



*Yours truly  
Levi Parsons.*

# Levi Parsons, D. D.

PASTOR OF  
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MOUNT MORRIS, N. Y.  
1856-1901



A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE—FUNERAL SERVICES—TRIBUTES  
OF ESTEEM—EXTRACTS FROM HIS SERMONS  
AND ADDRESSES



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*"For thou hast kept the faith ; thy soul undaunted,  
Whatever storms might round thee rage and roll,  
By one celestial passion still enchanted,  
Has held its course right onward to the goal.*

*Thou hast not basely gathered thrift with fawning,  
Nor worn a laurel that thou hast not won ;  
But, in thy zenith hour as in thy dawning,  
The good thy nature willed thy hand has done.*

*On thy calm front the waves of trouble, broken,  
Have backward surged and left thee regnant still ;  
Nor tempests of the soul nor griefs unspoken  
Have e'er had power to shake thy steadfast will."*

## Early Life.

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**H**ALF a mile south of the "First Church," just outside the village limits of Marcellus, stands a roomy old dwelling known for many years, in those parts, as "The Farm."

It is a simple, unpretentious, rambling house with a story and a half front, followed by a series of after-thoughts in the shape of wings and lean-to's added to suit the needs of a growing family. Its broad, low gable-end faces the road and overlooks a sloping meadow through which a noisy creek threads its silver way. Dormer windows peer sideways through the trees up and down the valley, catching glimpses of an orchard on this side, the garden and distant village spire on that.

The great central chimney gives evidence that within is the "hospitable hearth" of ancient fame, whereon blazed cheery wood-fires; and indeed "The Farm" boasts a parlor which has never known the profaning presence of a stove in all the ninety years of its existence. Household furnishings are plain but comfortable, a reflection of their owner's character and a revelation of ministerial life in the early part of the nineteenth century.

In this house which he had recently built the Rev. Levi Parsons, first pastor of the Marcellus Presbyterian Church, established himself with his young wife in the year of our Lord 1810, and here their happy married life of nearly fifty years was spent.

He was a native of Northampton, Mass., and came of good old Puritan stock as represented by Cornet Joseph Parsons who came to this country, while yet a mere boy, from Devonshire, England, in 1635. History and tradition unite in attributing to this worthy

“uncommon force of character.” But the judicial ability of the family first found expression in his son, Esquire Joseph Parsons, whose name heads the list of Hampshire county judges, and is found in connection with many other civil and political offices of the time. Possibly this legal mind is an inheritance from the female side of the family, for we learn that his mother, Mistress Mary Parsons, having the misfortune to be the wife of the wealthiest man in town, was (like many other ladies of substance in those days) accused of witchcraft. Mistress Mary was the grand-daughter of a man who had suffered imprisonment under Archbishop Laud. She was a woman of resolution and had no mind to tamely submit. Accompanied by her mother she traversed the wilderness lying between Northampton and Boston where the court was held, pleaded her own case and was acquitted.

The men of the Parsons family were thrifty, industrious, honorable, and reliable. Their religion was of that practical sort which gained them renown as good, peaceable neighbors rather than seats in ecclesiastical circles; but they were remarkably unanimous in selecting wives from the daughters of godly men, and so it came to pass that their descendants rejoice in tracing their lineage from Elder John Strong whose reputation for sanctity stood hardly second to that of the minister in the popular mind; Deacon Jonathan Hunt, and Deacon Josiah Clark whose grandfather bore the same title before him and whose great-grandfather, Lieut. William Clark, was one of the pillars of the pioneer church in Northampton. Of these Clarks it is said “they maintained a regular *family* prayer-meeting for a number of years.”

With such a background it is hardly wonderful that Levi Parsons, Sr., having graduated in September of 1801 from Williams College at the age of twenty-two, decided, after teaching a couple of years in an academy at Cornwall, Conn., and tutoring for a couple more years at Williams, to enter the ministry. He studied theology with Dr. Alvin Hyde, who for forty years ministered to the church of Lee, Massachusetts.

As a licentiate he was employed by the Berkshire Missionary Society to traverse New York State, visiting especially new settlements. On this tour he preached at Marcellus, the result being that he was invited to become pastor of that church at a salary of four hundred dollars a year. Here he was ordained and installed September 16, 1807, being the second minister settled in Onondaga county. This pastorate lasted thirty-two years, but his residence at "The Farm" continued during life.

His marriage with Almira, daughter of Deacon Samuel Rice, occurred October 9, 1809. To them were born eight sons and daughters, of whom seven lived to maturity. The youngest, who is the subject of this sketch, was born January 2, 1829. To him was given his father's name of Levi Parsons. The reminiscences of his early years show him to have been a thoughtful, conscientious, affectionate child. The object of his especial idolatry was his mother, a woman of mild but firm character, very prudent in speech and charitable in judgment. Her children laughingly said that when mother could find nothing else to say for a person she spoke of him as "a clever body." She was most sensitively careful of everyone's feelings, and took unwearied pains to impress upon her children the obligation of courtesy to all, but especially to a stranger or one who might be neglected.

Her health being extremely frail during a great part of her life, household cares were early assumed by the daughters, and it was a cardinal doctrine of the family that mother must be saved all unnecessary trouble. To her room gentle manners alone were admitted. Her youngest son knew no greater treat than to visit in the sitting-room with his mother, she seated by the chimney, he close beside her on his little cricket, in friendly converse. No music, to his childish ear, equalled her songs, the favorite being a hymn of Watts' which had power to soothe every woe of mind or body—

"No burning heats by day  
Nor blasts of evening air,  
Shall take my health away  
If God be with me there."

Supreme authority was vested in the father who was eminently "the head of the family." Never familiar with his children, never permitting undue freedom toward himself, he was yet a tender father, self-denying, and ever watchful for their best interests, reasonable in his demands. When his fiat had gone forth none dreamed that it could be changed by teasing or coaxing, nor did one fancy that transgression would escape merited reward however long delayed. Family government was administered with an impartial justice which won the lasting respect of the children.

The Sabbath, beginning with Saturday night, was strictly observed at "The Farm." Each child was expected to regularly attend divine worship where reverent behavior was exacted, for the minister had no intention of falling into Eli's errors.

In later years his son, Levi Junior, recalled an incident illustrating this feature of his father's character. The father was preaching for a year in the neighboring church of Otisco. With him were his two youngest children, Margaret, aged ten, and Levi, five. Among the boy's most cherished possessions at that time was a handkerchief stamped in one corner with the head of George Washington. The handkerchief was his "best," and as such, privileged to repose in his pocket on Sabbath day in the meeting-house, where an occasional glimpse of George was unspeakably refreshing to the child, making him forget his weary, dangling little feet.

One Sabbath morning, as the two children sat together in the square pew dedicated to the minister's family, it occurred to Levi to relieve the tedium of the service by folding the edges of the handkerchief around George in a coffin-like way, after which he buried him in one corner of the pew, and so pleasing did these obsequies prove that they were quietly repeated from time to time. Such a pastime in these days might be considered gruesome but hardly inappropriate to the house of God. In the early thirties other views prevailed, as presently appeared on their return home, and thenceforth greater heed was given to sermons and less to funereal rites.

No injunction of Holy Writ was more implicitly obeyed in this



household than the one to "Use hospitality without grudging;" and indeed the traveling customs of the day gave abundant opportunity for the cultivation of this amiable virtue. "The Farm" diaries record an endless round of visits. There were the morning visitors, the evening visitors, and those who came "to spend the day," or night. It was a joy to welcome a half-dozen unexpected guests to the breakfast table, escort eight or nine out-of-town friends to the family pew on Sunday, and entertain the "Female Benevolent Society" whose numbers swelled from twenty in the afternoon to an evening party of fifty or so.

The larder expected to be in readiness for any emergency calculated to produce famine, while that day which found "the spare bedroom" empty provided most unusual news for the family chronicles. The appreciative tribute of one visitor was long cherished by the children who heard him say to his wife, "This, my dear, is the family of whom I told you as being so exceedingly well brought up," from which we infer that even "the good old times" knew ups and downs in child-culture.

It was well for the minister that he was versed in agricultural lore and that his slender stipend was reinforced by the produce of his fields, whose area gradually grew from ten to a hundred acres, for his generous hospitality as well as the needs of a large and growing family necessitated the greatest prudence, industry and economy. Every child was expected to help, fixed tasks being assigned each at an early age. However, sweets were mixed with toil as will be seen from the following letter penned when the writer was nine years old :

DEAR SISTER :

As Almira is now going to Geneva I will improve the time in writing to you. I go to School as I said before, and I can parse a little. this year I go after the harvesters and glean all that they leave. Papa thinks that I shall gather a half a bushel and that will be worth a half a dolar. Mr. frost has made Some winder blinds for our front chamber. I have Watermelons as large as four Walnuts.

our folks have new Potatoes. Mr. teels has gon to Jail for abusing his family. I have but little to say as I wrote not long since. From your dear brother,

LEVI PARSONS.

It will be seen that his education was already begun. He was in fact a scholar of several years standing, having entered the district school at a tender age. The rudiments of learning gained, he passed into his father's study to fit for college. The study was located in the second story under the sloping roof. From its windows was an inviting outlook over barn and field to a wood-lot skirting the western side of the farm, which furnished abundant supplies of fuel, maple-sugar, berries, and nuts in their seasons. Within stood a high desk, perched upon phenomenally long legs, where were stored the minister's sermons and letters; the plain little rocker and "pegged" stand where he listened to recitations, and two long, home-made tables supplied with stone inkstands and quill pens around which gathered young folk in pursuit of "higher branches of learning." Here Euclid and "the classics," Blair's Lectures and Rollins' History held sway, while a host of ancient worthies looked on from the book-shelves.

In all matters educational, Mr. Parsons took a keen interest. He himself was regarded as a superior instructor. From the time of his settlement in Marcellus, he had, after the fashion of old-time ministers, increased his income, as well as his cares, by receiving into his family pupils preparing for college or the ministry. As years went on his own sons and daughters shared these advantages, which were varied as family finances permitted by occasional seasons at academies or female seminaries. Moravia Academy was chosen for Levi Parsons, Jr., mainly because his sister had recently married and removed to that village. A glimpse of him at fifteen is afforded by a composition on "Patriotism as it Affects Our Country," written at this time. The style, while rather more oratorical than youthful essays of the present day, is characterized by simplicity, earnestness, and well-chosen language; while the boyish thought expressed in

his treatment of the theme curiously foreshadows those productions of later years bearing upon public affairs. A year later we find him a Freshman at Hamilton College. His mother, whose education had been "finished" there in the old days of Kirkland Academy, simply notes in her diary under date of January 6, 1846: "Mr. Parsons, Levi and Guy left this morning for Hamilton College, the boys expecting to be left as members."

