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1858

SAMUEL WARE FISHER.

1814—1874.



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1858



Sam'l W. Foster

W.C. Foster, Engraver

1850

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

ON THE

CHARACTER AND PUBLIC SERVICES

OF THE

REV. SAMUEL WARE FISHER, D. D., LL. D.

DELIVERED IN THE

CHAPEL OF HAMILTON COLLEGE,

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 29TH, 1874;

AND IN

WESTMINSTER CHURCH, IN UTICA,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 8TH, 1874.

WITH A

Historical Sketch of Westminster Church.

UTICA, N. Y.

CURTISS & CHILDS, PRINTERS, 167 GENESEE STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

The Memorial Addresses that appear in the following pages, were first delivered in the chapel of Hamilton College, on Thursday, January 29, 1874. The occasion drew together many friends of the college and of Dr. FISHER, whose faces are more familiar in other places of public worship. Among these were Hon. LEWIS LAWRENCE, TIMOTHY PARKER and SAMUEL W. RAYMOND, Jr. of Utica, Hon. O. S. WILLIAMS, Dr. J. C. GALLUP, Dr. T. B. HUDSON, Rev. F. A. SPENCER, Dr. D. K. MANDEVILLE, Rev. S. W. HOWELL, Rev. O. C. COLE, Rev. SAMUEL WELLS, and GAIUS BUTLER, one of the few surviving pupils of President BACKUS. The members of the Faculty were also present, with their families and the undergraduates. The exercises were introduced with singing by the college choir, reading of Scripture by President BROWN, and prayer by the Rev. THOMAS J. BROWN. After the addresses, the memorial services closed at half-past one, with singing by the college choir, and the benediction by Rev. THOMAS J. BROWN.

II.

At the urgent request of many who could not attend the service in Clinton, the Memorial Addresses were repeated in Westminster Church, in Utica, on Sunday evening, February 8, 1874. The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church united with that of the

Westminster Church, and a very large audience were deeply interested in the following exercises :

- I. Singing by the choir, " Jesus, Lover of my soul."
- II. Reading of Scripture and Prayer, by Rev. S. P. SPRECHER.
- III. Singing by the choir and congregation, " Nearer, my God, to Thee."
- IV. Biographical Discourse, by President SAMUEL G. BROWN.
- V. Singing by the choir, " Beyond the Smiling and the Weeping."
- VI. Addresses by Hon. WILLIAM J. BACON and Rev. THOMAS J. BROWN.
- VII. Singing by the Choir, " There is a blessed home."
- VIII. Benediction, by President BROWN.

III.

At a meeting of the Session of Westminster Church, of Utica, Rev. THOMAS J. BROWN, THEODORE POMEROY, Esq., and Prof. EDWARD NORTH were requested to act as a Committee of Publication, to reproduce in permanent form the addresses delivered Sunday evening, February 8, 1874, as tributes to the memory of Dr. SAMUEL W. FISHER, formerly pastor of the Church.

H. H. CURTISS,

Clerk of the Session.

THE
COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION
FIND MUCH PLEASURE IN
RECORDING THE GENEROUS CO-OPERATION OF
HON. LEWIS LAWRENCE,
OF UTICA,
WHO HAS GREATLY LIGHTENED THEIR LABOR
BY FURNISHING THEM WITH
ALL NEEDED FUNDS,
AND HAS THUS LINKED HIS NAME BY ANOTHER GRATEFUL
ASSOCIATION WITH THE REVERED MEMORY
OF HIS
PASTOR AND FRIEND.

SAMUEL WARE FISHER,

Born in Morristown, New Jersey, April 5, 1814.

Graduated from Yale College in 1835.

Graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1839.

Installed Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in West Bloomfield,
New Jersey, April 18, 1839.

Married to ANNA CAROLINE JOHNSON, of Morristown, New Jersey,
October 22, 1839.

Married to JANE JACKSON, of Newark, New Jersey, May 18, 1842.

Installed Pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, in Albany,
October 13, 1843.

Installed Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, in Cincinnati,
Ohio, in 1847.

Author of "The Three Great Temptations,"—published in 1852.

Received the Doctorate of Divinity from Miami University in 1852.

Trustee of Marietta College from 1854 to 1859.

Elected Moderator of the New School General Assembly in 1857.

Elected President of Hamilton College July 6, 1858.

Received the Doctorate of Laws from the University of the City
of New York in 1859.

Author of "Occasional Sermons and Addresses,"—published in 1860.

Installed Pastor of Westminster Church, in Utica, Nov. 15, 1867.

Resigned the Pastorate of Westminster Church Jan. 13, 1871.

Died in Cincinnati, Ohio, January 18, 1874.

DISCOURSE

BY

PRESIDENT BROWN.

We have met this evening in accordance with a custom which surely has much to commend it, to pay a tribute of respect to one, who it seems to me but yesterday occupied this pulpit; who formerly presided over a neighboring college, and exerted much influence upon its welfare; who elsewhere occupied positions of great responsibility in society and in the church, was widely known for his love of letters, for his efforts in behalf of education, for his eloquence as a preacher, his fidelity as a pastor, and his weight in the larger councils of the great religious body with which he was connected.

It is now almost four years since this community was startled, as it has rarely been startled, by the tidings of the sudden and dangerous prostration of Dr. Fisher, then pastor of this church, by a stroke of disease whose nature and violence we could not on the instant determine. We feared, indeed, the worst; we could hardly hope for the best. Time brought some alleviations. The severer symptoms passed away. The darkening understanding emerged again into the light,—or rather into a dim, unchanging twilight. The weeks and months, as they passed, brought no return of the thick darkness, but neither did they bring the clear day. It became evident, after a while, that the work of that busy and overwrought brain was done; that no more burdens could be laid upon it, no more tasks be accomplished. He accepted, reluctantly, yet with docility, the sorrowful conclusion, and, after a sufficient time had elapsed to remove all reasonable doubt, the connection between him and the people of his charge—of his last charge—was finally sundered. He lingered here for a while longer, and then decided

to remove to the vicinity of his former ministerial labors in Cincinnati. It has been only too evident, from the reports which now and then have reached us since that time, that no change for the better was taking place, nor, perhaps, any change but one most gradual, and from day to day quite imperceptible. His hold on life was, however, growing feebler and feebler—the tissues of that delicate organ, the brain, it may be, gradually losing strength, till at last a moment of extra exertion completed the work, and the end came suddenly and unlooked for. The shattered structure was gradually undermined, till it required but a feeble blow to bring it crumbling to the ground. This was on the morning of Sunday, the 18th of January, and on the next Wednesday all of him that was mortal was laid to rest by the side of three of his children in that quiet rural cemetery near Cincinnati, of whose beauty he used often to speak.

Dr. Fisher was a native of Morristown, N. J., where he was born, as I am informed, April 5, 1814. His father was an eminent Presbyterian minister, for many years in charge of the Church in Morristown, then one of the largest in the State; and afterward for twenty years the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Paterson. He was the first moderator of the General Assembly of the New School body after its separation from the old, and was long recognized as one of the most earnest workers in the church, to whose welfare his life was consecrated. To the example and counsels of such a father was naturally owing something of the tastes and tendencies of the son. Dr. Fisher was early initiated into the modes of thought and action common to the great body with which he was connected. Its traditions were all familiar to him from boyhood.

The choice of a profession to a young man is sometimes difficult; the result of anxious deliberation; the conclusion reached through much doubt and conflict. To him it was easy; a profession to which his life had been naturally and divinely shaped; the most satisfying and best, he thought, which can be chosen by man. His desires and wishes, his purposes and ambitions, if I may use the word in its better sense, opened out in the direction of work for and through the Presbyterian

Church. Here was ground ample and noble, whose every hill-side and vale were familiar to him, and it is perfectly natural that he should always have felt himself most at home with the congregations and presbyteries, the synods and assemblies of this powerful body. Of his early life I have been able to learn but little. He was graduated at Yale College in 1835; spent a year in Middletown, Ct.; pursued his theological studies at Princeton for two years, and completed them afterwards at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Immediately after leaving the seminary, he became the minister of the Presbyterian church in West Bloomfield, N. J., where he continued three years and a half.* From this he removed in 1843 to a larger and more trying field of labor, being installed on the 13th of October in that year as pastor of the Fourth Church of Albany. This position was one of unusual delicacy and difficulty. The church was, probably, at that time, the largest in the whole denomination, having more than 900 names upon the roll of its communicants. He succeeded men eminent for ability, earnest and unsparing in effort, and conspicuous by success, whose aims were high, although mainly directed towards one immediate result, and whose methods, very effective for their purposes, demanded a peculiarity of temperament and ability rarely conjoined, and involved a strain upon the sensibilities and nervous energies which could not be permanently

*The records of the Presbyterian Church in West Bloomfield, now Montclair, N. J., contain the following memoranda in the handwriting of Dr. Fisher. They were copied for the committee of publication by Dr. J. Romeyn Berry, present pastor of that church:

"In the early part of the year 1840, this church enjoyed a season of refreshing from on high. A sermon by the pastor from Jer. xxviii. 16, was followed by an immediate interest. The places of meeting were too small to hold the people, and the church was opened. Divine service was held once a day, and a great part of the time twice a day, for more than two months. The church was very much revived and blessed. Between 20 and 30 have made a profession of religion here and elsewhere, as the fruits of that revival.

"In the fall of 1842, there were signs of an increased interest in religion. Some of the male members of the church were unusually aroused to labor and prayer. In the early part of February, 1843, the revival seemed to have really commenced with power. The interest was chiefly among the young men. Our meetings were not half so numerous as in the previous revival, nor was there the same anxiety in the community. Yet the convictions of sinners were deeper, and the cases of conviction more numerous. About 50 we trust have passed from death unto life. Some of these have left the place. About 30 joined at the last communion, and a number yet remain to make a profession."

maintained. A man, as he was, of independent thought, could not possibly preach just as his predecessors preached, or adopt methods which were quite familiar and easy to them. His mission was somewhat different from their's, but not less essential, or requiring a lower order of talent, or less self-devotion.

To everything, says the wise man, there is a season, and so are there different forms of ministerial labor, each essential in its proper time and place, the relative importance of which we do not care to estimate. For a firm and beautiful building there must indeed be abundant and fitting material, but there must also be wise selection and adaptation, much shaping and polishing and skillful adjustment. To the service to which he was chosen the young pastor gave heartily, without reserve, the power with which he was endowed. Gratefully accepting the religious work which had been accomplished, devoutly acknowledging the spiritual power which had awakened so many from their lethargy and brought them to a new life in Jesus Christ, he devoted himself, according to the measure of his ability, to the work of the ministry "for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The various materials of that spiritual building he endeavored to fashion into the shapes of comeliness and beauty. The important work of his predecessors he supplemented by other work quite as important in forming a complete and sound christian character, and a vigorous and active christian church. The results might be less noteworthy, might challenge less attention, and to the common mind be less an evidence of profound religious feeling or successful christian work, but they were none the less essential.

