have become onerous and even perilous to the very existence of the church, for whose spiritual and permanent good I have devoted my life. In St. Paul's Cathedral may be seen the epitaph of its architect, ending with the word "Circumspice"; "If thou seekest his monument, look round." Thus, have I desired no other monument than this church, that my name may live in its history and in the hearts of my beloved people. *It is my life work*, and the only visible thing that will long survive me, to tell to future generations, that I have lived and labored for the Master. To those of you who have labored and struggled with me, and who commenced this enterprise "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling," it must be gratifying to behold this day the realization of your hopes, and the church, which you have nourished in its feebleness, established in strength upon a permanent basis. Let us rejoice and give thanks together.

In a spiritual point of view, we have enjoyed many precious tokens of the Divine presence and blessing. Brotherly love has continued. No schisms or alienations have existed. Perhaps no church has enjoyed greater harmony. Often have we felt, with the Psalmist, to say, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded his blessing, even life forevermore."—133d Ps.

We have received the early and the latter rain, and enjoyed precious revival seasons. There have been added to this church since its organization, 1456; five hundred on profession of their faith in Christ. The largest number added in any

given year is 290, subjects, for the most part, of the great revival in 1858. Very many who received the blessing of conversion with us, united with other churches, and eternity alone will disclose the full extent of that wonderful work of grace. For the most part, the converts have "run well," and have honored their profession. There have been dismissed from this church or called to the church above, 866, leaving the present number in full communion with us, 770!

The Abrahamic covenant has been honored and observed among us, and 389 children have received the rite of baptism.

The total number added to the church under my ministry of 25 years is 2,290! What hath God wrought? "And what shall we render unto *Him* for all his benefits toward us? We will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord; we will pay our vows unto God now in the presence of all his people."

Many striking changes have taken place during the period of my ministry. The city has more than doubled its population. Churches have changed their localities and increased in numbers to meet the wants of the increasing population. Few, at the commencement of my ministry, of any description, existed north of this; they were not needed; the population was sparse; the streets were not laid out; vegetable gardens, or fields rough and uncultivated abounded, over which wealth and genius have since erected palaces and monuments of taste and beauty. The whole aspect of the city has changed. My first boarding place was in Jane Street, then quite in the country and called "Greenwich Village," and the church next door to the place of my abode was called "The Village Church." Then there was no "Union Square"; no Fifth Avenue; no Madison Avenue; no Central Park; Washington Parade Ground had just disrobed herself of the habiliments of the grave, and the pauper dead had given place to the affluent living. "The Battery" was the place of favorite resort, and the wealth and the fashion dwelt in its immediate vicinity. Behold the change which time has wrought! Our own circle

and church have not been exempt from change, and, as in the city, so with us, change marks the progress of improvement.

The edifice in which I first preached was plain and poor, and oppressed with debt; now we have a beautiful and substantial building, and owe no man any thing. Then we had no persons of means; we were all alike poor; now the rich and the poor mingle together, affording mutual help and sympathy. Then your minister, though without family, could scarcely be said to have received even a meagre subsistence, now your means are adequate to afford him a liberal salary, and your hearts prompt the most generous deeds as the last week can testify.† At the first public service after my arrival in the city, I preached to 150 persons and no more; now our average attendance is not far from 1000. Then in the orchestra, we had a bass viol, a flute and violin, now we are thrilled by the deep and varied tones of our beautiful organ. In all particulars, God has greatly blessed us. We have a Board of Trustees, wise, energetic and prudent, whose works praise them—a Board of Elders, such as is an ornament to any Church and a support to the pastor—a Board of Deacons appreciated for their sympathy and devotion—a Sabbath School, for numbers, order, interest and effectiveness, unsurpassed by any in the city. The church in its unity, strength, spirituality and prospects of usefulness, was never in so good a condition as at the present. In the language of one of my elders, “we are now an institution—*the little one* has indeed become a thousand.

It was Augustus Cæsar’s boast, that he found Rome of *brick* and left it *marble*. With us boasting is excluded. “Paul hath planted and Apolles watered, but God has given the increase.” And I have been induced to present these contrasts, between our past and present condition, that you may be impressed with a sense of gratitude to *Him*.

At times, indeed, the work has seemed to move slowly; some years have witnessed but few additions to the church;

† See Note.

Still in the retrospect, I perceive, that believers, from time to time, have been strengthened, edified, built up in their most holy faith and fitted for heaven. While Michael Angelo was occupied in completing one of his famous statues, he received a visit from a friend who expressed his admiration of the work, but who, on repeating his visit, was astonished at the apparently slow progress which had been made and exclaimed, "You have been idle since I saw you last." "By no means," replied the artist; "I have retouched this part and polished that; I have softened this feature and brought out that muscle; I have given more expression to this lip and more energy to that limb." "Well," interrupted his friend, "but all these are trifles." "It may be so," was the answer, "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."

Thus even in times of general declension, when little spiritual progress seemed to be making, have I been quietly and earnestly toiling to realize in you the stature of perfect men and women in Christ, chiseling down rough excrescences and filling up in your character painful deficiencies, all the time tremblingly solicitous, that every liniament might be perfect—a reproduction of Christ's own beautiful and blessed image.