The Hamilton which welcomed the class of '49 was not a luxurious spot; but the boys did not mind,—they were used to sheet iron heaters, candles, and rectangular buildings, nor dreamed that hardship was connected with their use. For a year's residence on College Hill, the most extravagant of upper classmen was not, according to the catalogue, expected to make way with more than \$103.50, while frugal Freshmen need spend but \$64.25, which modest sum might be still further reduced by consultation with the Faculty.

There was plenty of fun and frolic mixed with the regular curriculum (the age of "electives" was not yet), and no one more thoroughly enjoyed that relaxation than Levi Parsons, Jr.

His genial humor and genuine friendliness soon won the affectionate regard of his mates, while his thorough, accurate scholarship gained their respect as well as the approbation of grave professors.

During the winter of his Junior year a term of teaching interrupted his college course. Under date of January 24 his mother writes: "This morning two of our trustees called to invite Levi to take the head of our union school—he had three hours for consideration when he gave his answer in the affirmative." The following morning his duties as schoolmaster began. This first experience in managing humanity was not one of unmingled bliss; however helpful it may have proved in the development of his own character.

His position as "instructor of youth" was joyfully abandoned in April in favor of college and the Junior Exhibition for which he had carefully prepared during his absence, having also kept up with regular class work in most studies. The opening of the term is

described in a letter from which the following extract is taken :

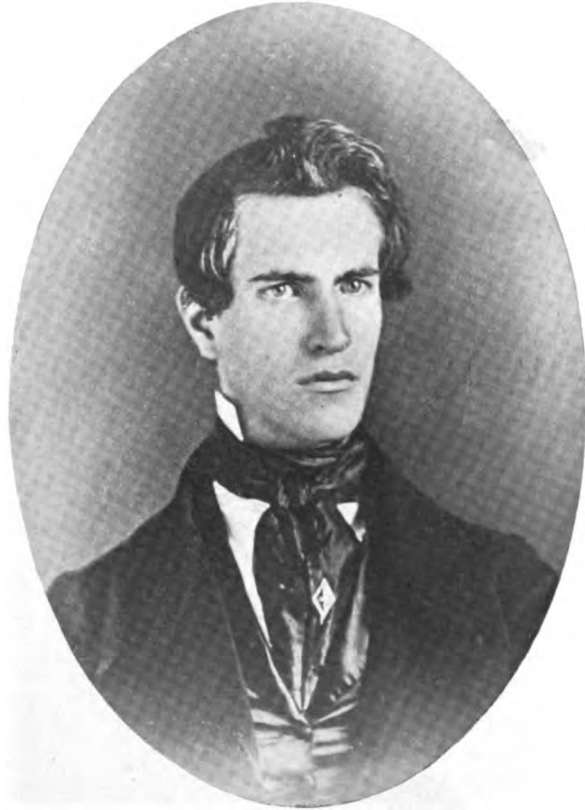
HAMILTON COLLEGE, May 9, 1848.

DEAR FATHER—

Since I left you at the embankment have been generally prospered in my affairs as well as could be expected. Found students enough before we landed at Oneida to make out a full load for college. Had rather a raw time going over and found things looking rather cold and disagreeable at college; but at the same time there were many familiar faces and fellows whom I was right glad to see. As regards a boarding house, I found a place had been reserved for me at Col. Barker's, my old boarding place, which I concluded to accept. The price is as formerly which is as low as any place except one—and most of them have 13 and 14 shillings. I occupy the same room as when here before; but have adopted a new chum. His name is Russ—he is not quite so talkative as my other chum, but is much neater about the room. I am quite pleased with my new chum and am glad to be with some one who does something towards keeping things in order, a quality which most of my former chums have not possessed. The Exhibition came off in due time and I performed my part to the best of my ability. I succeeded in gaining good attention which very few were able to do—in fact my piece was peculiar and entirely different from anything else on the stage, and, if I may be permitted to say so, I got along very well. I am going to have a first rate chance for studying this term. Three other classmates besides myself intend reciting to Prof. Dwight. He is considered much better than the regular German teacher, and the class being so small we shall have a good chance to learn the pronunciation.

The "piece" to which allusion is made was an ardent exposition of the superior advantages gained by the student in country institutions, and its position upon the program evidently entitled the speaker to some private rejoicings.

He graduated July 25, 1849, being then according to an onlooker "a rather mature looking, old looking young man." Boys who have since attained honorable rank in life were his classmates. Among them may be noted John J. Knox, U. S. Comptroller of Currency;



LEVI PARSONS, JR., ÆT. 19.

Hon. James Woolworth, of Nebraska; W. B. Ruggles, who held prominent offices in New York State, and Rev. F. F. Ellinwood, D.D., Senior Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. With many, friendships were maintained which terminated only with death.

The year succeeding his graduation was an important one—for in it was settled his lot for time and eternity. He had decided for law, a profession his gifts eminently fitted him to adorn, and intended teaching his way to the Bar. The position of assistant in an academy at East Bloomfield, N. Y., where legal studies filled leisure hours, was the first step in this career.

At East Bloomfield Providence had located as pastor Henry Kendall, a son of both Hamilton and Auburn, whose magnetic Christian character was influential in bringing about the young teacher's conversion. On September 1, 1850, he united with the Marcellus First Church and soon after went to Michigan to teach at Flint. When twenty-two years old he began the study of theology at Auburn Seminary. Of this institution his father was a founder and devoted friend, serving as its trustee from its incorporation until his death—a period of forty-four years—during thirty-four of which he was President of the Board.

Hardly was he well established when Hamilton College honored him, as Williams had previously honored his father, by offering a tutorship, which was declined. He was licensed to preach at Northville by the Presbytery of Cayuga the 21st day of June, 1853. Six months later he received a communication which we give in full:

HAMILTON COLLEGE,  
December 1, 1853.

DEAR SIR—

You are perhaps aware that since the beginning of the present collegiate year the duties of the College Chaplaincy with us have been discharged by the Rev. J. A. Brayton who also at the same time in part acted as a Classical Instructor by hearing one recitation each day. In consequence, however, of engagements into which he

entered with the Home Missionary Society before coming here, he finds himself unexpectedly obliged to leave at the close of the present term. We are hence looking around for some one to take his place; as you were on a former occasion invited to a place in our Faculty, we have thought it proper to renew the invitation at this time; and it is in accordance with the unanimous wish of my associates that I now write. Our first wish is: that you should accept the place which Mr. Brayton proposes to leave vacant, in which case it will become your duty to preach once on the Sabbath, attend prayer-meeting Sabbath evening, and hear one recitation on each of the other days of the week. The salary attached to this position is \$700. Should you be unwilling to assume the duties of the College Chaplaincy we shall be glad to have you accept the post of tutor, as before offered to you, in which case your salary will be \$450 for the first year, \$500 for the second, &c., with duty usually of hearing two recitations each day. Should you consent to this proposal we shall desire you to join us at the opening of the next term. I shall be glad to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Very truly yours,

SIMEON NORTH.

Mr. Levi Parsons,  
Auburn, N. Y.

This mark of confidence from his Alma Mater could not but gratify so young a man. The position with its literary outlook was tempting to one entering life. Wisely estimating his own abilities, however, he chose to continue his studies and enter the broader field of usefulness awaiting his future.

In 1854, five years after leaving Hamilton, he entered the Christian ministry as a graduate of Auburn.

An early friend, Rev. Walter V. Couch, of San Diego, California, writing of him lately says: "I knew him in college; but did not know him intimately until we met in the Seminary at Auburn. Although scarcely any older, he was much more mature than I. That was a characteristic that impressed itself upon me at the beginning of my acquaintance with him—his ripeness of character. He had a judgment that was almost faultless. That and his purity

of character and steadfastness of principle gave him his great influence over his brethren, and his weight in ecclesiastical councils. His sterling character added force to his words in the pulpit as well as in the judicatories of the church."

Soon after graduation, his ministerial life began in Otisco, N. Y., where his funereal propensities suffered check a score of years before. In early days this was a flourishing church; now it numbers but little over a hundred members. The edifice stood in the midst of a modest hamlet, remote from railways and "madding crowds," surrounded by the picturesque hills and hollows of Onondaga county.

To this secluded country parish he brought his bride, Mary Wadsworth, daughter of Rev. Charles and Tryphena Isham Wadsworth, of Richfield Springs, N. Y., to whom he was married November 21, 1854. Her personal attractions, winning manner, and Christian character secured the respect and love of those who knew her.

After preaching as stated supply for about a year and a half at Otisco, Providence opened for him a way to Mount Morris which proved to be the scene of his life-work; but he ever retained an affectionate interest in the welfare of that first charge on bleak Otisco Hill.



## Mount Morris Pastorate.

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“The transcendent importance of the pastoral relation is only seen when viewed in the light of eternity.”

—LEVI PARSONS.

I N these days of frequent changes it is pleasant to note a pastorate possessing a degree of stability and permanence. A relation so important as that between pastor and people should gain in power and richness with every passing year. Such a ministry was that portrayed by the poet Goldsmith, whose description of the village preacher, after the lapse of a century, still charms the imagination, still touches the heart—

“His ready smile a parent’s warmth expressed,  
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.”

Such a life, such scenes are not the fancies of the poet’s brain; rather are they the beautiful realities which rightly crown any pastorate of many years. For by lifelong service in behalf of one people, a pastor becomes so intimately associated with their joys and sorrows, their hopes, their cares and aspirations, that a tie is formed like that of a father to beloved children, to be terminated at last by death alone.

In the matter of long pastorates Western New York has an honorable record. Prominent among them is that of the Rev. Levi

Parsons, D.D., for forty-five years pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Mount Morris, N. Y.

In December of 1855, he preached in Mount Morris as a candidate, which resulted in his engagement to fill the pulpit as stated supply for six months. His term of service began on the first Sabbath of the succeeding February; three months later by a practically unanimous vote he was invited to the pastorate of the church. One brother objected to his installation on the ground that he looked like a sickly young man and might not live long; but the brother departed for another world thirty years before the "sickly young man."

The call was made out and subscribed to by the members of the session. It was as follows:

The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church in Mount Morris, being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, Mr. Levi Parsons, Jr., and having good hopes from our past experience of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of seven hundred dollars annually in regular quarterly payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church. In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this 28th day of April, A. D. 1856.

JAMES CONKEY,  
MARSENA ALLEN,  
STILWELL BURROUGHS,  
MILO H. MALTBIE,  
L. J. AMES,  
Members of Session.

To the fact and doings above stated I hereby testify as Moderator of the meeting.

PLINY F. SANBORNE.

The call being accepted, household goods were removed to the new home and life began hopefully, though the outlook for a young man, barely twenty-seven, was somewhat formidable.

Of the fifteen predecessors who had ministered to the church since its formation in 1814, but four had been regularly installed pastors and only one had managed to remain as long as seven years. The majority, after a more or less prolonged struggle, sought other fields of labor. Permanence in the pastoral relation was the last thing expected. The church was laden with a debt of three thousand dollars as a result of building the present edifice, and there was division in the fold. The prospect required courage, resolution, diligence, and tact.