To enlarge the knowledge, to expand the christian sympathies, and to strengthen the christian character, in all ways to give it fullness and completeness,—this was the peculiar and difficult labor of the young and inexperienced minister. Its result was to change considerably the character of the body, and to lay broader the foundations for strong and healthy growth, and so to contribute largely to the formation of one of the most sound and efficient churches in the State. The work that he did there has not lost its value by the lapse of years, nor is the estimation of its importance, in the judgment of the

most judicious observers, less than at first. The extent of his reputation as a vigorous and effective preacher may be indicated by the fact that, in 1846, he was called to succeed the most popular, the most widely known, and the most powerful preacher of the new school body, in the Second Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati. Dr. Lyman Beecher had gone from Boston to Ohio, with the largest reputation for effective pulpit oratory, a reputation fairly won by the boldness with which he affirmed the great christian truths, the intellectual power of his discourses, and a wonderful ability to grasp alike the minds and the consciences of his hearers. The weapons which he wielded were of ethereal temper, and he dealt his blows like a giant. It was a day of theological discussion; of differences of opinion which seemed to go to the centre, and to be held so strongly as to separate chief friends; a day not only of discrimination, but of divisions and separations, to which we are happily strangers. But these discussions stimulated thought to an amazing degree, and familiarized the common mind with ideas of the most profound and searching character. It is easy now, in the joy of reünion, to say that these discussions were intemperate, that the differences were exaggerated, were based upon metaphysical definitions, were upon subtle points beyond the power of finite and imperfect men absolutely to determine, were made to cover ground too broad, and to affect character as well as opinion. But there could be no doubt that the different parties were as sincere as they were thoroughly in earnest; there could be no question of the depth or intensity of their moral convictions, and quite as little of the profound feeling, the intellectual strength, the acuteness and subtlety of perception to which these discussions gave birth. Every mind interested in religious themes at all, was fully awake, alive in every part, and keenly sensitive to statement or argument. Great questions pertaining to practical church efficiency were still unsettled. New and bold measures for awakening the interest of irreligious men were regarded by different parties with approval or opposition. The methods of carrying on the great benevolent operations of the church, the modes of conducting foreign missions and domestic missions, forms of organization, voluntary associations incorporated by the State, or Church Boards

determined by the General Assembly—these subjects, and others like them, were beginning to agitate the minds of good and earnest men, to be advocated or opposed with unanswerable arguments on both sides.

Besides these, there were other questions partly political and partly moral already looming up, of portentous magnitude and of threatening aspect. The most important of these was domestic slavery in its relations to the church and to pure morality on the one side, and to the Constitution, the Government and the political and civil welfare of the country on the other. Nor were these questions isolated, so that each could be treated by itself. They were strangely interlaced; affiliated by unexpected connections. They became, in some form, watchwords to open or shut the gates to honor and preferment; they were proposed as tests of character, and awakened suspicion or inspired confidence, to an extent difficult for us fully to understand. It was not a small thing then for a minister still young, comparatively unknown, to follow in pulpit ministrations the most renowned pulpit orator, the most powerful controversialist of the West; not an easy task, with prudence, skill, commanding vigor, and above all, with christian fidelity and with a view to the broadest christian success, to maintain his position, to secure the confidence, the good will, the sympathy of a large and unusually intelligent congregation, of various political affinities, trained to vigorous and discriminating thought. Here was not only opportunity, but imperative demand for large and exhaustive labor. Here were conflicting opinions to harmonize,—critical minds to satisfy,—plans for christian labor to be formed,—machinery to be organized and put in motion,—new evils to be met by new methods,—the life and vigor of the church itself to be maintained in the midst of peculiar temptations, and so a larger and completer christian household gathered and inspired.

This was the work which he performed. The difficulties of his position stimulated his energy. He was in the full vigor of every faculty. The field of labor was broad and full of encouragement. His words were not spoken to the empty air, but came back laden with the murmurs of approving voices. He became an intellectual and moral power in

the city. The young gathered about him, and he prepared more than one series of discourses particularly adapted to their tastes and wants. In no other place did he labor continuously so long as in Cincinnati, and to this period I suppose he afterward look back as on the whole the most successful and fortunate of his life. He was in his chosen employment; his manly energies at their highest vigor; a working church trained and stimulated by large foresight, in full sympathy with him, accepting his leadership, and cheerfully cooperating in christian word and work. What position, for one of deep religious convictions and high religious aims, can be so happy? To rescue and save those ready to perish,—to avert so much misery and confer such inestimable good,—to raise and sustain an intellectual community in nobleness of moral purposes, in pureness of christian act,—in lives of self-denial and religious consecration,—in constant growth in every element of beauty and goodness and truth,—to give force and prevalence to those ideas and habits, those beliefs and activities, which form the ornament and defense of individuals which constitute the honor and strength of States,—this surely is a most beneficent most happy, most exalting service, never to be entered upon but with the purest motive, and never failing to bring its own ample reward.

During the eleven years of his service in the great commercial city of Ohio, his mind had not been growing narrower, nor, engaged as he constantly was in duties most important and exacting, had he forgotten the claims of science and letters, or failed to meet the demands upon his time and talents necessary to their encouragement. The schools, colleges and professional seminaries of the State, and of neighboring States, heard his voice and felt his influence, whenever he could say a word or lift a finger for their help. It was natural also that occupying so prominent a place he should have been called upon for various public services, and become of influence in the larger assemblies of the church. And here, too, raged some of those conflicts to which I have referred, for one could hardly turn without treading upon some prejudice,—hardly utter an opinion without irritating some sensitive conscience, or what was called conscience.

In 1857 the new school General Assembly met at Cleveland; of this learned and able body Dr. Fisher was chosen moderator. The subject of slavery had been discussed in more than one General Assembly and the system strongly condemned. The southern members had as frequently protested against these deliverances, and in 1856 did not hesitate to acknowledge that their views in respect to the evil of slavery had materially changed, and they openly avowed that they now accepted the system.* In 1857, "the Presbytery of Lexington, Kentucky, gave official notice that a number of its ministers and ruling elders held slaves from principle and of choice, believing it to be according to the Bible, right, and that the Presbytery, without qualification, assumed the responsibility of sustaining them in so doing."†

This position the assembly at Cleveland pointedly condemned, while yet expressing a tender sympathy for those who deplore the evil, and are honestly doing all in their power for the present well-being of their slaves, and for their complete emancipation.‡

These ideas of the two parties were too radically antagonistic, too deeply held, too frequently and publicly affirmed to allow fraternal coöperation. The southern synods thereupon withdrew, and formed themselves into a separate body, called the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church. It was in reference to this secession, that in the sermon before the General Assembly of 1858, in Chicago, with which, as retiring moderator, he opened the sessions of that body. Dr. Fisher used these strong and generous words :

"Fathers and brethren, ministers and elders, we assemble here amidst the brightness of scenes of revival—scenes such as the Church of Christ, perhaps, has never enjoyed so richly before. But as my eye passes over this audience, a shade of sadness steals in upon my heart. There are those who have been wont to sit with us in this high council, whose hearty greeting we miss to-day. Taking exception to the ancient, the uniform, the oft-repeated testimony of our church, as well as to the mode of its utterance, respecting one of the greatest

* Presbyterian Memorial, p. 82. † Ibid p. 83. ‡ Ibid p. 83.

moral and organic evils of the age ; deeming it better to occupy a platform, foreign, indeed, to the genius of our free republican institutions, yet adapted, in their view, to the fuller promulgation of the Gospel in the section where they dwell, they have preferred to take an independent position ; and while we can not coincide with them in their views on this subject, while we know that this separation has been precipitated upon us, not sought by us, yet remembering the days, when, with us, they stood shoulder to shoulder against ecclesiastical usurpation and revolution, when in deepest sympathy we have gone to the house of God in company, and mingled our prayers before a common mercy-seat, we can not but pray for their peace and prosperity. We claim no monopoly of wisdom and right. If in our course hitherto, we have been moved to acts or deeds unfraternal or unbefitting our mutual relations—if in the attempt to maintain our ancient principles, and apply the Gospel to the heart of this gigantic evil, we have given utterance to language that has tended to exasperate rather than quicken to duty, we claim no exemption from censure, we ask the forgiveness we are equally ready to accord.”* And then he closes by eloquently urging the church to comprehend her exalted and commanding position ; to develop in the line of God’s providence ; not to remain fixed, chrystalized and stereotyped in the past, but to recognize the new, grand and nobler present, with a catholic spirit toward other branches of the Church of Christ, to develop her resources in harmony with the true genius of her constitution and discipline, in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

From the delivery of this able and weighty discourse on the “Conflict and Rest of the Church,” of the style and spirit of which the above brief extract may give us an imperfect notion, Dr. Fisher came directly to Clinton, having been already consulted respecting the presidency of Hamilton College. His reply to the formal invitation of the Board of Trustees, accepting the trust, was not given until the annual meeting at Commencement. He entered upon his duties at the opening of the fall term of 1858, the ceremonies of the inauguration not taking place until the fourth of November.

*Sermons and address, p. 484.

From no other learned profession have the ranks of teachers in our higher institutions been so freely recruited as from the clerical, perhaps from the very nature of their common pursuits and from the close harmony between them. The members of both these professions deal much with the young; both are accustomed to use the language of instruction; neither can be said to labor for ample pecuniary reward, and both seek for high spiritual and intellectual results.

The college had risen far above its earlier difficulties, and under a wise administration had for many years enjoyed an honorable reputation for thoroughness of instruction and discipline, but its resources were still insufficient, and its appeals for aid had not been quite loud enough to reach the ear of the wealthy and the liberal. Indeed, the day of ample endowment had not then dawned. Men who gave at all for the encouragement of education, gave sometimes generously indeed, but not with the amplitude of bounty which has conspicuously marked our time.

Dr. Fisher, I think I am correct in saying, had two or three special objects in view when entering upon this new field of labor. The first was, by means of sermons and addresses, by availing himself of his wide acquaintance with the Presbyterian bodies of this and other States, to bring the college into closer sympathy with the community at large, and especially the religious community; to make it, through his own representations and those of others, more familiarly known, and thus to gather to it a larger measure of support. It was natural for him to aim to produce an impression by public services. In them he had given proof, and had experience, of his own power. His labors in carrying out this purpose were indefatigable. Our present easy communication with towns southward and northward did not then exist. He was obliged to drive long distances, over rough roads, often by night, to meet his engagements. He was blessed with good health, and his restless energy allowed him no repose. In connection with this, and as a part of the same general scheme, he ably seconded the labors of the commissioner, Dr. Goertner, in the essential, but difficult work of adding to the funds of the college. We owe a debt of grateful remembrance to Dr. Fisher for the persistency and untiring

assiduity with which he discharged this duty, a duty somewhat beside and beyond those which are usually thought to pertain to this office.