During the 25 years under review, death has been busy doing his work, both among the clergy and the laity. Rev. Herman Norton once the esteemed pastor of a Church in Prince Street, the mention of whose name will awaken grateful memories in the hearts of a large circle of friends, was called to his rest in the midst of his years and usefulness.—Both my predecessors in Houston Street—Rev. Dr. Lansing, of blessed memory, and N. E. Johnson, a man of genius and singular eloquence, whose latter days were darkened by a cloud, and my youthful and promising successor Rev. R. S. Dickinson, have ceased to walk amongst the living. Rev. Dr. Armstrong, the devoted Secretary of the A. F. M. S. Dr. Erskine Mason, the scholarly and argumentative preacher, who officiated at the two great occasions of my life—my ordination and my marriage. Rev. Dr. Henry White, the first pastor of the Allen Street Church and subsequently the honored President of

Union Theological Seminary, and more recently, his successor Rev. Dr. Robinson, of world wide fame—the Rev. James W. McLane, D. D.—the indefatigable scholar and faithful pastor, and J. Parsons Hovey, D. D., whose life was a constant walk of usefulness; these, *all* of our own denomination, have rested from their labors and their works do follow them. We congratulate them as having finished their course and kept the faith and are now before the throne of God and the Lamb. Many of our own members have we seen glorifying God in the fires, and receiving prelibations of Heaven, while as yet, they lingered on the terrestrial shore. As the sun of their earthly being has declined, leaving the earthly landscape in cloud and shadow, they have cast their eyes upward to behold unexpected and extended wreaths of purple and gold, hanging over vast fields of emerald and amethyst and jasper and they have wondered at the wealth of glory in reserve.

Of the Elders of this Church, “father Green,” whose name is associated with its early history—Charles Davis, of blameless integrity and Dr. William J. Johnson, who was ever at his post, have been permitted to share in this “far, more, exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Many others, both male and female, have left us, giving delightful evidence that our loss is their eternal gain. We hail them as victors—the conflict ended. Let us wait patiently till our warfare is ended and then we shall meet them in the Father’s house, *one family in Heaven*. Of those, who were members, when I first became pastor, twenty-four only remain in our present communion. Of the 180 who constituted this Church, at its organization, forty-nine remain. Others are still doing good service in other fields of labor; many who look back to this spot, as their Spiritual birth place, are in distant Churches or States, holding fast their profession; some are in the army fighting our battles; some have fallen in the great strife covered with glory, true and loyal to the last?

And now, in conclusion and in a review, I may truly say, I have had a pleasant ministry, a considerate and devoted people, who have been lenient of my faults, who have ever been

ready to exercise that "charity which suffereth long and is kind." Your proofs of sympathy and affection have been numerous and affecting. Though I have been *watched* and on several occasions *caned* and once *banished*, still I have no cause of complaint—such chastisement has always been joyous, the practice and the proofs of love.† Your last and crowning act of generosity overcomes me. It was a surprise, a grateful surprise, a testimonial of affection, such as it is the privilege of few pastors to receive from their people. I thank you—every emotion of my heart throbs with gratitude. May I ever prove worthy of your continued affection. It is my joy to serve you and I enter upon a new segment of time and labor with increased fervor and hope. I have no desire to leave you. Often have I been tempted, and called to other, and in some respects, to more eligible fields of labor, but my reply has ever been, "I dwell among my own people." And now with more emphasis and feeling than ever before, can I adopt the language of Ruth to Naomi. "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God, my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Ruth 1; 16, 17.

In reviewing the past and the present, I have two regrets; one is, that I have not been able to serve you with more diligence and devotion, the other is, that to some, who have been with me from the beginning, my ministry has been comparatively barren, as yet yielding no fruit in a ripened Christian experience. You are among my warm personal friends; you possess many traits that I greatly admire; you have stood by me in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity; you are *attached* friends; I can rely upon you, and I love you, as Jesus loved the young man in the gospel, but I am sorry to say that you lack "the one thing needful." You listened to my appeals when a *young* man and you have been almost per-

† See Note.

sueded to be Christians; will you not regard the counsels of experience and make *my* Saviour *your* friend. He will be a friend, that sticketh closer than a brother? Very few of us will live through another quarter of a century, and if any of us should, we shall be old; the vigor of youth will be gone; sad changes will have taken place; we shall have passed into "the sere and yellow leaf" of life. This Church may stand, as I trust it will, but another people will occupy these seats and another voice shall address them. We know not what shall be on the morrow. "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."

I have expressed my *regrets*, may I not express one hope, one strong desire, that after we shall have lived and labored together as pastor and people, suffered and enjoyed together, that we may dwell together as one soul, in that far off and better land, to which many of our companions and friends have already gone, where there is no toil nor weariness, nor sin, where friendship is sanctified and eternal; where we shall behold the King in his beauty and share in all the glory of his triumphs and join in the anthem peal, that shall ascend from that great and white-robed multitude,* which no man can number, saying "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever, Amen."

*The sympathies of the Community and Presbytery were with the mother Church, and the pecuniary responsibility of establishing and sustaining the new enterprise rested exclusively upon those who constituted the young and feeble colony.

†Reference is here made to a surprise party at the Pastor's house, on the Thursday evening previous, at which was given a purse of \$1,726, and articles of value to himself and lady, amounting to nearly two thousand dollars.

‡Allusion is here made to a splendid Gold Watch presented in the year 1859, and to several canes, two of which are very valuable, being mounted with gold, and to the Pastor's extensive tour in Europe in 1855; the expense of which, was borne by his people.