On the morning of July 10th he was ordained and installed pastor by Ontario Presbytery. The service opened with invocation and reading of Scripture by Rev. J. R. Page of Perry. Prof. E. A. Huntington, D. D., of Auburn Seminary, offered prayer. Dr. Kendall, subsequently secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, preached the sermon from Rev. iv. 8-11. The moderator, Dr. Barnard of Lima, proposed the constitutional questions and offered the ordaining prayer. The charge to the people was given by Rev. P. F. Sanborne; that to the pastor, by his father, Rev. Levi Parsons, Sr., then advanced in years. Of him Prof. S. M. Hopkins, D. D., of Auburn, said: "In his character as a Christian and a minister, there was happily blended strict orthodoxy with evangelical charity, ecclesiastical enterprise with great personal modesty, sound wisdom with marked simplicity, and he filled a long life with abundant labors and activities." A portion of his impressive charge is here given:

"An ordination occasion is always very interesting and solemn; but the present is to me peculiarly so. Having been engaged in preaching the gospel for a period of fifty years, and as I am now closing my ministerial labors, it is a very consoling consideration that this my son now comes forward and consecrates himself to the

work of the ministry, and with favorable prospects of usefulness is this day placed over this people as their pastor.

“By appointment of Presbytery, it becomes my duty on this occasion to give the charge to the pastor.

“My Dear Son—You having been, in the providence of God, directed to this place, and having been set apart to the work of the Gospel Ministry, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and having been placed over this people as their pastor, I would now, as your father, earnestly and affectionately exhort you, and in behalf of the Presbytery, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, under whose authority we act, I would solemnly charge you to be faithful in discharging the duties of the holy ministry.

“In the first place I would exhort you to be faithful to your own soul. Be eminently a man of prayer. Cultivate a spirit of ardent and devoted piety. This is of first importance, as it respects your usefulness in the ministry. In vain will you attempt to describe the beauties of holiness, unless you are able to discern its beauties yourself. In vain will you attempt to direct sinners to Jesus, unless you are personally conversant with the way. If you would expect to be a successful preacher, you must be a man of active and fervent piety. In your intercessions with God, never forget that precious and immortal souls are committed to your care. Commend them affectionately to the God of all grace.

“Be a man of study. \* \* You will not be able for any length of time to answer the expectations of this people, only as you pay constant attention to literature. While you will pay suitable attention to the branches of science which are not strictly theological, it is in sacred literature that we would exhort you to be a proficient. If you would be an eminently useful minister, you must, by your varied and extensive reading and your close attention to study ‘let your profiting appear unto all.’

“It is the appropriate business of the minister to preach the gospel. To this end it is necessary that you should clearly illustrate and enforce the great truths of revealed religion. \* \* While you

will carefully avoid being wise above what is written, or attempting to fathom the deep things of God, you will at the same time plainly preach the truth, as you find it revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Remember, my dear son, you serve a holy and a jealous God, who will not suffer his word to be handled deceitfully. You are to preach the preaching which God bids you; and though you find doctrines in the Bible, offensive to the carnal mind, included in the general commission to preach the gospel, still you will not find yourself warranted in making exceptions.

“In your public preaching and in your more familiar intercourse with your people ever be careful to avoid giving unnecessary offence, either by harshness and severity of expression, or by invidious personalities. \* \* Address them tenderly and affectionately, as one who takes a deep interest in their welfare, as one who loves them and sincerely desires their salvation.

“In nothing seek the applause of men. Let motives of a higher and nobler nature sway in your breast. Seek to please God; seek that honor which cometh from God only. In view of prevailing errors, and especially such as are very dangerous and subversive of the very fundamentals of the gospel, you, as a watchman for Zion, must sound the alarm and at all times stand forth boldly in vindication of the truth. \* \* \*

“Finally, in all things pertaining to the holy ministry, we solemnly charge you to be faithful. Constantly keep in view the responsibilities of your station. And let the consideration of your high and holy vocation, and of the immense importance of the ministry of reconciliation, involving the eternal interests of man, draw forth the strongest, and the most devoted affections of your soul. Remember, that you are laboring not for time merely, but for eternity.

“Behold, My Dear Son—the congregation—the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath this day made you the overseer. Oh, be faithful to this people. It is not their temporal welfare merely, but it is especially their spiritual welfare, the eternal interest of their souls, their final salvation, that you are to seek.

“Reflect on the solemn account you must one day render to the great Judge of quick and of dead, of the manner in which you discharge the duties of the ministry. Therefore, be faithful, that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear you may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

All things seemed to smile upon the new relation, when suddenly, after a brief illness, his wife was taken from him on the morning of August 2nd, leaving a motherless little boy a few months old. She had already endeared herself to the community, who evinced the utmost respect for her memory and sympathy for the bereaved husband.

The funeral services, conducted by Rev. Dr. Shaw, of Rochester, were held in the church, which was filled to its utmost capacity with sympathising friends from far and near.

This unexpected blow was a great shock to the young pastor, who had entered upon his work with such bright anticipations of the future, leading him to realize more deeply “how little we know what the Lord may have in store for us.”

In the first year of the pastorate a powerful revival swept the country, resulting in a large addition to the church in Mt. Morris. Two years later, following a great commercial revulsion, a second very general revival occurred, which was promoted by the agency of prayer meetings, there being very little preaching aside from that on Sabbath. In this place daily union prayer meetings were held at eight o'clock in the morning for six weeks in succession, and it was amazing to witness the crowds that gathered.

The years 1864, '70, '78 and '96 were also especially blessed by ingatherings, though few communion seasons passed without additions.

His marriage to Harriet M. Pease, youngest daughter of Rev. Lorenzo and Lucinda Leonard Pease, occurred September 14, 1858. Mr. Pease was born at Hinsdale, Mass., in 1809, but removed to Auburn with his parents in 1811. He was a graduate of Hamilton

College and Auburn Seminary. In 1834 he married Lucinda Leonard whose parents were also early residents of Auburn. In August of '34 they sailed as missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. to the Greeks in Cyprus. Interesting records are still preserved of his missionary work and archeological investigations on that island, while an unfinished Greek grammar bears able testimony to his scholarship. The work, which began happily and earnestly, was terminated five years later by the sudden death of the young missionary. He was greatly beloved by the people to whom he had devoted his life, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Lazarus, Larnaca, with every mark of respect from priests and dignitaries, amid general lamentation. Mrs. Pease returned to this country to educate her two little daughters, sparing no pains to gain for them the best advantages afforded at that day. The youngest daughter, Harriet, becoming proficient in art and music, at an early age taught the same in a school for young ladies at Hornellsville, coming from there to take the responsible position of pastor's wife.

During the first six years of this pastorate the church, in accordance with what was then the usual custom, held its second Sabbath service at half past one in the afternoon. In addition to these two sermons it was also expected that the pastor would lecture in the evening excepting when the missionary concerts occurred. Very little, however, was then expected of him in the Sabbath School which, composed almost exclusively of children and their teachers, met in the gallery under the superintendancy of Judge Hastings. "After 1861 the pastor co-operated with the school, and indeed prior to that time was accustomed to hold Bible classes at private houses during the week as well as to lecture in school houses in the remoter parts of the parish."

The prayer meetings were held in the draughty church vestibule, the organ room, or a hired room in the old Empire Block until the pastor desperately determined to gather funds for a small building which might be more easily heated. This, known by the good Presbyterian names of Lecture Room or Session House, was

dedicated November 14th, 1861, in the early part of the civil war.

The fierce controversies of the slavery question which preceded that strife, and the four years of terrible warfare were instrumental in severing many a pastoral relation. "Those were days," as Dr. Parsons once said, "when people honestly differing in opinion felt very intensely, rendering it extremely difficult for a pastor to exercise true courage in upholding the government, without giving serious offence." That this pastorate was able to endure and come out all the stronger for that prolonged strain, speaks volumes for the mutual forbearance as well as for the mutual regard of both parties.

During the war he went to the hospital at City Point, Va., under appointment of the Christian Commission to assist in caring for the wounded, and it was always a satisfaction to him that he could be of use during that great struggle. He, himself, was drafted in '65, but the surrender which occurred soon after prevented his seeing active service.

February 5th, 1865, he entered upon the tenth year of his pastorate and at that time delivered an anniversary sermon, giving a brief synopsis of what had been accomplished during his ministry, from which we quote :

"On April 1st, 1856, which was soon after I commenced my labors, this church reported to Presbytery 168 communicants, while by our recent report there are 251 members. \* \* As to the relative numbers who may be regarded members of the congregation then and now, we of course have no accurate data, but probably our congregations now are from a fifth to a fourth larger than at that time. \* \* In respect of the temporalities of the church also the past nine years have not been fruitless of progress. An additional lot of land to enlarge the premises of the church has been purchased, a convenient row of sheds has been built, together with fences and walks, a heavy debt has been paid, a commodious lecture room has been erected and an organ has been purchased. \* \* During this period not far from \$2,700 have been contributed for benevolent purposes of a missionary character, not far from \$6,000



have been paid for extra congregational purposes and about \$9,500 for the ordinary expenses of the congregation, making a total of \$18,200 or an average of about \$2,000 a year. \* \* \* During the past year on the 29th day of April this church entered upon the second half century of its history. Of the original fourteen members all have passed away by death. And of all those who were members during the first twenty years, numbering about 300, only twenty still retain their connection with us. \* \* \* Of the revival during the past year, one of the happy fruits worthy of special mention is a prayer meeting of lads about fifteen years of age, numbering some eight or ten and conducted by one of our Sabbath School teachers, Mr. S. L. Rockfellow, which has been quite uniformly sustained. This is one of the excellent methods of continuing the precious influences of a revival. \* \* \* Nor in the review of the past year would I fail to mention your care for me in several voluntary donations aside from my regular salary. The greatly increased expenses of living have rendered this aid very acceptable in a pecuniary point of view, but superadded to that my heart has been cheered by regarding it as an evidence of your personal attachment."

His father's death occurred November 20th, 1864, during his absence at City Point, and the following spring he was appointed to take his father's place as trustee of Auburn Theological Seminary. For eighty years no catalogue of that institution appeared without the name of Levi Parsons on its Board of Trustees.

The growing esteem in which he was held, was again shown during the same year by his appointment as member of the Board of Councillors of Ingham University. Later he declined an urgent invitation to become chancellor of that school. He was also a trustee of the old Temple Hill Academy at Geneseo.

Those were the days of the Old School and the New School, terms intelligible only to the theologically wise of the present generation; but of greatest consequence to our grandparents. The reunion of these two branches after a separation of thirty-two years made the year 1869 memorable in the history of American Presbyterianism. As member of the Philadelphia Assembly the elder Levi Parsons witnessed that parting and went the New School way;

his son, as delegate to the great New York and Pittsburg Assemblies, assisted in bringing about the happy event which he jubilantly mentions in his journal as "A Great Day for Presbyterians."