To the period of his presidency we assign the growth of a greater confidence and sympathy between this beautiful city and the college, a mutual pleasure and advantage. From this period dates the endowments of professorships, and charitable foundations, and prizes for the encouragement of good learning, bearing honored names in this, and in neighboring communities, and never to be forgotten by us. From this period dates also the effective enlargement, almost the new creation of the general funds of the college, and an impetus and direction imparted to the liberality of the generous and noble-minded which has not ceased, but, let us hope, has yielded but the first fruits of an increasing harvest.

During his presidency, the efficiency of the college instruction was increased. The department of the ancient languages was divided, so that the complete attention of a professor could be given to each of the great ancient tongues.

Another cherished purpose, to which he often referred, closely connected with the intellectual and moral discipline of the college, was the more effective introduction of the study of the Bible, its poetry, its history and its doctrine, as a part of the regular curriculum. In many of the New England colleges, this good rule is so old, so inwrought into the general habit, that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. But here the study had been pursued but fitfully and occasionally. Under his influence and in accordance with his wishes, the Bible assumed a more prominent place, which it has ever since retained, for the advantage of all.

Dr. Fisher's views of the ends and methods of education are contained in several addresses which he delivered at different times, and which were afterwards collected and published. The very subjects of these are suggestive of broad and careful thought. They are such as "Collegiate education," "Theological training," "The three stages of education," (by which he discriminates child-life, the school and society,) "Female education," "The supremacy of mind," "Secular and christian civilization," "Natural science in its relations to art and theol-

ogy." I have recently re-read some of these addresses with much satisfaction and profit. They are eloquent and sound. The most complete of them, perhaps, is his inaugural, in which he endeavors to develop his idea of what he calls the American collegiate system.

In opposition to those who would substitute a technical for a liberal education, who would humor the special aptitudes developed in boyhood, aptitudes or inclinations which may after all be the result of accident, or of opportunities, to indulge which unchecked may only increase the natural disproportion between the faculties, he argues for a more generous culture. "We will teach the mathematician," he says, "how to master language; we will chasten the poetic imagination by the drill of abstract science; we will teach the man of verbal memory to go through difficult processes of reasoning; we will endeavor to cultivate in all the power of profound reflection and just discrimination, so that when they go forth into life, it will not be with a partial, a distorted, a one-sided intellect, a mind that has ability only in one line, and is prevented by its very training from advancing in any other. The system of collegiate discipline thus seeks to give breadth, solidity, proportion to all the powers. * * It leaves special attainments for after study—individual choice. It supposes that the Grecian, the mathematician, the rhetorician will be vastly more accomplished as scholars, and not at all less accomplished in the specialties they have chosen, by having thoroughly mastered the entire circle of college studies."

And then afterwards he goes on in a noble vein of generous thought, to portray the large effect of mastering the general elements of the whole system of truth by which we are surrounded. "From this so wide range of knowledge," he says, the student "not only acquires the materials of illustration, which contribute so powerfully to the success of the orator, but he finds these principles so allied to each other, that in whatever direction he pushes his investigations, spontaneously they send in their contributions. Lights flame out on every side. He stands in the centre. He concentrates their blaze into an intenser light upon the subject he is seeking to penetrate. They guide and illustrate the student's path. * * They

expand and ennoble the forensic efforts of the lawyer, by bringing the science which he wields for the cause of justice into sympathy and union with the profoundest principles of divine law. They give comprehension and elevation to the statesman, teaching him how human government hath its roots in a sublimer system of order, that hath its seat in the bosom of God."

And then he closes, in words which deserve to be repeated and remembered, with a noble summary of the importance of these institutions, and their claims on good men who wish well to the State: "These christian institutions," he says, "are not only tributary to the diffusion of a correct literature; they are equally essential to the advance of religion and the highest civilization. They go down in their influence through all society. They build up the common school; they rear the academy; they aid the press; they cultivate art; they refine the rude; they multiply the sources of wealth; they qualify men for positions of trust and influence; they stand among the foremost guardians of the liberties of the State, and impart to her the lustre of high intelligence. They minister at the bedside of the sick; plead in the forum of justice; utter their judgments on the bench; frame laws in the halls of State; proclaim the Gospel in their pulpit, and send forth their words of light and truth to delight, ennoble and mold the minds of the millions of our stirring population. They give us influence abroad; they rule on the sea and the land; and wherever the attribute of intelligence joined with just principles is mighty, there their works are seen, their influence felt. Shall such institutions as these fail of the appreciation and support of a noble people? Shall a State like this be a pensioner on others for that higher education which she seeks for her children? Will not her men of wealth covet for themselves the honor of building higher the walls of these institutions?"

Thus he spake in words which have gathered strength and not lost it; have assumed a profounder and more vital significance, and not one more superficial and trite, as the years have rolled away.

The whole address is an argument for breadth and loftiness of culture. The scheme which it defends and enforces is noble and generous to the last degree.

In 1862, in the midst of our civil war, occurred the semi-centennial celebration of the founding of Hamilton College, a memorable occasion, marking the age and progress of the institution as with a tall memorial shaft visible from afar. The address of Dr. Fisher is an admirable sketch of the college history, portraying in picturesque language the events of its early and later life, with enthusiasm and faith commending it to the good will of its alumni and friends, and predicting its future prosperity.

"It was," he said, "amid the smoke and thunder of war, that, fifty years ago, the foundations of this college were laid; and when they passed away, lo! on the hill-top had sprung into being a power mightier than the sword; more glorious than its triumphs. It is amid the heavier thunder and darker clouds of this dread conflict, when all that to us is most precious is in peril, that we celebrate our semi-centennial jubilee. This thunder shall roll away and the cloud disperse before the uprising patriotism of twenty millions of freemen, and the red right arm of the Lord of hosts."

That was indeed to the nation an hour of darkness, when the light was as darkness, but he never "bated one jot of heart or hope," nor failed to act up to his patriotic faith. The record of his words and efforts in those days of trial and triumph, I leave to one who shared them with him with full sympathy, proving his sincerity by laying the most costly of jewels on the altar of liberty.

After a service of eight years in Hamilton College, Dr. Fisher was solicited to accept again the position of pastor. The Westminster Church, of Utica, formerly in connection with the old school branch, but now willing, under his guidance, to change its ecclesiastical relations, cordially invited him to its pulpit. This position was undoubtedly more acceptable to him, more in accordance with the traditions of his early life, more nearly in the line of his previous studies and training and labors, than that which he had for some time occupied, and I think it must have been with something of the feeling of going to an old home, that he assumed again the charge of an important church. The work of a pastor and preacher was his most familiar work, and in entering upon it for the third time it was

with all the zeal of a neophyte, but with the wisdom and skill which come only from long and varied experience. With what forbearance and wisdom, with what sincerity and earnestness of purpose he endeavored to lead this people into their new ecclesiastical connection, others can recount better and more fitly than I. There must have been, of course, apprehension with some, doubt with others, as to the way in which they were going. But he wounded no feeling, violated no prejudices even, but with natural, and, as it were, inevitable motion guided you of your own will as it were, along the chosen path, of itself sufficient evidence, perhaps, that the real differences were small, and of little account, and those which had served to separate and alienate were chiefly imaginary, such as christian sympathy and charity could easily remove. He at once marked out fields of christian labor in building up a mission church, which now has outgrown its dependence, and in all ways which christian ingenuity could devise, sought to increase the efficiency of the church.

As a preacher, Dr. Fisher must be held to rank among the ablest of the Presbyterian body. With all that may be said by way of detracting criticism, it must still be allowed that our religious communities move along a pretty high level of intellectual experience and of religious feeling. To satisfy the reasonable demands of our congregations, requires a continuous intellectual exertion which, when we come to measure its force, is something startling. I do not wonder that so many poor sermons are preached, but rather that there are so many good ones. But Dr. Fisher moved above, far above the common level. Within the ample dome of that forehead, you felt, at sight, there dwelt a powerful brain. He brought to his discourses a mind well stored and well disciplined. There was a fullness and richness of thought which left you little or nothing in that direction to desire. An intellectual hearer could not fail to be attracted by his vigor. His style was often bold, sometimes picturesque, almost always clear and direct. His words were well chosen and exuberant. Thus full and weighty in matter, affluent in language, with no ambiguity in expression, fertile in imagery and illustration, with a voice clear and penetrating, and a manner somewhat authoritative, it is not

surprising that he was often sought for (no one, probably, within our circle more frequently) to address public bodies on important occasions, a duty which he always performed with dignity and to the satisfaction of his hearers. The subjects of his discourses were various, and, as his mind was mainly occupied with grand and lofty themes, so there was a certain nobleness, freedom and power of development, the natural and necessary fruit of his general studies and habits of thought.

He had a sanguine temperament, and as he saw clearly, so was hopeful, self-trustful and confident of success. This sometimes led him to mistaken judgments from giving too little weight to the opinions of others, and so, perhaps might be thought, a defect, but when duly tempered it is only a virtue, and a virtue greatly needed by him who would do much in this world where good is so constantly impeded, and obstacles heaped up in the way of truth and justice which would paralyse every effort of the merely cautious and prudent and wise. I should refer here to an opposite quality which rendered him, what you might at first hardly expect, a most valued and acceptable pastor, whose visits to the bedside of the sick, whose counsel and encouragement in hours of depression, calamity and doubt were always a joy and strength.

There was yet one other occasion not to be forgotten in which Dr. Fisher bore a prominent part in a great and memorable public service whose influence is incalculable; I mean the measures which led to the reünion of the separated branches of the Presbyterian Church.

There is no time to rehearse, even briefly, the events which tended to soften differences and to awaken the old brotherly love, to point out the methods by which great and good ends were attained, to name even the resting places where the hosts tarried by night in the wilderness, as they marched slowly toward each other, but as surely as the Hebrews were led by a divine hand in their weary wanderings till they were ushered into their fruitful inheritance, were these great christian bodies heaven impelled, divinely guided, led as if visibly by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. Contrary to the expectations of many good men, contrary to the predictions of many wise men, in spite of difficulties pronounced insuperable, in defiance of

probabilities clearly demonstrated, not by human skill, or wisdom, but by the spirit of God, the great end was reached. The rocks melted, the sea divided; every valley was exalted; every mountain and hill made low.

To all those preliminary movements which tended toward the happy result, Dr. Fisher gave all the strength of his influence, fully, unhesitatingly, without reserve. There was no object, perhaps, nearer his heart, none which more moved his enthusiasm. The disruption had taken place in 1837, just before he entered upon his ministry. His father was the first moderator of the New School Assembly. The doctrines and the men, the causes and the consequences, he had heard discussed from his boyhood, and now that these differences might be removed, harmony once more restored, confidence found in place of distrust, fraternal union instead of distant recognition or even repulsion, the angry waves all soothed and tranquil, his heart rose as on the wings of angels. He was one of the able committee of conference appointed by the two assemblies, which reported the plan of reünion in 1869. Nor does he seem to have doubted the beneficent result. In behalf of the joint committee, he proposed the resolution for raising \$1,000,000, immediately afterward raised to \$5,000,000, as a memorial fund. His last work to which he gave himself with all the confidence and enthusiasm of his nature was to prepare a paper for the General Assembly of 1870, an assembly which he was never to see. If, in his eagerness for this, he forgot his own injunctions, if he forgot the need of rest and recreation, if, confident in his own strength, he tasked yet again his overwrought brain, if he failed to recognize the premonitions of nature, if he violated the spirit of his own words, that "the finest intellectual culture is dearly bought at the cost of shattered nerves and a broken constitution," it was, after all, in the spirit of a noble, generous and fervent devotion to the great ends of the kingdom of Christ.