A general reconstruction of synods and presbyteries followed. At the formation of Rochester Presbytery, which occurred at this time, Rev. Levi Parsons, of Mount Morris, by appointment of synod, convened the Presbytery and presided as moderator over its first meeting, when he was elected stated clerk, which office he retained until his death, a period of thirty years. His calm, good judgment and thorough knowledge of church laws and usage placed him among the valuable and influential men of his Presbytery, and made its records the model of accuracy throughout the synod, while his annual statistical reports to the General Assembly ranked among the few perfect ones presented to that body.

In 1874 his Alma Mater, Hamilton College, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, an honor which was a complete surprise to himself and a matter of great satisfaction to his friends. The pastor of one of the sister churches in the village only voiced the popular feeling when he said in a communication to a local paper: "While the much esteemed pastor of the Presbyterian church is moving steadily on to consummate in a little, a score of years spent in Mount Morris, a word is not out of place expressive of the genuine and uniform esteem in which he has been held and is held. Hamilton College did itself no discredit in giving our brother the well earned title of D.D. With admiration and reverence we look upon him, and shall take genuine comfort in calling him 'Doctor.' It will make no difference in the man, and he will never seem conscious of the dignity imposed upon him. With all a brother's heart, a younger and inexperienced pastor desires to say, 'God bless Doctor Parsons.'"

This clipping illustrates the amicable relations which ever existed between Dr. Parsons and the other clergy of the town. In the early days of his ministry, a regular weekly minister's meeting rotated between the studies of the Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian

and Presbyterian brethren, beautifully exemplifying the doctrine of Christian Unity, and although in later years this meeting was given up, the graces of tolerance and fraternal intercourse continued to flourish.

The twentieth anniversary of his pastorate was celebrated in 1876 by a reception, a brief description of which is given in a letter to his sister :

“The New York Evangelist of week before last gives an account of our ‘surprise.’ It was indeed a great surprise to us both. Wife and I went to Mrs. Hastings’ in response to an invitation to take tea with Brother Page, with the assurance that they would have their tea in time for us to reach our evening service. I began to be uneasy lest their tea should be too late, when Mrs. Hattie McNair invited us to step into the dining room. On entering we found the crowd and were soon met with congratulations on the twentieth anniversary of my pastorate. The rooms were decorated—one motto, ‘Hitherto the Lord hath led us,’ and another ‘Abide with us.’ Brother Page had been secured to make the presentation speech. Two large easy chairs, (one for wife) and a rich study gown were presented, and some money was afterwards quietly handed wife to get covers for the chairs and some memorials of the occasion for the children. This was the week of the society meeting and as usual I had been feeling quite depressed; of course the transition was very great. The parish was quite generally represented, about two hundred by actual count. Dr. and Mrs. Sprague were over from Geneseo. The evening meeting was only in another place.”

In June of the following year Dr. Parsons sailed for Scotland as delegate to the first Pan-Presbyterian council, whose sessions were held in Edinburgh, the home of Knox, of Chalmers, of Guthrie, and of many another brave defender of the faith. It was a goodly outing for a country minister who had been busily engaged in cultivating his corner of the vineyard for one and twenty years. The voyage over in company with that congenial band of forty brethren of different Presbyterian stripes was in itself vastly refreshing, intellectually as well as religiously. Not since his experiences in the City Point hospital had he enjoyed so long a vacation as that

which now opened before him. In the early days of his ministry he took no vacation, the pulpit being filled always during his infrequent absences by means of an exchange with some brother desirous of visiting friends in these regions. August was then the time of all the year for large congregations. And later, when the custom of annual vacations grew more common, the church was never closed for more than three Sabbaths of the year, so that this recess from the numerous cares and responsibilities incident to his active life was a welcome interval of rest, into the joys of which he entered with an almost boyish zest.

“It hardly seems possible,” he wrote to his home friends on landing, “that I am indeed in Old Scotland, the land which in past centuries has witnessed so much strife and contention. I see so much that is interesting that I am almost as much puzzled what to write as though I had seen nothing. The atmosphere is a real tonic. Poets in this land, breathing this air, ought to write the best of poetry ; and preachers, to preach the best of sermons. The weather, however, is not perfection, as the multitude of umbrellas seen on the street attest. Even on a bright morning a man would almost as soon go a mile without his hat as without his umbrella. Again ten or fifteen degrees more of heat and an occasional subsidence of the wind would not be unacceptable. The inhabitants here seem to have the impression that it is summer, as they resort to the seaside for bathing ; while we Americans with our flannels and overcoats are inclined to question whether they have not lost their reckoning.

“On the morning of our arrival at Glasgow we lost no time in taking the cars for Loch Lomond, and the subsequent trip by steamer, coach and car to Loch Katrine, the Trossacks and Stirling. These lakes are far famed for their beauty and deservedly so. The mountain scenery with which they are surrounded of course adds a grandeur which we do not find in our lakes of Central and Western New York. The Trossacks, celebrated for its wildness, afforded us with its smooth road and fine horses one of the most delightful coach drives we have ever taken. They have a way of so construct-

ing a coach with its inside out as to afford all the passengers the privilege of deck passage; a way too of putting their horses upon a keen gallop that is suggestive of accident insurance policies.

“At Stirling the chief point of interest, of course, is the Old Castle whose history is interwoven with that of Scotland itself. But the interest of the place is not limited to historical associations. I think I never viewed so rich a landscape as from the walls of the castle was spread out before us in the broad valley, and all under a high state of cultivation. Returning to Glasgow the same evening about ten o'clock, we were still favored with daylight but concluded we had seen enough for one day. The next two days we devoted to Glasgow and neighboring points.

“July 2, '77. We came to Edinburgh on Saturday, June 30th, passing through a very interesting agricultural portion of Scotland. Yesterday, Sabbath, we heard Dr. Bonar, who has written some of those sweet hymns to be found in our book. After the sermon we went to the vestry and introduced ourselves. The church to which he preaches discards the use of hymns. The quietness of the Sabbath and the church-going habits of the people are very noticeable. I am assigned as the guest of Mr. Forbes, No. 5 Whitehouse Terrace, about two miles from Assembly Hall, with the expectation of going there sometime to-morrow. Thus far I have been staying at the hotel. The opening sermon of the Council was preached in St. Giles church, famous as the place where John Knox made his rousing appeals.

“July 5. Our Americans are doing splendidly in the Council. I am proud of my countrymen.

“July 9. Yesterday in the afternoon I preached to a large congregation in Moray church for the pastor, Mr. Glendenning, who very politely invited me to dine with him, which I did. I am not quite so much in love with the weather here as I was on first coming to Edinburgh. It rains so much and clouds prevail, and to-day I have worn my thick overcoat besides having on my flannels. The sessions of the Council have been held in the large hall owned by the Free

church and occupied by them for their yearly meetings, and capable of accommodating about two thousand. Admission was by tickets at about five shillings for the course, and large numbers were disappointed in not being able to secure these tickets, so great was the rush. The meeting was a success beyond the expectation of those by whom it was projected; many very able papers were read and many eloquent speeches made. It was indeed a rich treat, which I expect to enjoy all the more as in the quiet of my study I shall review the proceedings. Have been delighted with my stopping place in Edinburgh. Our memories of this most interesting city will ever be all the more delightful as associated with the comforts and luxuries of this Scottish home, whose bountiful hospitality we have shared."

After seven days of conference, enriched with the wisdom and spiritual thought of some of the world's most eminent scholars and divines, the First Pan-Presbyterian Council adjourned July 10th. The following morning, Dr. Parsons in company with other members left for Melrose and Dryburgh Abbeys.

"From thence we walked some three miles," he says in a home letter, "to the residence of Lord Polwarth, where we were introduced to his lordship, a very plain, unpretentious man, as well as to Lady Polwarth, who is the mother of an interesting group of children. It was in response to their invitation that nearly two hundred of the Council and their friends met at their mansion for a Christian conference. All these partook of a bountiful lunch on their arrival as well as of supper just before their return; while the people from the neighborhood to the number of several hundred were provided with refreshments in a pleasant grove not far from the house. The grounds, located on the banks of the Tweed, reminded me of the Murray place [Mount Morris], and though more extensive were not as beautiful as the latter."

In company with Rev. Messrs. Gaston, Preston, Scovel and Sanborne he started next day for London and a short continental trip. They reached Paris on the evening of July 16th in a somewhat

dilapidated condition, having undergone the usual vicissitudes connected with crossing the channel. Of the sights, scenes and experiences of the next five weeks we will content ourselves with fragmentary jottings.

“Paris, July 20. This is a delightful city. The streets seem more cleanly as a rule than any other city I was ever in. We have been impressed with the spaciousness of the avenues and the extent of the parks, gardens, forests and driving courses. Were you to think of all Livingston county thus laid out I question whether your idea would be much in excess of the reality which was spread out before us as we took our stand on the top of the Triumphal Arch, some 150 feet high, erected by Napoleon in commemoration of his victories. As we see the people in the streets they are well behaved—no rowdyism, not a drunken man have we met in Paris.

“We went with others to view the catacombs, which are said to be better than those at Rome. The whole distance underground is a mile. I am not sorry I went, though I think once will answer for a lifetime. My conception of the catacombs up to this time has been somewhat vague. Now it is altogether distinct and vivid.

“Our efforts to thread our way through the streets and to supply our wants are sometimes quite amusing, inasmuch as we are quite ignorant of the language. At one restaurant Bro. — wanted milk for his coffee and made various gestures to make the waiter understand. At length the waiter seemed to say ‘I understand you now,’ started off and brought him a bottle of brandy. I leave you to imagine the roar of laughter at the table.

“Turin, July 24. We have passed through a section of the far-famed Alps. I had thought of the Alps as presenting a grand but desolate appearance, but all along our route they seemed to furnish a background to the social life of a rich agricultural region. In the matter of grandeur I was surprised at the almost endless combinations which were successively presented. \* \* You come to a group of snow-capped mountains and as the sun shines upon them you can hardly conceive of their beauty; then you suddenly discover

another, whose top is grey, towering to a great height and giving character to the others, very much as the grey-haired man in a congregation seems to give character to the congregation itself.

“Naples, July 28. Having been introduced to the minister of the Scotch church here on my trip from Edinburgh, I find he has been to the hotel to see me, and later has sent a note by messenger asking me to preach for him to-morrow morning, to which I have given my consent.

“Since dinner we have taken a drive in a cab, but the driver whipped his horse so unmercifully that I think we should have enjoyed a walk more. The inhabitants seem to be of all grades. But I think we have seen more of squalor and filth than in any other city thus far. Since coming to Italy I have been surprised at the high order of intelligence indicated by many of the faces, especially has this been so with quite a number of the military men.

“Florence, August 6. As there was no English speaking service to be found, we had Brother Scovel preach us a sermon. Of course there was not much in the atmosphere of the place like our Puritan Sabbath; and I can but think how sad it will be for our country if ever the foreign element shall succeed in breaking down our Sabbath institutions. Their absence here helps you to appreciate their preciousness.

“Venice. As I sit here writing, I hear no rumbling of wheels and clattering of hoofs as in other cities. This quietness pleases me. After dinner we took a ride in a gondola. Our oarsman favored us with some music, which was probably the best he could manufacture, but I hardly think he succeeded in charming any of the fair ladies of Venice. With the aid of a guide we have been visiting some of the wonders. Had I not seen so many cathedrals I should probably have been amazed at St. Mark's; but that which amazed us most was that so many of its precious things had been stolen from Jerusalem, Constantinople and other places.

“Of the thirty-seven days, which we had laid out for our stay on the continent, only about fourteen now remain. Well, it is a very



pleasant thought to me that we are now homeward bound. There is no country which in my eyes is as attractive as the Genesee Valley, and there are no scenes through which I pass which render my home less precious."

From Italy the party passed rapidly through Switzerland down the Rhine to the Low Countries, and thence to England and the Emerald Isle, where they took ship for New York. After an absence of nearly four months, Dr. Parsons reached home late in September. His return was a matter for village rejoicing. The satisfaction of his people found vent in a reception at the lecture room, adorned for the occasion with autumnal foliage and flowers. Here many of the citizens joined his parishioners in expressing their hearty welcome. It was a season of that abundant "good feeling," so dear to the pastor's heart, leading him to exclaim with the psalmist, "Truly the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage."

The pleasant day dreams indulged during the journey, of retrospective enjoyment with his family, were never realized. "A funeral was waiting for me when I got home, and I have been on the go ever since," he said in explanation. "I have about as much as I can do to grapple with present duties and cares, and let the past take care of itself. And so life whirls along and perhaps will continue to whirl until I shall get through."

The Quarter Centenary of Dr. Parsons' pastorate was celebrated at the residence of George W. Phelps, Esq., on the evening of February 3, 1881. Notwithstanding extreme cold and uncertain traveling, three hundred guests assembled to participate in the exercises. Among these were Rev. Dr. Page of Rochester, who assisted at the installation twenty-five years earlier; Rev. Messrs. Weed of Scottsville, Kittredge of Genesee, Conklin of Lakeville, Gutelius of Moscow, Best of Clinton; also from the village Dr. Massey of the Episcopal church and Rev. S. D. Moxley of the Baptist. Dr. Ames in behalf of the congregation addressed Dr. Parsons. He alluded to the pleasure of the church in commemorating the

event, and, after dwelling appreciatively upon the pastor's faithful labors during bygone years, presented twenty-five silver dollars, "milestones to mark each year of work," and a silver tea set, belated on the road by adverse weather. Several valuable gifts were likewise presented by members of the congregation and out-of-town friends. Remarks were made by Dr. Page, Messrs. Weed and Best; extracts from numerous letters read, also a poem contributed by a former pastor, Rev. C. H. A. Buckley, entitled

**A CHURCH'S SILVER WEDDING SONG.**

Sing we our "Silver Wedding" lay  
Of joys oft garnered up,  
With him by whom our souls have long  
Quaffed God's salvation cup;  
Drink we from it with fullest joy  
Out of Truth's living stream,  
Nor let the world, with Time's alloy,  
Begloom its golden gleams.

Twice ten and five of toilsome years,  
And yet a gladsome time,—  
Their harmonies of hopes and fears  
Ring out with sacred chimes;  
Blest memories from afar they call,  
To troop before our view,  
Linked hand in hand with grief for all  
The lost, the loved, the true.

Do not their spirits hover near,  
A cloud of witnesses,  
To greet him in our festive cheer  
And swell our tide of bliss?  
Were they not fed by him through life  
To run the patient race?  
Like them, shall we not bear the strife  
And win the heavenly place?

Truths, bright as stars, he made to shine  
Anew upon our way,  
And fruits, shed from the tree divine,  
Defying Time's decay  
He brought to us—and told of love,  
Of joy and hope in God,  
For all whose feet, when fixed above,  
The paths of pureness trod.

O Lord of light! still may his bow  
With us in strength abide,  
And let his life in fulness flow  
With love's undarkened tide;  
Grant that we all his joy may share,  
The topmost crown to place,  
On us a spirit temple fair,  
With shouts to it of "*Grace.*"

It was an event memorable not alone in the church annals of Mount Morris. Throughout the State of New York there were at that time (so far as is known) but *nine* other Presbyterian ministers who had occupied their pulpits twenty-five years and upwards. Although in his early ministry he had aimed at permanency, he had never anticipated so long a stay, ever realizing, in view of the constant changes in the ranks of the village clergy and those of the neighboring churches, the necessity of being "ready to go at the shortest notice, with the kindest feelings toward all, whenever the interests of the church and especially its amity seemed to require it."

While all else had changed—the trees, which he had helped to plant around the church, overtopping the eaves—the children grown to adult years—his co-presbyters scattered to the four quarters of the Union or gone to their final reward—one thing remained unaltered: "The declaration which I then made," he said in his anniversary sermon of that date, "the declaration of my belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God, and that I received the confession of faith of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, is a declaration which I still maintain with no less heartiness than when first made; while the vows which I then took to seek your spiritual welfare, are vows which I have cherished, and which I can only regret have not been more faithfully fulfilled." "Rooted and grounded in the faith," his creed knew no wavering; the truths learned in childhood stood the test of a lifetime.

It is interesting in this connection, as showing his indebtedness to early religious training, to read a letter written by him for the eightieth anniversary of the Marcellus church:

OCTOBER 10, 1881.

MY DEAR BROTHER SMITH:—Could we only carry these bodies from place to place as rapidly as our hearts go, I should not fail to be one of your number at the approaching anniversary. No urging is ever necessary to induce me to visit Marcellus. That village, with all its surroundings, has been to me much the same as Mecca has been to the Mohammedan, or Jerusalem to the Jew. No spot on

earth can quite take the place in my heart which I have given to my childhood home; and I am glad to say that as years increase my love for that home grows none the less. Sometimes when I am weary and perplexed with cares, it even now proves a very pleasant recreation to let memory busy herself in reproducing the scenes of my childhood. There was a great deal of sunshine in those scenes, but perhaps this is because I forget the clouds. Nothing as connected with the sufferings of our late President so touched my heart as the longing he expressed to be back on the "old sod" and to visit a certain hill where he used to pick wintergreens. Childhood memories brought him more sunshine than all the honors of the Presidency and splendors of the White House. The man was only the grown-up boy.

I never can be too thankful that God gave me Christian parents and surrounded me with the hallowed influences of a Christian home. Much as I loved those parents while they were living, I love them *more to-day*; and this because of my increasing appreciation of their real worth, and of what they did for me. When I meet them in Heaven I shall want to tell them this. But of course no view of my childhood home can possibly be complete excepting as seen in connection with the church. God himself has so joined the two together, that the highest excellence of each is only discoverable in its union with the other. Some of my earliest recollections are of attending church when I was about three years of age. That, of course, was in the old meeting-house. My place was in the minister's pew, which was a large square pew next to the pulpit on the west. How plainly I can now see the interior of that church, with its three aisles, its high pulpit, and its large galleries on three sides, occupied by not a few of the young people. Edward Frost was my first Sabbath school teacher, and Deacon Beach was the superintendent. At five o'clock I would go with my father to a third service on the south or east hills, or Falls, or the Captain Taylor school house. The church conference was on Friday afternoon and was attended by such men as Judge Bradley and Mr. Bingham. Mr. Bingham was a notable singer. I think St. Martin's must have been his favorite, as he used to give the peculiar warble of St. Martin's to all the other tunes. His singing was to me the best part of the meeting, attributable in part, perhaps, to the kind word which he usually had for me as a child. The reason for holding the meeting in the afternoon was to accommodate those living at a distance, there being very few church members in the village. Indeed,

the strong infidelity which prevailed in the village was one of the chief obstacles to the prosperity of the church. \* \* And as we think of all these eighty years through which God has led our beloved church, how encouraging the fact that an institution which was thus founded in the wilderness, has survived all its founders, and comes down to us with increased strength, freighted with so many prayers, and labors, and tears, and rich in so many precious memories and associations. We may presume that on that October day, eighty years ago, the forests that, with the exception of here and there a clearing, covered all those hills and valleys must have looked gorgeous in their autumnal robes, as that little band of Christians gathered from different parts of the town to enter into solemn covenant with God and each other in the church relation. That must have been an interesting meeting. I think we all wonder what were the hymns they sung, what the chapter they read, and what the particular truth to which their attention was invited; but we cannot doubt their prayers reached down to us and to those who shall yet come after us. Theirs was a noble work, they toiled hard, they laid strong foundations; but, one by one, they have fallen asleep, they rest from their labor, and their works do follow them, and because of this they are not lost to us. But in the very act of taking up their work and carrying it forward we may be said to belong to them, and they to us.

Among the literary productions which Dr. Parsons prepared, in addition to his regular work as pastor, may be mentioned his address before the Alumni at the commencement exercises of Hamilton College, in 1885, on "The Uses of Political Parties." On the request of his friend and classmate, Hon. John Jay Knox, this address was published in the *New Princeton Review* of May, 1887.

His most important work, "The History of Rochester Presbytery," was compiled from manuscript records of that ecclesiastical body and the presbyteries formerly occupying the ground, and published by Presbytery in 1889. As giving access to all matters pertaining to Presbyterianism in these regions, the work possesses great value. In reviewing it the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* says: "The volume gives a brief sketch of Presbyterian work from the year 1795, when the first trace of any permanent church organ-

ization is found in Western New York. \* \* The general information in the work is invaluable. Dr. Parsons is entitled to the gratitude of all students of church history for the care with which the work is compiled, and that subjects ordinarily dry are so handled as to be replete with interest."

"The Mount Morris Centenary," prepared in 1894 by Dr. Parsons and Mr. S. L. Rockfellow, in addition to being a most excellent record of the first century of the town's existence, shows his earnest desire as a citizen to promote the development and well-being of the place, and his interest in local as well as general history.

He was chosen Moderator of the Synod of New York and New England at Albany, in 1892, and by virtue of this office presided over the Missionary Congress held in Saratoga the following year. It was during this same year, '93, that he became President of the Board of Trustees of Auburn Theological Seminary, and in this capacity presented the keys of that institution to its first president, Rev. Henry M. Booth, D. D., and to his successor, Rev. George B. Stewart, D. D. The remarks of Dr. Parsons on this latter occasion regarding the use of trust funds are of especial value. We give the address in full:

"PRESIDENT STEWART:

*My Dear Brother:*—It has been made my pleasant duty, on the occasion of your inauguration, as the second president of our beloved seminary, to present you the keys of this sacred institution, which I now do in the name of its Board of Trustees, which I have the honor to represent.

This is not an empty form, but is rather significant of the power with which you are invested, as the recognized head of this honored school of the prophets. The charter has devolved upon our board the more immediate care of the seminary, as to its curriculum of study, the maintenance of discipline, the comfort of the professors and students, the care of its buildings and grounds, and the management of its finances.