Some other things might have been set down. Some other characteristics portrayed, the inner and spiritual life opened somewhat to our reverent contemplation, but that it more fitly belongs to other lips and hands.

The lessons of a noble and faithful life, whose last years were spent among us, are patent to us all. Excellences which we see we may try to imitate, defects, to avoid, but even to recognize and acknowledge the truly good and great is itself a step toward the good.

Happy for us if each, as the shadows lengthen, are filled with the hope which sustained him, and, as the evening draws on, can as serenely give up our account for the day's work, feeling that it has been faithfully done.

ADDRESS BY HON. WM. J. BACON:

When that eminent and every way remarkable man, the first president of Hamilton College, was prematurely called away from the position he had just begun to illustrate and adorn, a service like that in which we are now engaged, was observed in honor of his memory. On that occasion the thoughts of the assembly were led by that sainted man, Dr. Asahel S. Norton, long the honored and venerable pastor of the then Congregational Church, in Clinton. The tradition is that when he rose to address the congregation, he burst forth in the affecting and passionate utterance of King David when, in lamenting the untimely death of Abner, he exclaimed: "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

I know not how more appropriately I can express the conviction of my own mind, or more fairly interpret yours, than to repeat those words which, nearly four years ago, spontaneously rose to my lips when, as by a lightning flash out of a clear sky, that equally eminent, in some respects, more remarkable man, Samuel Ware Fisher, was, by a mysterious providence, removed from the sphere of his influence and the seat of his power. A prince he was, not by virtue of any patent of nobility bestowed by an earthly monarch, but by the direct gift of Heaven with the royal signet of the giver legibly impressed thereon; a prince in intellect, a prince in large and liberal culture, but over and above all, a prince in active sympathies, warm affections, and a great human heart going out impulsively toward all that pertained to man, however lowly, or sin-stained, or despised, and devoting his best powers and faculties to the good of the world and the glory of God. It was in the practical and persistent consecration of the gifts and

graces with which he was endowed to these large and beneficent ends, that he earned the title, secured the honors and obtained the rewards of a prince and a great man in Israel.

It is not needful, nor would it be appropriate for me to narrate the personal history, or sketch the public career of Dr. Fisher. That has already been amply done by other and abler hands. I first made his acquaintance in connection with his accession to the office of president of Hamilton College. I well remember the first interview I had with him after his arrival in Clinton. His reception of me, until then an entire stranger to him, was warm and cordial in the extreme; and upon the instant there sprung up between us a personal attachment that was not only never interrupted by even a momentary break, but which on my part grew in strength and constancy up to the hour when last I felt the warm pressure of his hand, and caught the parting accents of his faltering lips.

Whatever may be thought or said, perchance of the minor defects of his administration of the presidency of the college, it can not be questioned, I think, that as an instructor in those branches to which his thoughts and studies specially inclined him, he was eminently successful in awakening interest, evoking investigation, and impressing his own well-balanced and matured convictions upon the minds and hearts of those he instructed. He recognized, indeed, no royal road to knowledge—"ad astra per aspera" being ever his motto; but he not unfrequently by affluent diction and impassioned thought, conducted his scholars through many a flowery field to the temple of science, and it was ever a delight and a refreshment to him when his pathway led him and his companions "through green pastures and beside the still waters" where his Master's feet had led the way.

It is impossible, however, that there can be any divided opinions in respect to the character, as it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the work he accomplished for Hamilton College in the community at large, and outside of and beyond her walls. The inaugural address which he delivered upon his induction to the presidency, struck the key note of the system upon which he proposed to conduct the college.

It was, in substance, the realization of the idea which was shadowed forth by the venerable and honored founder of the institution, the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, when he declared that his hope was that the college might, "under the smiles of the God of wisdom, prove an eminent means of diffusing useful knowledge, enlarging the bounds of human happiness, and aiding the reign of virtue, and the kingdom of the blessed Redeemer." He subsequently prepared an exhaustive essay and an eloquent plea for christian education, which he delivered at various places with great acceptance and with most marked and beneficent results in enlightening the public mind and advancing the prosperity of the college. It was a work which had been long overlooked amid other duties and labors that seemed more pressing, but the time had come for its full presentation, and a happy Providence led the friends of the college to the selection of the man of all others, perhaps, most competent to meet the exigency and discharge the trust. And so faithfully was it executed, that no occasion has since arisen, or probably will arise, that will require its repetition.

In administering the affairs of the college, outside of the course of instruction and discipline, Dr. Fisher had the full coöperation of the Board of Trustees, of which he was a member, and discharged even more than his share of those labors which devolved upon them. There were days of anxious thought and deliberation; the solving of financial problems always pressing; the organization of larger means of instruction and facilities, not only for diffusing useful knowledge, but for introducing a higher culture, to which he gave the best faculties of his mind, and labored with a diligence unappalled by obstacles, and a courage and persistency that would never accept defeat.

Nor was it to the cares and duties pertaining to his high office, that he alone restricted himself. He was alive to every interest that affected society, his fellow men, and above all his country, which he loved with an almost passionate devotion, but at the same time with a discriminating patriotism. Hence it followed, as naturally as the night the day, the effect the cause, that when the first faint symptom of rebellion arrested attention, his quick ear and his watchful spirit caught the

alarm, and when the overt act of treason was perpetrated, he asked no time for deliberation, he paltered not with timorous pleas for compromise, but instantly sprang into the arena, where, with vigorous pen and eloquent tongue, as well as with drawn sword, the great cause was to be defended. And well and nobly did he defend it. If there was a faint heart that needed strengthening, he stimulated and encouraged it, a doubting and vacillating spirit he rallied and rebuked it, a call to duty his voice was heard above the pleadings for ease and exemption, summoning to the sacrifice. With all that stood for the government, the union, for liberty and law, he stood. For all that fell, martyrs to what he deemed a holy cause, he mourned, and with survivors mingled tears and congratulations. How grateful and how sustaining these were, I had full occasion to know. Although the shafts of death fell thick and fast among the households of those he loved, and his kind heart keenly felt and warmly sympathized with the bereaved, he still had words of encouragement and strength for them, and not for a moment did he surrender his faith in the final triumph of his country's cause. And when the victory was won, the union preserved, rebellion forever crushed, and freedom, blessed, blood-bought freedom, proclaimed for four millions of the down-trodden and the enslaved, he rejoiced with exceeding great joy, even as if he had seen in vision the coming of millennial day. None but those who were associated with him, and who witnessed them, can fully appreciate the amount and extent of the labors he performed on behalf of the great cause, for to that cause he gave the choicest treasures of his intellect, and the warmest impulses of his heart.

The special mission to which Dr. Fisher was called, and to which he devoted the best years of his life, was beyond all question the ministry. To this he felt himself impelled by a spontaneous choice and an early consecration, and for the fulfillment of this mission he had peculiar gifts and adaptations. I well remember in conversation with a distinguished and venerable divine at Cleveland, the Rev. Dr. Aikin, formerly of this city, in view of the then recent election of Dr. Fisher to the presidency of Hamilton College, that he expressed the very highest opinion of his power as a preacher of the Gospel.

“Indeed,” said he, “taking him for all in all, I consider him in the front rank not only, but as standing at the head of the American pulpit.” I thought at the time that personal partiality had unconsciously influenced this judgment, but I had occasion afterward deliberately to weigh this estimate, and to arrive substantially at the same conclusion. Comparing him with some other divines and pulpit orators of our day, he may be deemed inferior in some one or more special endowments. He had not, it may be conceded, to the same degree, the accurate analysis, the clear method, and the massive strength of Dr. John Hall, nor the intellectual intuition, or simple, yet profound, metaphysical discrimination of President Hopkins; neither was he gifted with the wonderful versatility, the keen insight and the torrent-like impetuosity of Beecher; nor could he, perhaps, for a series of years, by winning and attractive simplicity, by pungent personal appeal, by the magnetism of eye and gesture, and clarion voice, hold, as Spurgeon does, six thousand auditors spell-bound from Sabbath to Sabbath.

Still, as I have said, he had gifts and adaptations that well fitted him for his great work, and that are not often as largely combined in one character. Although not of an imposing person, there was something indescribably attractive, and even commanding in his presence. The dome of thought and reflection was high and broad and strongly developed; his eye was both tender and expressive; the tones of his voice, if not in the highest sense musical, were well modulated and adapted to announce fittingly the most solemn truth and express the most soul-subduing tenderness, and when roused by strong emotion he would pour forth from a full mind and a warm heart, a tide of eloquent speech that would bear his hearers away as with the sweep and rush of mighty waters. His nature was strongly emotional, and so deeply did he feel the pressure of his great commission that it was seldom he could conclude a discourse without a free flow of tears. He well understood and appreciated the maxim of the Roman satirist:

“ Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi,”

He that would arouse emotion in his auditors must himself first “ope the fount of sympathetic tears.” There was no his-

trionism in this, neither the trick of the stage, nor the simulation of sensibility. It was the expression of genuine feeling inherent in his constitutional organization, and awakened by his estimate of the momentous nature of the message he was commissioned to deliver. His distinguished predecessor, Dr. Backus, had in this respect the same temperament, and exhibited uniformly the same emotion. It is related of him that on one occasion, when he wept copiously he suddenly stopped and said, "Brethren, I beg pardon, for these tears, I could not help weeping, but there's no religion in it." It may indeed be true that logically speaking, there is no religion in mere tears, but when they are the expression of genuine sensibility, there is something near akin to it. Behind and beneath such tears there is a great and tender human heart that keenly feels the danger attending a thoughtless mind, a torpid conscience and an untroubled soul, and would pour out the wealth of its resources and the gushing tenderness of its nature to rouse the unthinking, awake the dormant, and startle into life and action the secure and undisturbed. No man could ever listen to Dr. Fisher when engaged upon those great themes with which his soul was filled, without a persuasion that he spoke from absolute conviction of the truth and an overwhelming sense of the importance of the message he bore as an ambassador of Christ and a "legate of the skies." His ordinary discourses were full of thought as well as of feeling. Those in this congregation who heard the course of sermons on the "Epistle to the Hebrews," and on the "Life of Christ," need not be told that a more remarkable series of discourses has seldom been heard from an American pulpit.

There were public occasions also when he discussed great topics with a fullness and a power that left nothing more to be said, and with results of conviction in the minds of his auditors that nothing could shake, nothing even disturb. There are several discourses of Dr. Fisher that would alone make a distinguished reputation for any man, and that are to be ranked among the highest efforts of the pulpit of his day. What he was in private life, in the domestic circle, and in the quieter walks of his pastoral office, I need not dwell upon. The memory of all he was to them is written in the loving hearts, and enshrined in

the unfading memories of the kindred by whom he was cherished, and the people to whom he ministered.