In the care of all these invested funds, we are impressed with the greatness of our responsibility, when we consider that they are not only trust funds, but especially sacred, as the offerings of God's people for ministerial education; many of whom though dead are yet speaking, through the perpetual power of their benefactions.

Nor do we forget that these funds represent, in part, the hard earnings of the fathers and mothers, who were the pioneers of Central and Western New York, and who transformed what was then a wilderness, into these fruitful fields; and who as they endured privations, and built their own humble homes, made their 'deep poverty to abound unto the riches of their liberality,' in the founding of this seminary.

But our funds represent not only poverty but wealth. As God has lifted our whole country to its present high position of power and riches, in the sight of all the nations of the earth, our own favored section has been a large sharer in this prosperity, as is attested by the many enterprising cities and thriving villages which are scattered so thickly over this part of our commonwealth. To the small contributions therefore, of the pioneers, have subsequently been added the hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of dollars, in gifts and bequests of the wealthy, which have served to erect these massive buildings, to adorn these beautiful grounds, and to increase the amount of our invested funds.

While therefore in the administration of our high trust, we must seek only to do the Lord's will, yet we feel that in ascertaining what his will may be, we are to have a wise reference to the views, the tastes, and the habits of life, of those who contributed this prosperity; the rich as well as the poor, and the poor most certainly, as well as the rich; for we know that in God's sight the smallest contribution may be the largest.

But this is not our most perplexing problem. As wealth abounds in our land, it is not without its dangers to institutions, as well as to individuals. To say nothing of conspicuous instances of the perversion of funds from the express terms of charters under which

they have been held, it is enough for us to know that churches, and missionary boards, and educational institutions generally, are enduring some of the most insidious temptations, as the god of this world through the power of money is securing as many as possible to fall down and worship him. In retaining the simplicity, the humility, and the fraternity of the gospel, it is far easier 'to know how to be abased, than how to abound.'

Wealth is a greater trial to grace than is poverty. The Bible abounds in its warnings against the encroachments of worldliness.

The efficiency of our future ministry will be the fruit of the consecrated spirit which now pervades our theological seminaries. God is calling for ministers 'who shall endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ;' and we shall be greatly to blame, if our trust funds shall result in sending out men whose moral fibre has been weakened by their love of ease and desire for luxurious living.

We think it quite proper, my dear brother, in recognizing your headship of this institution in all its departments, that we should thus indicate the nature of our duties as a board, and frankly confess the dangers with which we are beset. After many losses and much perplexity, owing to the unprecedented revulsion which has recently prevailed in all commercial circles, we are happy to report our financial condition as both sound and hopeful. We are out of debt, and, what is more important, have learned to keep out of debt.

Most cordially do we welcome you as our leader; and it will be our pleasure to aid you in carrying out all plans which you may devise, for the strengthening, enlarging, and greater efficiency of this institution. We shall invite you from time to time, as we have your predecessor, to participate in our deliberations; and we shall rejoice to find that his mantle has fallen upon your shoulders. Words fail us as we try to express our debt of gratitude for the six years of his faithful, wise, sagacious and successful leadership. Indeed his expressed approval of yourself, as his possible successor, is your most happy introduction to our confidence.

And now it is our prayer that our covenant God, the God of our





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MOUNT MORRIS, N. Y.

fathers, may fill you with all wisdom ; and that the Holy Spirit may use you as his own chosen instrument, in sending out year by year successive bands of young men, who shall be 'able ministers of the New Testament,' 'workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' "

The fortieth anniversary of this pastorate was celebrated June 25th, 1896. It was one of those perfect days known only to the month of roses. "Mount Morris, fairest village of the valley of the Genesee, was at its best," says the Presbytery News, "and the environment helped to make more glad a joyous anniversary. The church auditorium was adorned with plants and flowers in rich profusion and chaste designs ; the session room and parlors were turned into a dining hall with tables laden with products of field and garden."

The guests, including a large delegation from the Presbytery, assembled from far and near to congratulate the church and minister whose mutual vows had remained unbroken for two score years.

There was an elaborate program extending over afternoon and evening sessions. After the usual preliminary exercises, the Rev. H. H. Stebbins, D. D., of Rochester, as representative of Rochester Presbytery, delivered the introductory address, closing with : "As members of Presbytery we say, Blessed be God for the five and twenty years of Dr. Parsons' continuance with that body. It has never known but one stated clerk, and as stated clerk, what a record ! I will not call him the father of Presbytery, for that he might construe as a reflection on his age, and this is no time for reflections—of that sort. But in the best sense of the word, and in a most important, yea invaluable sense, he has been the Boss of the Presbytery. \* \* What fidelity to the meetings from invocation to benediction ! He has been the first to arrive, the last to depart. What accuracy as a scribe ; what skill, entirely legitimate, that at

Synod and Assembly, the Rochester Presbytery should have its full quota of representation! What intelligent and vigorous interest in all the business! What fraternal regard and tender consideration, and gentleness. Blessed be God for the twenty-five years. May his presbyterial function attain unto its fortieth year and as much longer as God will let him serve in that capacity. \* \* The Presbytery shares the joy, the honor, the grateful review, the sacred memories inspired by this anniversary."

Rev. Dr. Kittredge, of Geneseo, followed, as representing the neighboring ministers, and said in part: "Good friends, and friends all; especially, my friend Dr. Parsons. The members of this Presbytery, and the inner circle of its members, have rejoiced that they have a brother whom they can trust, a counselor. I am here to speak of the wisdom and balance of this brother. Our inner circle recognize what a good thing it is to have fellowship with such a soul, a right royal soul; we bless God that he has given us such a head, heart, and soul to be our companion in His name."

John M. Hastings, Esq., then spoke for the congregation: "In coming before you, I believe that I am speaking, not only to those present here, but to a great congregation who have gone beyond. Forty years have passed, and I believe that I can say, that year by year our hearts have been knit closer and closer with our pastor. It is not to our credit, but it is because our pastor has been patient with us, almost beyond the patience of man. \* \* Had we a joy, we gladly told it to our pastor. Had we a sorrow, then we to the good Doctor came, a friend with ever ready ear; and with mouth closed but to that one who did confide. The Doctor has never failed us. When there is any unusual occurrence in church or state, we have a way of waiting to hear from Dr. Parsons. We know that he never gets off his base; a regiment of cavalry or artillery cannot move him; he is solid and has his reasons for what he says. \* \* We have never had cause to fear the propriety of the utterance of our pastor. We have never known what it is to come to church with a doubt as to the spirituality of what we hear. When the

Doctor tells us that anything is spiritually right, all the authors or books in existence are at naught, and we are at rest."

In response Dr. Parsons said :

"Standing as I do today at the close of forty years' service as pastor of this church and congregation, I wish most of all to express my obligations to God for the way in which He has been pleased to lead me and to give Him all the glory for any good whatever which He may have secured through my instrumentality in this pastoral relation.

I feel today that I am surrounded by friends; and for forty years I have had that same feeling.

This is my home where the Lord has permitted me to abide and I can truly say "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage." The whole valley of the Genesee is renowned for its fertility and beauty, and certainly we can not be blamed if we regard this as one of its most attractive spots. The words of kindly greeting which have been so happily expressed by representatives from the Presbytery, the neighboring clergy, and the people of this congregation, have only reassured me of the friendliness of my co-presbyters, the sweet fellowship of brethren whose parishes join my own and the confidence and love of a people who occupy a very warm place in my heart.

The friendship in these different relations, of which I have been so many years the recipient, has been of a quality to overlook my many defects; for I am intensely conscious of my imperfections, and could almost wish to repeat these years in the ministry, so as to be more careful, more active, and more faithful.

This occasion is one of reminiscences, suggestive especially of the meeting of the Ontario Presbytery in this house forty years ago, when this pastoral relation was constituted.

The Presbytery of Ontario was with few exceptions, limited to the county of Livingston, and was composed of brothers who were bound together by very strong attachments. We were a band of brothers; our meetings were noted for their sociability, especially

the summer sessions, when our wives were present and the collation was the most attractive feature of the occasion.

Those, too, were days of disunion among Presbyterians, when the terms Old School and New School were very familiar, and while the bitterness which characterized the division at the first had largely abated, yet the old battle lines were far from being obliterated; and as churches of both kinds were located side by side in this territory, the friction here was greater than elsewhere. For this very reason the Re-union in 1869 brought a great blessing to the Presbyterians of Livingston county. The event was celebrated by a large convention in this very church, the hatchets were all buried, the best of feeling prevailed, and the meeting was little else than one great love feast.

At this time of re-union the desire was very strong that as a county we should be by ourselves and be known as the Presbytery of Livingston; but the demand for large bodies was so overwhelming as to merge us with the metropolitan Presbytery of Rochester, and thus largely obliterate our cherished traditions. The union, however, has proved most happy for these more than twenty-five years. Our city brethren have treated us most courteously, and the parity of the clergy has been not less happily exemplified by them than it was on the floor of our formerly purely rural body.

The entire disuse of the terms Old and New School has only proved how completely obliterated is every trace of that unhappy controversy which divided our beloved Zion for more than thirty years.

Of the clergymen of all denominations in Central and Western New York, I know of none but Dr. Waith, of Lancaster, who occupies the same position as he did forty years ago. For many years Brother Hunter of Springwater, and Dr. Shaw of Rochester, were conspicuous illustrations of the permanent pastorate, the one celebrating his fiftieth anniversary and the other very nearly reaching that mark.

As productive of prolonged pastorates this Genesee Valley has

earned an enviable distinction. Dr. Barnard was thirty-eight years at Lima, Rev. Thomas Aitken was more than forty years at Sparta, and the following have had pastorates of twenty years or more: Dr. A. G. Hall of Rochester, 3rd; Dr. J. R. Page of Perry, Dr. S. A. Freeman of Honeoye Falls, Dr. G. Patton of Rochester, 3rd; Dr. C. B. Gardner of Rochester, Westminster; Dr. C. P. Coit of Rochester, Memorial; Dr. H. P. V. Bogue of Avon, Rev. G. K. Ward of Dansville, and Rev. F. Gutelius of Moscow. The last four are in the race with a fair promise of celebrating the fortieth or even the fiftieth anniversary. The name of Dr. J. E. Kittredge, of Geneseo, should properly be added to this roll of honor, as he is already in the twentieth year of his pastorate.

But turning from these Presbyterian relations to the dear people of my charge for whom I have offered so many prayers and from whom I have received so many benefactions, not the least of which have been the prayers they have offered up for me, I feel that if any honor attaches to the fact of our having walked lovingly together for forty years, that honor is largely attributable to your patience, your thoughtfulness and your uniform kindness. While it would be more than human to suppose that any minister could preach even one year to any congregation, without awakening some opposition, yet I can say that whatever of opposition there may have been, you have been very careful to keep me in blissful ignorance of it.