Such, most imperfectly, and in the merest outline sketched, was Dr. Samuel Ware Fisher up to the day and hour, when, at the flood-tide of his influence, and apparently in the meridian fullness of his intellectual and moral powers, he was, by the mysterious stroke of an unseen hand, suddenly struck down, leaving him with the bounding pulse of life faintly fluttering, the bright eye dimmed, the eloquent tongue mute or incoherent. His half executed plans, his high expectations, his large purposes arrested, nothing remained for him but with childlike trust and sweet patience to await the final summons which now has come in kindness to call him home. The temporary torpor of his faculties has been at once dispelled, the clouds and the shadows that gathered about his setting sun have all been dissipated, the darkness has passed and light perennial and eternal beams on him, for in his own beautiful words: "Another teacher infinitely wise and good is now leading him up the heights of knowledge, and in a moment he has learned more than men on earth can ever know."

Wise instructor, faithful friend, true patriot, loving disciple of thy Master, earnest and eloquent proclaimer of the truth, farewell! Thou hast left this "bank and shoal of time," so unsatisfying, so disappointing, even in its best estate, and art safely landed on the eternal shore. Thy mental vision, so mysteriously veiled, has been unsealed "at the fountain of heavenly radiance;" thine eye undimmed, thine intellect unclouded, thy tongue unfettered, thou hast passed beyond the dim mists of earth into the clear light of heaven, and, walking in that illumination,

"Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea."

thou shalt, with the redeemed hosts, the many called to glory through thy instrumentality, dwell in the presence and in the companionship of thy Lord, to go no more out forever.

ADDRESS BY REV. T. J. BROWN.

"The highest honor of Dr. Fisher's life came to him with the presidency of Hamilton College. But the greatest delight and the most solid satisfaction were connected with his pastorates, in West Bloomfield, N. J., Albany, Cincinnati and Utica. He appreciated the honor, and felt always a just pride in having presided through so many years and with such marked acceptance and success over a seat of learning so ancient and so honorable. And the years spent there were eminently happy ones as well as useful; but there was a relish for him in pulpit and parish work, in all that constitutes the office of a pastor, such as was afforded him in no other sphere. He ever spoke of the college with warm affection, and of his labors there with a degree of thankful satisfaction, but when he left them that he might assume again, after so long an interruption, the pastoral charge, it was with a joy and an alacrity that renewed his youth and made him, as he himself expressed it, "as happy as a child."

Entering in such a spirit upon what he believed would be, and, indeed, intended *should* be the last work of his life, his success was assured. He came at the close of an eminently successful pastorate—that of Rev. Dr. Samuel M. Campbell, now of Rochester—and found the church thoroughly harmonious and active. But he infused into it new life and spirit, strengthening the cords of fellowship already strong, and at once starting the church upon a career of enterprising usefulness far surpassing anything it had already attained to.

Dr. Fisher was no stranger either to Westminster Church or the city of Utica, when he came to settle here. He had

already made full proof of his ministry in our midst. Almost every church in the city had had experience of his eloquence as a preacher. And this reputation which he had thus already made for himself suffered no diminution, but rather was heightened and brightened by the continuous effort of a settled pastorate. It was so genuine and solid that it grew in estimation the more closely it was inspected. To the end he was a master of pulpit eloquence.

I need not attempt here any analysis, or even an estimate of his power. That has been done, and done most admirably, this evening, and this too is the very spot where he has held many a listening audience hanging upon his lips, delighted and instructed by his manly and vigorous oratory. It was such, I may say, however, that the impress of it on the minds of this people, at least, is not yet even dimmed, and it will never be entirely effaced. He preached, for most part, the grand, immortal truths most intimately relating to man's salvation through Christ, and his sermons, usually flowed in a stream of mingled argument and pathos, bearing with it equally the understanding and the affection of his hearers. His ardor kindled as he advanced, and increasing conviction went along with his increasing energy. There was at the same time a perspicuity, and a simplicity that adapted his style to all classes and capacities of hearers and made him attractive to all. He was genuinely popular. But in an especial degree, and to a most notable extent, he attracted men of trained mind and thoughtful habit. Not a few are the men, prominent in this community, both in the church and out of the church, who to this day bear willing and thankful testimony to the mastery that Dr. Fisher attained over their minds and hearts to their present advantage and their eternal good.

That he usually "was long preaching," and often far overstepped the limit which modern patience, or impatience, has set to the length of a sermon, was owing in part to the fact that he was never content to merely suggest a thought; he must needs elaborate it, trace all its bearings and display its various relations; exhibit it in all its more delicate and subtle shade of meaning. This gave to his sermons unusual volume, but also great completeness.

But not in the pulpit only did he shine. His reputation as a preacher was, as I have said, already established of old when he came to Utica. And so unusually is marked excellence as a preacher, combined with an equal excellence as a pastor, that I think I may say there would have been no disappointment experienced by Westminster Church if Dr. Fisher had proved comparatively inefficient in pastoral work. His recent life as a scholar and teacher might seem to have unfitted him for this kind of effort. Certainly no large expectations were at all generally entertained in this direction. Nevertheless, he did prove to be an exceptionally good pastor. He gave living demonstration that one man may be both great preacher and good pastor. In all the families that made up his congregation, his name is still a household word. He is mentioned everywhere throughout the parish almost as though he had been an immediate member of each household, and the very children, "the chicks," as he used to call them, hold him in loving remembrance. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that his social and pastoral virtues were not less distinguished than his talents as a preacher. Carrying everywhere an atmosphere of cheerfulness and sunshine, no one ever met him in social life without feeling the charm of his manners and conversation. Slow to condemn and quick to sympathize, shrinking instinctively from wounding the feelings of any and prompt in all offices of kindness and love, he won the hearts of his people to a most singular degree. Never was any pastor more universally beloved. The minister most covetous of the love of his people might well be satisfied with the measure of affection accorded to Dr. Fisher.

Of this attachment he received numerous proofs and tokens. One of them may be mentioned here. Weeks before the blow fell which so suddenly prostrated him, the quick eye of love detected the inroads being made upon his health by overwork. Straightway an immediate rest was urged upon him, and at his disposal were placed a long vacation and the funds that would enable him to spend it in a trip to California. He appreciated the kindness and was very grateful, but so pressing seemed the work then in hand that he could not be persuaded to rest at once. He fixed a date, however, only about three weeks dis-

tant. But before it came the blow had fallen, and a forced rest was upon him, a vacation which will now never know any return to labor.

Westminster Church by no means monopolized his labors. He was in demand everywhere and made it a point to decline no opportunity for usefulness.

The charitable institutions of this city all acknowledge themselves his debtors. Every new scheme of benevolence enlisted his sympathy, and his sympathy was more than a sentiment; it meant an effort either by voice or by pen. His wisdom helped to guide and his spirit to animate many an enterprise of public utility. His attendance upon all ministerial meetings, especially upon meetings of synod and presbytery, was so constant and punctual as to become proverbial. And no man took a deeper interest in the general state of the church and the propagation of the gospel abroad. The future glory of Christ's kingdom and the best means of promoting it were favorite themes with him; they found place always in his thoughts and his prayers. Never was he more in his element than when devising plans for its extension, at home or abroad. He took also a lively interest in the temperance cause. It drew forth some of his ablest pulpit efforts. And believing that this cause should find its most efficient supporters among the members of our christian churches, he was chiefly instrumental in organizing a Church Temperance Society, embracing the different churches of the city. One of his last plans of usefulness here was the formation of a Parish Temperance Society for the children and youth of this church.

His pastorate was a great success. The effects of his ministry were striking and visible. He kindled an enthusiasm for home evangelization, identifying himself with the mission school efforts in which the church was already engaged, and inciting it to further ventures in the same direction. No record of his life could be complete without special mention of this. He thought, and planned, and labored personally for her missions as for the mother church. The East Utica Mission—now grown to a prosperous Church, self-supporting, and contributing, in its turn, to the support of others—was a special object of both pride and interest to him.

Moreover, he developed such a spirit of giving among the people as soon put the church in the front rank of contributors to all our boards. But best of all he won souls to Christ. How many will only be made known by the disclosures of the last day; but seldom, if ever, did a communion occasion come round without some additions being made by profession of faith, and the number added on one such occasion alone was not less than fifty-seven. And the fruit was not all borne during his ministry. Of the large accessions made during the first two years of his successor's pastorate, not a few are directly traceable to the labors of Dr. Fisher—labors that perhaps to him had seemed barren and lost. His career closed at the very height of his usefulness. His sun never went down. It seemed rather to stop midway in its course, a great cloud overshadowing it in the very midst of its meridian splendors. Through three weary years he cherished the hope of restoration, then that dimmed and died out, but his *faith* never failed him. To the last he gave frequent expression to his unfaltering trust in God. Witness the scene about his family altar on the very morning before his death. He led the devotions, as was his wont, even through all his sickness. He selected the hymn, and requested that it should be sung to "Jewett," the tune with which it was familiarly associated in their minds. He joined, as best he could, in the singing of it, and was visibly affected by its sentiment. The hymn tells the story of his submissive faith. It was:

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
 However dark it be!
 Lead me by Thine own hand:
 Choose out the path for me.
 I dare not choose my lot;
 I would not, if I might;
 Choose Thou for me, my God,
 So shall I walk aright.

"The kingdom that I seek
 Is Thine; so let the way
 That leads to it be Thine,
 Else I must surely stray.
 Take Thou my cup, and it
 With joy or sorrow fill
 As best to Thee may seem:
 Choose Thou my good and ill."

Of five pastors who have filled this pulpit, he is the first to enter into rest.

He is not dead, but only sleeping. God giveth His beloved sleep, not death,—sleeping that blessed sleep that carries with it the promise of a more blessed awakening, the promise of renewed and higher activity, by and by. We will not think of him as dead. We will not think of those great powers with which he used so to move upon hearts and minds as being forever hereafter unused. We will think rather of a period put to all weariness, and fevered activity, and toil too great for the strength, by a calm of blessed sleep, and that to the end that the warm heart and brilliant mind, many powers of which, doubtless, lay undeveloped and undreamed of, may rise hereafter to a fuller, nobler, holier service before the throne of God and the Lamb.

At the conclusion of his discourse, Mr. Brown gave out the following hymn, remarking that he did so because it was the last hymn ever given out from the pulpit of Westminster church by Dr. Fisher. It was given out on Sabbath evening, the 8th of May, 1870:

“There is a blessed home
 Beyond this land of woe,
 Where trials never come,
 Nor tears of sorrow flow;
 Where faith is lost in sight
 And patient hope is crowned,
 And everlasting light
 Its glory throws around.

“Look up ye saints of God!
 Nor fear to tread below
 The path your Saviour trod
 Of daily toil and woe;
 Wait but a little while
 In uncomplaining love;
 His own most gracious smile
 Shall welcome you above.”