Years ago you gained my confidence, and you have never forfeited it. You have made me feel at home, you have cheered me with your kindly greetings, and you have sustained me with timely assurances, that my ministrations were appreciated.

You yourselves have met with many changes, while the Lord has kept me in the same place. He has with few exceptions taken from me my former people, and supplied their places with others. Of the one hundred and sixty-eight communicants reported in 1856 only sixteen remain, three of whom are non-residents, and four of whom have changed their church relations and returned. In addition

to these there are about forty, who then belonged to the congregation, many of whom were children, who are still with us, and mostly communicants ; and there is perhaps no blessing so sweet to a pastor's heart as when our covenant God permits the children to take the places of the fathers and mothers who have fallen asleep.

Coming as I did to this place in my youth and inexperience, the Lord was very good in surrounding me with a noble band of elders, men of varied gifts but all of sterling character. One by one they have left us until all have gone. But their places have been supplied by worthy followers up to the present time ; men in whom I have confided, and who have worked harmoniously for the interests of the church. Indeed I have never felt that any of them, either openly or secretly, were working against my ministry. And I am happy to bear similar testimony as to the successions of deacons and trustees, who have been true helpers.

I recall their names with tender interest, and cannot forget their friendliness. This absence of opposition is all the more noticeable when we think of the exciting experiences of the civil war.

The uniform good health with which the Lord has blessed me has enabled me with but few exceptions, to meet my ordinary presbyterial, pulpit and parochial duties. I call to mind only two stated meetings of presbytery from which I have been absent ; and few indeed have been the Sabbaths, when sickness has kept me from my accustomed place in the sanctuary.

Nor can I fail to bear testimony to the uniform friendliness of the other churches in this village. With many of the pastors of these churches, I have formed very strong friendships. The Lord has enabled us to work together in love. Indeed in not a few instances, our relations could hardly have been more confidential, had we belonged to the same denomination. Similar testimony I wish to bear respecting the people generally, irrespective of any church relations. They have expressed their friendliness in ways which have touched my heart.

I am glad the Lord led me into the ministry. Were I to live my

life over again I would choose the same profession ; only I would strive to honor it more and make it more effective for good. The ministry is a noble calling, appealing to the grandest motives and furnishing rare opportunities for the development of a true manhood. The Lord greatly honors the man, whom he truly calls to proclaim 'The glorious gospel of the blessed God.'

I have tried to be faithful in preaching the truth, as found in God's Holy Word, I have tried to discourage everybody from thinking they could be saved, by their moral lives ; and I have tried to point all alike to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

Daniel Webster is represented as having said, that the one truth which of all others most impressed him, was the fact of his personal accountability to God ; and so may we not say that the transcendent importance of the pastoral relation, is only seen when viewed in the light of eternity.

When I was a boy I was much moved by reading a sermon, by Jonathan Edwards, in which he reminded his people at Northampton that he must answer at the judgment for the way in which he had preached, while they must answer for the way they had received the word at his mouth ; and so, my dear people, pleasant as this pastoral relation has been, helpful as it may have proved to us mutually, let us not forget that it is all to be passed in review, by that Judge who cannot err ; and that it is our privilege to be storing up from day to day, its rich fruits among the rich treasures which never fail. It is especially interesting to think of this anniversary, in its relation to the recent revival, in which God has so greatly blest this whole community, and permitted us as a church to be enriched by so large a number of new recruits. We can think of this large ingathering as a crown which God has placed upon our mutual life as people and pastor. We have labored and prayed together and God has not suffered us to labor and pray in vain. Let us welcome this band of helpers, as full of promise for the future, and let us with them, hand this church down to our successors,



through the rich blessing of God, stronger and purer, and more effective for good, than it has ever been before.

During all these forty years, we have been threading our way through the wilderness, not knowing what a day might bring forth—living only a day at a time. In this respect, this glad anniversary day of mutual congratulations, is just like every other day of the forty years, in that we know not what shall be on the morrow.

A kind Providence will turn the leaves of our histories one by one in the future as in the past; and we shall only need to trust implicitly in Him who has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' "

Dr. Parsons then read the following poem which was written for the occasion by Mrs. Parsons :

The way the Lord has led us ;  
These forty checkered years,  
'Mid doubts and fears,  
'Mid smiles and tears  
How short the time appears.

The way the Lord has led us ;  
Sometimes the clouds were dark,  
But through the gloom  
The light has shone  
And we no fear have known.

In the misty halls of mem'ry,  
The purpling shadows fall,  
For nearly all  
Who gave the call  
Have passed the jasper wall.

The way the Lord has led us ;  
A generation new  
Has gathered 'round,  
New friends we've found  
And this is hallowed ground.

One family above, below,  
United in one love,  
We're pressing on  
To join in song  
With all the blood-bought throng.

In one unceasing melody,  
Like sound of ocean surf,  
With hope complete  
Their joyous feet  
Now tread the golden street.

I see the crimson banners  
Of morning now unfold ;  
Hail, day so bright !  
Dispel the night,  
Arise, glad soul, 'tis Heaven's light.

The evening exercises, consisting of brief addresses by visiting clergy, were enlivened by a tale of secret presbyterial proceedings related by Rev. G. K. Ward, of Dansville, which was after this fashion :

“MY DEAR BROTHER PARSONS: I have a somewhat strange story to relate this evening.

It is with reluctance that I make you acquainted with certain facts that have come to my knowledge, but a troubled conscience has driven me to commit to writing, so that my words may not be misquoted, the confession, that within the past few weeks, a secret correspondence has been carried on by certain members of the Presbytery of Rochester, relating to one of its members.

Now this member being none other than the honored pastor of this church, for many years the stated clerk of our Presbytery, who keeps all the records, and at the same time keeps everybody straight; who is in fact the Boss of the Presbytery, as Dr. Stebbins has said, I did not feel that it would be proper for me to withhold this information from him, since, in his judgment, it ought properly to appear in the minutes of Presbytery. The purport of the secret correspondence referred to, was to the effect that the above mentioned brother should be specially honored, in view of the fact that he had come to the fortieth anniversary of his pastorate, as the Bishop of the Diocese of Mt. Morris. In proposing the manner in which this should be done, one brother wrote: Let our honored brother be arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and a glittering crown—a la Mordecai in the reign of Queen Esther; let him be placed upon a richly caparisoned horse, and led in triumph through the streets of Mt. Morris, while brother Bristol, or some other horseman equally expert, proclaims, ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the Presbytery delighteth to honor.’

This suggestion was considered quite unique, but there were difficulties in the way. The Doctor’s most intimate friends were not quite sure he would look well in a robe and crown, never having seen him with those appurtenances, and others said that the sight of him upon horseback would be so novel as to provoke laughter and spoil the effect, so that plan was given up.

Another brother suggested that we should present our brother with a luxurious and richly upholstered armchair, with the names of

his brother clergymen engraved upon it. But this was thought to be too suggestive of retirement ; as though we were hinting that our friend was becoming venerable and needed rest, so that scheme was found impracticable.

Then some one wrote : Let us Doctor him. We had to send for explanations, the suggestion being ambiguous. 'Doctor him?' What does that mean? Surely he was doctored years ago! But the answer put a new light upon the proposal: 'Let us give him some pills,' wrote the originator of this marvelous scheme ; and he proceeded to outline his method and the reasons for it, which were so cogent that his advice prevailed, and all the brethren said, Amen.

So it came to pass that your speaker was commissioned to procure the medicine to be administered to our dear brother upon his fortieth anniversary. I had been furnished with the prescription by Dr. Kittredge, who as you know is quite a physician in his way, and I wended my way to the drug store. The proprietor looked at the prescription carefully a moment, then glancing up, 'You will have to have that put up across the way.' I looked toward the opposite side of the street in a bewildered sort of way, and saw nothing but the bank. 'Where do you mean,' I said, 'at the bank?' 'Yes, that is the place.' So with astonishment I went over to the bank, and threw my paper down, in front of the paying teller, with the remark, 'Do you fill clerical prescriptions here?' What was my surprise to hear him answer, 'Certainly,' and he took up the paper, read it, and disappeared, returning a moment later to remark, 'This prescription calls for forty 'gold cure pills,' but if the patient is a large man, I think I had better make up heavier pills, and not so many of them.' I said, 'That will meet the conditions exactly,' and in a few minutes he handed me this pill-box, marked, as you will see, 'Clerical Gold Cure, to be taken once a week or as often as required.'

So now, my dear friends, I have revealed this secret. One of the brethren rather scoffed at the idea of the 'gold cure' for Doctor Parsons, who never was known to take so much as a glass of beer in his life. What an idea! The last person in the world to need

the gold cure!! But then, wrote another, Dr. Parsons is a gold man for he is going to stand on the St. Louis platform this fall.

And *similia similibus*, you know, as the Homeopaths say. It will be all right. So Doctor, here are the pills prescribed for you by the Presbytery. Are you fond of taking pills? No? I assure you these are not bitter, they are easy to take, and you must take them anyway, for there was a unanimous vote in the Presbytery to this effect, and you know you have never failed to obey the will of the Presbytery. Take them with our best wishes. I trust that they will do you good, and help to cure every heart-ache, in the sweet remembrance that your brethren in this Presbytery love and honor you."

The closing years of Dr. Parsons' life were fully as crowded with cares and responsibilities as any that preceded, for his zeal in the Master's work abated in no degree, while his genuine interest in others and desire to be helpful led him, as always, to enter heartily into any cause that might promote their happiness or welfare.

Long usage never led to neglect of parochial duties. With his wife he still continued to visit each home in his parish twice a year; and many were the calls in addition to comfort the sick, cheer the lonely, or welcome newcomers. He was a faithful teacher in the Sabbath school, and a regular attendant of the Christian Endeavor society, where he was always ready to take some helpful part. Moreover he was accustomed to prepare for each Sabbath one written sermon and one extempore. During these latter years, also, he held a third service once a month at Craig Colony for Epileptics, which was a source of great comfort to himself because of the warm gratitude expressed by those unfortunates.

Although involving much outside work and an extensive correspondence, his devotion to ecclesiastical affairs never flagged. No regular meeting of Presbytery found his name recorded among the absentees, or lacked the guidance of his knowledge and fore-

thought, while his appointment by Synod and General Assembly upon important committees often necessitated long journeys to attend extra sessions of the same.

Amid all these labors, the preparation of the Half Century Annalist's letter for the class of '49 of Hamilton College, was no small task. This is pervaded by that freshness of spirit and genial humor, always a most lovable feature of his character, which time never dimmed. We quote from its opening:

“This occasion may be sad or joyful, depressing or inspiring, just as we may be determined to view it. As retrospective merely, it must be sad, as a summing up of achievements for their own sake, we cannot evade the conclusion that all is vanity; but when we think of the work we have done, and the victories we have gained, not as past, but even now as a part of ourselves, and potential for our higher development, and nobler, purer, and more complete characters, when we realize that we are only in the infancy of our existence, then such a union is refreshing—stimulating and full of hope.