Appendix.

FROM PROF. HENRY A. NELSON, D. D.

Rev. Dr. Nelson writes to the New York *Evangelist* as follows :

The funeral services have been attended to-day, January 21, at his residence, and at the Presbyterian Church on College Hill. The officiating ministers were Rev. Wm. A. Bosworth, pastor of that church; Rev. T. H. Skinner, D. D., of the Second Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati; Rev. Hugh Smythe, of the Seventh Church, and Professors Smith and Nelson, of Lane Seminary. The bearers were the elders of the Second Church and Mr. Lupton and Mr. Huntington—members of it—all whom had known and loved Dr. Fisher as their pastor.

Prof. Smith appropriately alluded to the prominent incidents of Dr. Fisher's life down to the time of his removal from Cincinnati. He abstained from eulogy, as had been desired, "by those who loved him more tenderly than any others;" but he recalled some pleasant and comforting reminiscences. Associating him, in his recollection, with the late Dr. D. Howe Allen, he remarked: "They were men altogether similar in faith and love," and "the leading power in the life-work of each was love, pervaded, hallowed, consecrated by his faith in Christ." He recalled Dr. Allen's expression concerning Dr. Fisher, at the time of his call from Albany to Cincinnati—"he is a man of God who will preach, from conviction, the simple gospel of Christ." Dr. Smith fitly appealed to those who enjoyed his ministry here, for the correctness of Dr. Allen's judgment.

Speaking again of Dr. Allen and Dr. Fisher, he said: "Both these honored servants of Christ were alike in physical organization, slight in figure, John-like in benignity of aspect, with an almost feminine grace in the contour of his head and face, and in ease and dignity of movement. Perhaps in nervous organization Dr. Fisher was the more delicate of the two, as in temperament he was the more excitable and enthusiastic, and so yielded a year or two sooner to the

assaults of that fearful disorder which of late years has prostrated so many of our most highly gifted men."

Dr. Smith also recalled an expression which he remembered to have been made by Dr. Fisher, in a prayer at the funeral of Rev. D. C. Lansing, D. D., who closed his eminently useful life on Walnut Hills. That memorable expression was "We thank Thee, O God, that we may die." How expressive of his faith and hope concerning "the life everlasting."

The writer of this stated that his personal acquaintance with Dr. Fisher began just as he was leaving Cincinnati, and he adverted to a number of incidents illustrating Dr. Fisher's genial and amiable disposition, and the solid christian manliness which no less evidently belonged to his character. As an alumnus of Hamilton College, he testified to the high value of Dr. Fisher's services in that institution, in bringing it into closer and more nutritious connection than it had had before with the churches, and the active christian life of western New York. He spoke also of Dr. Fisher's wise earnestness in giving the Bible the high place which it deserves in the college course of instruction.

He alluded to the eminent part which Dr. Fisher had in the reünion of the Presbyterian church, and the sorrow felt in the general assembly of 1870, of which he should have been a conspicuous member, at the news of his then recent prostration. He also gave the testimony of Rev. Mr. Bosworth, to the beautiful christian spirit in which Dr. Fisher has borne his heavy affliction, during these last three years at College Hill.

FROM CINCINNATI, O.

At a meeting of the Session of the Second Presbyterian Church, held March 2, 1874, the following memorial record of the life and services of the Rev. Samuel W. Fisher, deceased, formerly a pastor of that church, was ordered to be spread upon the minutes and a copy of the same to be furnished by the clerk to the widow of Dr. Fisher.

The Rev. Samuel W. Fisher, D. D., formerly pastor of this church, died suddenly at his residence at College Hill, near this city, on the

18th of January, 1874. He was born in Massachusetts, April 4th, 1814, was graduated at Yale College, and pursued the study of Divinity at Princeton and Union Theological Seminaries.

He was elected pastor of this church in October, 1846, entered on the duties of the service in April, 1847, and so continued until July, 1858, when he resigned to assume the duties of President of Hamilton College, N. Y. His ministry in this church was eminently successful—one hundred and seventy-eight persons having been added to the church by profession and two hundred and forty-eight by letter during the eleven years of his pastorate.

Dr. Fisher was a man of highly cultivated intellect and classic taste, of earnest and devoted piety, genial, affable and greatly beloved in his social relations. His influence reached far beyond the limits of this church and city. He was greatly esteemed throughout the Presbyterian Church, and he received from the General Assembly the highest expression of their confidence and esteem, being selected as their Moderator in the year 1857; and in the reünion of the two branches of the church he was relied upon as among the most judicious counselors in the very delicate and difficult questions that impeded its progress and threatened to prevent its consummation.

His character was a rare combination of mildness and energy. Thus quietly operating, he put in motion various plans and organizations in the church which resulted in great and lasting usefulness. Among them was the Young Men's Home Missionary Society, so successful in establishing Sabbath Schools, providing for vacant churches and other works of a similar character. He awakened an unusual interest in Foreign Missions, by appointing different members of the church to make reports at the monthly concerts, on the condition of the important foreign stations. He held regular meetings at his own house of the younger members of the church for devotion, consultation and advice. In numerous ways he was constantly leading on the church in matters of christian enterprise.

Regarding Dr. Fisher's pastorate as one of great usefulness to our church, the session wish to put on their records this expression of their great regard for the man, their high estimation of his services, and also to express their deep sorrow at his loss and their deep sympathy with his widow and children in their bereavement.

BY ORDER OF THE SESSION,

J. BURNET, JR., *Clerk.*

FROM MONTCLAIR, N. J.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE SESSION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF MONTCLAIR, N. J.

Inasmuch as tidings have reached us of the departure from this life of Rev. Samuel W. Fisher, D. D., therefore we, the Session of the Presbyterian Church of Montclair, N. J., do hereby

Resolve, That we desire to express the loving and grateful regard in which his memory is cherished among us as the first pastor of this church. Coming here in the beginning of his ministry, he manifested that fervent zeal and unremitting labor, which have ever made his life so full of usefulness and honor. During his ministry of a little more than four years in this place, his fidelity was crowned with two revivals of religion. We bless the Lord of the harvest for the tokens of his favor thus early given him as well as for all the happy results which have attended his earnest and devoted life. He being dead yet speaketh; and we gratefully remember him as one who once had the rule over us, who preached to us the word of life and whose faith we desire to follow, considering the end of his conversation.

To the grace of the Holy Comforter do we commend those from whom the husband and father has been taken away, that he might be forever with the Lord.

Resolved, That these resolutions be entered on the records of the Session and that a copy be sent to the family of Rev. Dr. Fisher, and also to the New York *Evangelist*.

BY ORDER OF THE SESSION,

J. ROMEYN BERRY, *Moderator*.

Montclair, Jan. 26, 1874.

FROM HAMILTON COLLEGE.

At a called meeting of the Faculty of Hamilton College, held in the Library, January 19, 1874, President Brown announced the sudden death of Dr. Samuel W. Fisher, and the following resolutions were reported by Professor North, and unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That the death of Dr. Samuel W. Fisher, for eight years President of Hamilton College, calls upon us to make grateful mention of his varied and most valuable services, during a critical

period of its history, in presenting with fervid and convincing eloquence its claims and needs as a seat of higher christian learning, in filling one of its chairs of instruction, in adding largely to its resources, in broadening its field of influence and in making it more fruitful in the work of ministerial education.

Resolved, That we tender our christian sympathy to the family of Doctor Fisher in their great bereavement and sorrow, while we rejoice with them in the past beneficent activities of the earthly life now renewed and made perfect in the life eternal.

Resolved, That President Brown be requested to deliver a Memorial Discourse on the life and services of President Fisher, in the chapel of the college on a day to be named hereafter.

FROM MINNESOTA.

At a meeting of the college alumni of Minnesota, held at St. Paul, Jany. 30th, 1874, there were present the following graduates of Hamilton College: Hon. H. L. Moss, Rev. H. N. Payne, M. G. Willard, James W. Lawrence, Henry M. Knox, H. G. Butler and Rev. David R. Breed. The following resolutions, introduced by Rev. H. N. Payne, were by them unanimously adopted:

Whereas, It has pleased God to take to himself, Rev. Samuel W. Fisher, D. D., LL. D., late president of Hamilton College, and

Whereas, We, of the Minnesota alumni of said college, assembled this day in St. Paul, desire to give some fitting expression of our feelings in connection therewith, therefore be it

Resolved, That in the disease and death which have removed this servant of God at the time when his ripened experience and widely extended usefulness gave greatest opportunity for good, we recognize the hand of One whose ways are hid from the eyes of men, but whose acts are ever directed by Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love.

Resolved, That in the death of Dr. Fisher, christian learning has lost an able advocate, the church a faithful servant, the evangelical pulpit a most able and eloquent preacher and the cause of Christ a powerful and devoted friend.

Resolved, That while we in common with many others, in this and other lands, sympathize with his family and friends in their great sorrow and loss—largely our own—we rejoice in that our beloved teacher, counselor and friend has already entered on his great reward.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published in the *Interior, Evangelist* and *Hamilton Literary Monthly*, and that a copy be transmitted to his son, the Rev. S. J. Fisher, and his family in Cincinnati.

DAVID R. BREED, *Chn.*

FROM PROF. E. A. HUNTINGTON, D. D.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AUBURN, N. Y., Jan. 27, 1874.

Dear MRS. FISHER: It would be cruel to burden you with many words in the time of your great sorrow. But we may assure you of our deep, heart-felt sympathy with you and your dear family. We share your grief, and earnestly pray for your support and consolation, as also for your "profit" in "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," according to the gracious design of "the Father of spirits," that every chastisement of His hand may contribute to make you "partakers of His holiness."

It is very sad to me to think that my nearest neighbor in the Presbyterian ministry in Albany, is called away, and doubly sad that he and Dr. Pohlman, who were settled so early at the same time in Albany, should be taken within two or three days of each other.

Your lamented husband did a great work and did it well. His honored name will not be forgotten on earth, and he has already entered upon his reward in heaven.

With affectionate regards to the sons and daughter, we are,

Yours very affectionately,

MR. AND MRS. E. A. HUNTINGTON.

FROM HON. O. S. WILLIAMS, LL. D.

CLINTON, January 24, 1874.

My Dear MRS. FISHER: I received with profound grief the announcement of the sudden death of Dr. Fisher, and if it was an event not entirely unexpected, I was yet by no means prepared for its so early occurrence, for I had never quite abandoned the hope that he would be restored, in a reasonable degree at least, to his former health and activity.

The end has come, and nothing that I can say will lighten the blow, which has fallen upon you and your family, and still I desire to express in these few words, my sincere sympathy with you, in this your deep affliction.

My relations with Dr. Fisher, especially while he was president of the college, were quite familiar, and I may almost say intimate, and

he was one of the men that I learned to admire and honor and love.

The service which he rendered to the college, in a trying period of its history, was priceless, and the influences for good which he here put in motion, will be remembered and felt for years and years to come.

A solemn Memorial service is to be held in the college chapel on Thursday of next week, of which some account will be furnished you.

But, at present, I must not say more, and with my kindest regards to you and your family, in which Mrs. Williams joins,

I remain, very truly, your friend,

O. S. WILLIAMS.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

WESTMINSTER CHURCH, UTICA, N. Y.

BY THEODORE POMEROY.

The organization of the Westminster Church, in the city of Utica, seemed to be a necessity growing out of the somewhat peculiar and disturbed condition of church relations existing at that time. The fact of its organization was due rather to the appreciation of this condition, by persons residing abroad, than to any incipient measures to this end taken by those living in this community.

In Sept. 1843, Rev. Joshua H. McIlvaine, then preaching at Little Falls, N. Y., gave public notice that he would hold Sabbath services in the then unoccupied building now used as a place of worship by the Bleecker Street Baptist Church. Through the aid of Rev. Dr. Cuyler, of Philadelphia, he obtained the sum of \$200, with which to pay the rent for the first six months; the further sum of \$200 was raised by collections taken in the church for the rent of the rest of the year. The whole pecuniary responsibility of the transaction was assumed by Rev. Mr. McIlvaine: with the exception of Rev. Dr. Cuyler, no one had been consulted or advised with as to the expediency of engaging in this new church enterprise.

As soon as a congregation was gathered, a Sabbath school was started, which in less than two months numbered two hundred and fifty children and thirty teachers, which was superintended by Rev. Mr. McIlvaine, and by whom the necessary funds were raised, mostly from the teachers, to carry it on.

This Sabbath school at once became the principal matter of interest in the whole movement, and undoubtedly contributed more than anything else, to the ultimate establishment of the church itself. The congregation was large, but of a very mixed character; so much so, that it was not deemed prudent to attempt an organization for nearly eleven months. With the object in view of purging it of elements objectionable, and perhaps dangerous to its future peace and harmony, special and exciting topics were preached upon, which, having the desired effect, an organization was at length obtained.

The Board of Missions contributed \$400 to support the Rev. Mr. McIlvaine during the first year of his labors in this new field; at its close, and three months after its organization, the church was self-sustaining, and nothing was afterward received from the Board.

The services thus begun in September, 1843, were regularly continued with increasing success, until July 23, 1844, when "The Westminster Presbyterian Society of Utica," was formally organized with sixty-one persons for its membership, and with the installation of Rev. Mr. McIlvaine as its pastor. Soon after this, the church building owned by the Universalist Society, on Devereux street, was purchased and immediately occupied by this new church and congregation. On September 3d, 1847, the connection between pastor and people was terminated by the resignation of Rev. Mr. McIlvaine.

It is not too much to say, that the permanent success of an enterprise like this, depended very greatly upon the character, ability and purpose of the pastor, whose moulding hand should first undertake the work of bringing into practical shape and union, the diversified and disaffected elements that were scattered over this community. Among those ready to join in a new church organization were many persons of intellectual ability, wealth and social influence: while such men gave especial prominence to this new enterprise, yet it is easy to see that the pastor fitted successfully to conduct such a movement, must himself be able to command a general confidence, admiration and respect.

Rev. Mr. McIlvaine was a young preacher, of great personal energy, and independence of character; possessing, to a marked

degree, originality of thought, fine mental power, and an accurate and logical method, joined with an earnestness and enthusiasm well fitted to win all classes of hearers. Adapting himself to the exigencies of his position, he exhibited great versatility in his preaching; at one time by addressing the intellectual faculties of his audience, and at another by charming their imagination, he became an equal favorite among both the older and younger portions of his increasing congregation. But whatever the means he chose to employ, he never lost sight of teaching and enforcing that great truth which, lying at the foundation of religion itself, he sought also to make the corner-stone of this church he was sent to plant and develop, during the years of its early and perilous infancy.

Rev. Dr. McIlvaine, since his connection with Westminster Church, has occupied the position of pastor in the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester; that of Professor at Princeton College, and is now settled over one of the largest and most flourishing churches in Newark, New Jersey.

The Rev. H. S. Dickson, of Philadelphia, was chosen the second pastor of this church; entering upon his duties August 1st, 1848, he was installed October 31st, in the same year. The membership at this time was about one hundred. The period of his pastorate was an eventful one. The church building on Devereux street was materially enlarged and improved in 1849; a few years later, it was totally destroyed by fire, leaving his congregation without a place for worship. During the temporary occupation of the Court House for Sabbath and other services, the active business qualifications of the Rev. Mr. Dickson were employed in devising and executing plans for the erection of its present beautiful church building at the head of Washington street, which was completed and occupied early in 1855. This was a great undertaking for this new, and as respects numbers, comparatively feeble church. But by the persistence and enthusiasm of both pastor and people, all difficulties were overcome, and the sum of nearly \$35,000 was provided with which to purchase the site and erect this new place of worship.

During the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Dickson, the membership of the church was more than doubled, and those great material

advantages acquired which enabled it to fill an important and influential position as one of the leading religious organizations of this city and vicinity. If the Westminster church was fortunate in securing for its first pastor, those eminently characteristic qualifications needed for planting a vigorous church organization, it was none the less fortunate in securing as his successor, one possessing those practical business abilities, which enabled him, out of disaster, to lead his people into the possession of the commodious and beautiful edifice they now occupy as the place for their worship.

During a pastorate of about ten years of active and practical labor, in which period Dr. Dickson had endeared himself to all, by his kindly social and christian graces, he offered his resignation, which was most reluctantly accepted.

After concluding a pastorate of a few years at Lewisburg, Pa., Dr. Dickson retired from the active duties of his profession, but not from a participation in his high privilege of preaching the gospel of Christ, as occasion offers, in some of the churches of Philadelphia, the city of his present residence.

In June, 1858, the Rev. Samuel M. Campbell was elected the third pastor, and duly installed over a church having a membership of about two hundred and thirty. In many respects totally unlike either of his predecessors, he was inferior to neither in personal character or mental ability. A man of independent, earnest and intense convictions, with courage to follow wherever they should lead him, he did not fail to take an advanced position on all the great questions of reform; and especially upon the subject of slavery, then agitating the communities and the churches, he left none to infer upon what ground he stood. It is given to but few men to concentrate thought with such logical precision and conciseness of statement.

During his pastorate, the church was welded together and made more homogeneous. Although antagonisms are likely to be developed under uncompromising utterances of truth, in the direction of either civil or religious thought, yet Dr. Campbell's ministrations quite largely increased its membership; they gained for this church a reputation for conspicuous pulpit ability, and attracted the respect and attention of many of the most intelligent and cultivated minds in this community.

Under this pastorate also, Mr. Briggs W. Thomas, one of the oldest and most respected members of this church, generously provided a convenient and commodious building on Francis street, for the Olivet Mission School; which, but for his personal interest and private liberality would not probably have been instituted at all. This school for many years was a flourishing and important auxiliary to the church, in this new field of christian work.

The organization of the Bethany church, owes its existence to the Mission school started in East Utica, under the special care and direction of Dr. Campbell, by whose guidance and supervision it was so fully developed, that the organization of the church itself was completed very soon after the settlement of his successor as pastor of Westminster Church.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell resigned his pastorate, to accept a call to the Central Church, Rochester, N. Y., which highly important and influential position he still occupies and adorns with marked ability and success.

Under these three pastorates, covering a period of about twenty-three years, the work of planting, developing and maturing had, progressed under circumstances so fortuitous as to leave little or nothing to regret or disappoint. A power beyond that of human foresight had been directing the destinies of this church, founded as it seemed to be, in obedience to the providence of God, which had so clearly opened its way, and thus far in its history had been directing its steps.

The Rev. Dr. Fisher, President of Hamilton College, accepted the invitation of the Session to supply its pulpit upon the Sabbath, and for some months regularly preached to this people, while the committee chosen for the purpose, was endeavoring to select a successor to the pulpit made vacant by the resignation of Dr. Campbell. Being unable to receive favorable responses to their efforts in this direction, they at length decided to venture a call to Dr. Fisher himself. It was at the time hardly expected that such a call would be entertained, much less accepted by one whose eminent and acknowledged abilities fitted him for a position of far greater and more commanding importance and influence. But this call being made out

and offered, it was received with evidences that upon the compliance with certain conditions, it was likely to be accepted.

The only difficulty to remove that seemed at all serious, was the change required by the transfer of the connection of this church from the Old to the New School General Assembly. From its very organization this church had affiliated and acted with the Old School branch, and some of its strongest and best friends were unmistakably attached to this connection, and were not likely to yield their preference without reluctance. And but for the fact that an organic union between these two bodies was imminent and surely expected and counted upon, it is doubtful if the condition required would have been almost unanimously conceded, after a full, fair and careful deliberation.

The union soon after effected fully justified the expediency and the wisdom of waiving objections, that if persisted in, would not only have deprived this church of the services of Dr. Fisher, but in the end, have revealed the fact that, as objections, they were soon to be removed by the action of other and higher powers. That the time for reünion was at hand, and a further adherence to the past causes of separation was unnecessary, is made evident by the proceedings of the National Presbyterian Convention at Philadelphia, where two representative men—one of each school—Dr. Hodge and Dr. Fisher, by agreement in certain simple statements of doctrine, seemed to lead the whole convention, and so prepare the way for the organic union which was speedily perfected.

This action of the Westminster Church, in yielding the natural objections involved in a change from the Old to the New School body, was not only its practical testimony that they no longer existed in its own experience, but it also forshadowed that more conspicuous evidence to the same fact, which soon after occurred at Philadelphia, when Dr. Hodge, the leading Old School theologian, took Dr. Fisher by the hand, in presence of the whole assembly, saying, “Then I can give my brother Fisher the right hand of fellowship.” It seemed, therefore, proper, in view of the whole case, that Dr. Fisher, who was destined to act so prominent a part in effecting this reünion, should have preferred to officiate as pastor over a church in the same connection with himself; and that the

Westminster Church should waive objections that were speedily to be removed, and that too, very largely through the public influence and act of the very pastor it was endeavoring to obtain.

The consent of the church and congregation having been given to the proposed change in church relations, Dr. Fisher, resigning the Presidency of Hamilton College for this purpose, was elected pastor on the 8th of May, 1866; the call was accepted June 11th, and the installation services occurred on Nov. 15th, of the same year. The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. McIlvaine, the first pastor, and the charge to the pastor elect was made by Rev. Dr. Fowler, of the First Presbyterian Church, of Utica. The church at this time contained about two hundred and eighty members.

Dr. Fisher was now at the very maturity of his physical and mental powers, and he entered upon this new field of labor with great vigor and enthusiasm, intending to spend the remainder of his years of active usefulness among the people over whom he was now called to officiate as pastor and preacher. He confidently looked forward to a period of many years, in which to accomplish effective and important labor for the church of Christ. Into every department of his church he at once began to infuse his own personal energy and activity, and systematic efforts were made in every possible direction for the accomplishment of desired and beneficent results. As evidences of his influence over his people and of the success of his administration, it may be stated that the early part of his ministry was signalized by the accomplishment of three important results, which doubtless could not have been obtained under other circumstances, or at any former period in the history of this church. The personal attachment of his people led them to purchase, for a parsonage, a valuable and finely located residence on Rutger street; the beautiful chapel building, which had been previously erected by E. M. Gilbert, Esq., was now, by him, donated and decded to the church; and the mission enterprise in East Utica, (which in former years had its development in the generosity of Mrs. H. C. Wood,) having grown into a mission church, now became an independent organization, under the name of "The Bethany Church." To

aid this new organization, the home church gave up fifty one of its own members who were willing to identify themselves with this new and important field of christian labor. Under Dr. Fisher's administration, the Sabbath school of the church, and its two mission schools, numbered nearly six hundred scholars ; and the church membership subsequent to the organization of "Bethany" reached about three hundred and sixty-five.

These statements and results exhibit the highly prosperous condition of this church, in its varied interests, during the early period of the ministry of Dr. Fisher. For nearly four years of active and progressive work the church enjoyed the ministrations and stimulating energies of this able, active and untiring pastor. Other and abler hands have, in this memorial book, set forth the peculiar excellencies and powers of Dr. Fisher in his varied positions as teacher, pastor, preacher and eloquent orator.

The abrupt termination of his labors among his people was a surprise and shock, as painful as it was sudden and mysterious. On the evening of May 11, 1870, Dr. Fisher was occupied in his study at the church, in the preparation of a discourse he was invited to preach at the coming meeting of the General Assembly. Returning to his home at quite a late hour, he stopped to inquire as to the condition of one of his parishioners, then suffering temporary illness. He never appeared more genial, social and in better spirits than upon this occasion. Shortly after reaching his home, he was stricken with the disease, that, after holding him within its deadly grasp for nearly four years, at length caused his sudden and unexpected death at Cincinnati.

The hopelessness of his case, induced him, on the 13th day of January, 1871, to offer his resignation, which, being an absolute necessity, was acquiesced in by his people: his salary was continued until the first of May following, thus completing about one full year, during which he was utterly incapacitated from discharging any of the duties he loved so well to perform. The letter of resignation, and the resolutions passed

by his church,* show how hopeless was the sad condition of this beloved friend and pastor, and how full of painful sympathy and high appreciation was the heart of his people under this great affliction and sudden deprivation

**To the Session and Members of Westminster Church, Utica, N. Y.:*

The afflictive providence of God has laid me aside from the duties of my profession, and consequently, for the present, debars me from fulfilling my obligations to you as preacher and pastor.

Leaving the future with all its uncertainties in his hands, while thanking God for the blessed privilege of ministering for Him, in your pulpit, and expressing my gratitude to you for the affection always manifested to me in the relation of pastor and people, I am constrained to ask for a dissolution of this pastorate, and request you to unite with me in this petition before presbytery.

SAMUEL W. FISHER.

Utica, N. Y., January 13, 1871.

*At a meeting of the congregation called to consider the above, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :

WHEREAS, Our beloved Pastor, Dr. Samuel W. Fisher, was, in May last, by the mysterious dispensation of Providence, stricken down in the height of his power and usefulness ; and, notwithstanding the various expedients resorted to for the restoration of his health of body and vigor of mind, does not as yet experience the hoped for evidence of recovery ; and

WHEREAS, In view of the above condition, he having voluntarily tendered to us, the people of his charge, an unconditional resignation of his duties and responsibilities as our pastor ; therefore,

Resolved, That in most reluctantly accepting this resignation, and thus assenting to the severance of relations that have been to us as a church, a source of great prosperity ; we hereby desire to bear witness to the eminent ability, Christian gentleness, untiring fidelity, and absolute consecration of every power of mind and body to the upbuilding, not only of this particular church, but also to that comprehensive love which embraced the prosperity of the church of Christ, and the spread of his kingdom in the world.

Resolved, That in consequence of the unselfish devotion of his life to the work and cause of Christ, no adequate provision is made for the wants and necessities of his family, who, partaking of the same generous and self-sacrificing spirit, have ever lived obedient to the calls of duty and charity, and especial duty rests, not only upon his own people, but upon every sympathizing heart, to so generously contribute to Christ, in the person of this his devoted servant, that the anxieties and burdens respecting temporal matters be not added to those already so afflictive and heavy to bear.

Resolved, That in addition to the aid we, as individual members of his church and congregation, design to offer and solicit in his behalf, we continue the salary of Dr. Fisher to the first day of May next, thus completing the full year of our deprivation of his ministrations and services.

Resolved, That whilst we appreciate the claims of the short, but delightful nature of the pastoral relations, that for nearly four years of active service has endeared our pastor to every one of his people, we also cannot fail to recognize the obligations of other churches and institutions, which, in years that are past, have grown strong, and are this day enjoying increased prosperity, because of the earnest and self-sacrificing discharge of

In their expression, the sympathies of his people took the practical shape of supplying so far as possible, such pecuniary assistance as seemed appropriate to this servant of Christ, who, in laboring for the Master, had made no adequate provision for himself and family. As the result of these efforts, the sum of nearly \$10,000 was obtained, including the salary for the year of his incapacity; which sum, with the exception of less than \$3,000, was given him by the people of his own church.

The removal of Dr. Fisher and family to Cincinnati, his mental and physical condition while there, and the circumstances of his sudden death, are fully given in the statements of others whose addresses are found in this memorial tribute to his eminent, varied and valued services.

For nearly a year and a half the church was deprived of the services of a regular pastor. This long period of waiting was in the hope that some favorable change might yet occur, and restore Dr. Fisher to the position he had been forced so suddenly to surrender. Immediately after his resignation, the church again entered upon the difficult and dangerous duty of finding some one qualified to succeed this accomplished and eloquent preacher. It is not necessary here to record the discouragements and disappointments that attended all efforts in this direction. That great caution and wisdom was necessary, is apparent from the fact that the large membership which had been attained, was greatly the result of the personal power and popularity of Dr. Fisher; and it was feared that much of this was likely to be lost, if a mistake was now made, and a fitting successor was not chosen.

the arduous duties once resting upon him. Nor can we even thus limit the claims of this faithful servant of Christ, whose eloquent voice has been heard on every field wherein the church has struggled for union, or made aggressive movements against the powers of evil.

Resolved, That a committee of four be appointed to solicit subscriptions in the Westminster church and congregation, toward purchasing for Dr. Fisher and his family a *permanent home*, wherever they may deem it expedient or desirable; and that Messrs. T. Pomeroy, S. S. Lowery, A. Gardner, and J. H. Mallory, constitute that committee.

Resolved, that this same committee be authorized to receive donations, for the same object, from other churches, institutions, and individuals, desiring thus to recognize the scriptural obligation, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

After almost every possible effort had been made without the least success, the attention of the committee was drawn almost accidentally to consider the expediency of making out a call to the Rev. Thomas J. Brown, of Philadelphia. Suffice it to say that so satisfactory were the reports as to this young and promising preacher, and so confident were the people that he was fitted for the position they desired him to fill, that the unusual course was taken of giving him an unanimous call, without having had an opportunity of seeing or hearing him preach. A subsequent interview resulted in confirming this call, which being accepted, Rev. Mr. Brown entered upon his duties on the 30th of April, 1871, and was installed on the 11th of October following, over a church then having about three hundred and sixty-five members.

Under his pastorate, the church has prospered in all its various departments of christian work, and has never been in a more flourishing condition than at the present time. The Sabbath School now numbers some four hundred scholars; and every desirable pew is rented and occupied. This practical result demonstrates very clearly that the sudden and sad event that deprived this church of the services of Dr. Fisher, did not perceptibly interrupt its prosperity and growth.

In closing this rapid review of the history of the Westminster Church through the past thirty years, it is but just to say that at each trying period it did not lack able and willing friends to meet the exigency as it arose, and carry forward any plan that had for its object the firm establishment of an influential and permanent religious organization. Although this church is now in possession of an edifice ranking among the finest in this city, of a valuable and desirably located parsonage, and of a beautiful chapel building, it has not been indifferent to the claims of others needing its help and fostering care. Its contributions to all the general objects of christian benevolence and charity have been uniformly liberal; its Sabbath Schools for many years supported one or more missionaries in distant parts of our country, whose efforts resulted in the founding of hundreds of new Sabbath Schools in the West, and the instruction of many thousands of neglected children in the truths of the gospel of Christ. Out of many of these schools have

already grown independent and useful churches, while many more of them will doubtless attain the same desirable result.

But with respect to its specific external influence none is more conspicuous than that involved in the establishment and organization of "Bethany Church," which is the legitimate development of the humble mission school started a few years ago in East Utica, by this church. Through the generosity of Mrs. E. M. Gilbert and family, a large and most commodious building has been erected, and a self-supporting church, with a Sabbath School scarcely excelled by any in this city in point of numbers or real efficiency, there exists, as a permanent blessing to a neighborhood that formerly was among the worst and most forbidding for mission effort, in our vicinity. The establishment of this church in that locality has changed its whole aspect and character; and to the moral and spiritual benefits there resulting, is added a new impulse to material advancement and prosperity.

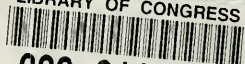
That the Westminster Church has been able to make so good a record, and exhibit a progress so steady and uninterrupted, is due, under the blessing of God, to the fact that it was planted at a time when a new church organization was really needed; that it presented no hostile attitude or rivalry toward any existing establishment; that no illegitimate influence was ever employed either to unduly attract others from their church connections, or to gain for itself favor or popularity by sensational or ephemeral means.

From the very first its aim has been to teach no theology except that clearly taught by Christ and his inspired apostles, and studiously and carefully to avoid all questions and controversies in respect to doctrine and faith, that had not a clear and acknowledged foundation in the precepts of the gospel. The largest liberty of opinion and belief, consistent with loyalty to God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, has ever been the unchallenged right of every member of this church; all its benefits, privileges and blessings have been freely offered on conditions so unsectarian and liberal as to attract and win. To such influences as these we must attribute that spirit of union which has ever been a characteristic of this church; an union of sentiment and purpose that has throughout its whole history

shown itself in every direction in which it has been called either to suffer or to act. Out of this vital union of membership has grown the strength that has enabled it so greatly to prosper, even while it was liberally expending itself in behalf of the prosperity of others.

To its unbroken line of able, earnest and faithful pastors, each one, in his time, seeming peculiarly fitted for the special needs of the church, it is chiefly indebted for its harmony, power and efficacy. To one is given wisdom, courage and grace to plant ; to another, the genius, tact and persistence to build up and develop ; to the third, a high degree of mental power and precision to crystalize and mature ; to the fourth, those graces and attractions of style and eloquence that were favorable to rapid development and growth ; and to the last and present pastor, something that seems to combine in himself so much of the qualities of each of his predecessors, as not only to enable his church to hold fast to all her previous acquisitions and influence, but also to fit her for a prosperity in the future, not inferior to that she has enjoyed in the past.

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