To the graduates of to-day, we probably seem as old men; but this is their mistake—their eyes are out of focus—a defect which fifty years will correct. We know better, we know that we are still but boys, in the preparatory department of God's great university, hard at work as ever, in studying our first lessons, with interest not only unabated, but increasingly intense.

It is pleasant indeed to call up the memories of our college life; those were happy days, and our advantages were exceptionally good. Fifty years have not abated the respect which we then cherished for our faithful teachers. We can now see them, as they occupied their conspicuous seats in the chapel, at morning and evening prayers; President North, with Professors Avery, Mandeville, Catlin, Dwight, North and Upton. They were scholars and instructors and gentlemen. They knew how to manage boys, and have patience with their infirmities. Those were not dull days—we managed to keep things lively and give the faculty something to do. I am sorry to say, that

with the most of us, we were not over-studious ; there was no danger that "much learning would make us mad." In our opinion, the most successful recitation was the one we got out of. That a professor was sick, and unable to meet his class, was not regarded as an unmixed evil, we were always quick to discover the silver lining to the cloud.

In our transition from Freshmen to Sophomores, there was a lightning rod affair, connected with rust ringing, that requires some explanation. It was a fine illustration of unity in diversity. The faculty and the boys were all after the same thing, only in different ways. All alike were anxious for the honor of the college, and the glory of Old Hamilton ; the faculty by maintaining order, sustaining government and keeping up at least a show of authority ; while the boys were zealous for the traditions of the elders, and cherished those ancestral customs, which they had found as a part of the college, and in their opinion perhaps even the more important part. This difference became quite interesting, as rust ringing night found the faculty occupying the entire lower part of the chapel, while the boys were limited to the belfry. The two parties stood in the relation of besiegers and besieged, and the question was one of endurance. The contest was proving quite unequal, for the faculty presumably was fortified by pies, cakes and cold coffee, while we in the belfry who were enduring the siege, were destitute of all the provisions. But what about the lightning rod? much every way, but especially down. To Benjamin Franklin belongs the high honor of discovering the utility of the lightning rod, as a conductor of electricity, but to the class of '49, the hardly less honor, of discovering its equal utility, as a conductor of boys ; yes, perhaps, we may claim a greater honor, for lightning can take care of itself, but boys have not always that ability. As we on that eventful night stood in that belfry, having performed our last duty as Freshmen, and made sure that the bell was free from rust, and according to all ancestral usage, had proved ourselves worthy of the name of Sophomore, we could have gone up a lightning rod or down just as the emergency

might require. In the present instance there were three important reasons, why we decided to go down; the first reason was, that we were already as high as we cared to be, there was nothing to be gained by a farther ascent and there was everything to be gained by a descent; our second reason was, that it was then past our bedtime, the most of us having been brought up in Puritan families, with the lullaby, 'early to bed and early to rise.' But our third, and indeed our strongest reason for going down rather than up, was to avoid the faculty. But why avoid the faculty when we all alike were after the honor of the college and they were waiting to receive us with open arms? That was just the difficulty—it was the open arms we were afraid of; it was an instance of distrust of proffered friendship. But to be brief in this description we retired to our rooms that night just as usual, only we went by way of the lightning rod. As to the subsequent movements of the faculty, of course our testimony is not admissible. Presumably they held the entire chapel as long as they cared to, or at least as long as the cold coffee and other provisions lasted; and whether they then formed in procession and marched away with their lunch baskets on their arms, or one by one stole quietly to their homes, we shall never know. It is a pleasant reflection that that was a night of victory all around; the faculty had its own way, kept up a show of authority, conquered the whole of the chapel, held it as long as they cared to, and went home when they got ready; while the boys sustained the honored customs, lifted themselves into unquestioned Sophomoric dignity, and proved themselves superior to the faculty in strategy. Wherever on the face of the earth a member of the class of '49 may see a lightning rod he can afford to take off his hat; for it always speaks hopefully, assuring him that however tight may be the place he is in, there is certainly a way out."

It is pleasant to remember the tribute of affection given during his last year by his townspeople in the "Closing Century Reception" held at his home December 7th, 1900. Members of every denomi-

nation assembled to express their love and esteem, leaving a valuable souvenir of their visit.

His failing health had for several months caused much anxiety. His family often urged the relinquishment of a portion of his work ; but he refused, saying, "I wish to die in the harness," and again to his wife, "I feel, 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.' "

Though his physical powers were impaired, the powerful sermons produced at this time show undiminished mental vigor and increasing knowledge of spiritual things. Among them will long be remembered the Thanksgiving sermon of 1899, the Closing Century sermon, and the sermon commemorative of the death of Queen Victoria. As the end drew near his themes became strangely prophetic of the approaching change.

Sunday evening, March 31st, he stood for the last time in his pulpit to preach to his people. His subject was the death of Aaron, which he depicted with singular vividness, describing the ascent of Mt. Hor at the command of the Lord, the laying aside of the priestly garments, and the yielding of his spirit to his Maker.

The following Sunday was Easter. Dr. Parsons administered the communion, and standing by the table, spoke earnestly from the words, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

That night the disease which had clung to him for many months took an acute form. The duties which he accomplished with such diligence, and such delight, were his to perform no longer. Instead he was called to lie upon his bed of patient suffering.

He talked little, but his meditation was sweet. He expressed to his wife great comfort in the abundant store of scripture which his memory contained. Once when death seemed near, he repeated the prayer learned at his mother's knee, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

The end, however, did not come till some three weeks later. On the morning of Memorial Day, 1901, his spirit entered the home not



made with hands, eternal in the heavens. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth ; yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them."

Dr. Parsons is survived by his wife and eight children : Dr. Stoyell C. Parsons, of San Angelo, Texas ; Levi E., of Marcellus, New York ; Dr. Henry T., of Beech Creek, Pennsylvania ; Arthur L., of Mt. Morris, and the Misses Elizabeth L., Mary A., Gertrude W., and Annie C., who reside at the home.

Referring to Dr. Parsons the Mount Morris Union said :

"To us who knew him, who have watched his every day life for all these years, and who loved him for his manhood, his tenderness, his Christian graces and his grand stability, the honors accorded him by his church and college are but a feeble expression of the largeness of the man. In our hearts he occupies the inner sanctuary, where we cherish all that is best and highest in our experiences. At our marriages, our christenings, our funerals, in society, in business, in civic life, there has been this good man ; his cheerful, hopeful heart has joined with us in all our joys, his pure spirit and unflinching trust in God's supremacy and wisdom has been our stay in affliction, his clear, cool, deliberate judgment has been our guide in business and civic life.

Although always first Christ's Messenger, still Dr. Parsons' mind was clear and his judgment safe on all business propositions and he took a deep and intelligent interest in all that pertained to the business and political world, and greatly enjoyed discussing these questions with his friends. While at all times he kept abreast with the advanced thinkers of the age, he was by nature conservative, and rarely spoke or acted without due consideration, hence his utterances bore weight, if not conviction to his hearers.

We cannot tell how many hundreds of sin-burdened souls have been brought to the light of Christ under the ministrations of Dr. Parsons. We only know that the number is very large, and that his Master's verdict will be, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

## The Funeral Exercises.

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ON the afternoon of June 3rd, 1901, a brief service was conducted at the family residence by Rev. W. A. Stirling, rector of St. John's Episcopal church. Immediately after, public services were held in the First Presbyterian church, during which time the schools and all places of business in the village were closed. The church was heavily draped in black, while many beautiful flowers surrounding the pulpit testified to the regard of a bereaved people. A throng of nearly eight hundred persons crowded the building, showing the esteem in which Dr. Parsons was held, not only by his congregation but by the community at large. About fifty clergymen of Presbyterian and other denominations were present.

The elders of the church officiated as bearers: Samuel L. Rockfellow and Miles B. McNair as honorary bearers, and Robert Crawford, John M. Hastings, Henry M. Swan, Frank H. Mills, Joshua C. Weeks and Jacob Knappenberg as active bearers.

When the casket had been placed before the pulpit, the choir chanted "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," after which the prayer of invocation was offered by Rev. F. Gutelius of Moscow. The scripture, selected and often used for the comfort of other mourning hearts by Dr. Parsons himself, was then read by Rev. J. N. Carmichael of Caledonia, and was followed by a sympathetic rendering of the hymn, "Jesus, still lead on."

Rev. Herman C. Riggs, D. D., of Rochester, then delivered the opening address:

“There is, for all who speak to-day, but one theme and thought. Our utterances will weave themselves into a loving tribute to the name and work and memory of our beloved brother, who for nearly half a century has lived in this community, the pastor of many, the friend of all.

It is to be my privilege to speak of Dr. Levi Parsons, the man. And he was the thoroughly true and noble man. In every department and feature of manliness he was admirable. Even physically he had the marked advantage of a full development. He was a man of large frame and fine bodily proportion. His physical presence was commanding. On the street, or in any assembly, he was a marked figure. As he entered the homes of his people he carried into them an atmosphere of power. In his prime he could have given delight to the Greek in his enjoyment of physical perfection as an ideal. He was gifted, too, with an unusual voice, strong and deep and round and rich, an instrument for service in the ministries of his life such as few possess or can possibly acquire. It could rise at his command to the utterance of most forceful thought, it could tremble with the soft sympathy and pathos of deepest feeling.

Dr. Parsons' mental equipment and furnishing were of high order. In this regard nature had been generous to him. In his physical frame, which many might covet and which all must have admired, was enshrined a broad, active, vigorous, well adjusted and balanced intellect. It was, moreover, an intellect disciplined by education, refined by culture, enriched by patient and thoughtful research. It enabled him to grow with each advancing year, into broader mental attainments, into surer and safer knowledge, into soundness of judgment, into clearness of comprehension, into careful accuracy of discrimination and conclusion.

In all his mental operation he was industrious and earnest, serious and thoughtful. He was a man of great energy and positiveness, yet combined with, what is so often lacking in such natures, a wise prudence and a liberal caution. He was a thinker and believer of the old sort. He believed in the Bible as the one divine book of the

world, and he built strongly and rested peacefully upon its declarations of truth. He knew that in these he had a sure foundation which did not need to be relaid with ever repeated investigations, or fortified with ever changing arguments. Nevertheless, his mind was characterized by great candor. He was broadly and cordially open to all truth, in its ever varying discoveries, and in its ever advancing utterances. If he was slow to accept what presents itself as new, or to change his once fixed convictions, this was not in him a sign of sluggishness but only of carefulness. He was not ready to consider a matter necessarily true or better because it is new, or necessarily false or imperfect because it is old. But if the light was really shining, in whatever quarter, from whatever source, he was glad to see it and to give it welcome.

All this wrought itself into his work as a preacher. He preached the great Gospel doctrines unfalteringly: regeneration by the Spirit of God; conversion, as the decisive and final act of the soul in turning from sin unto righteousness, from the world unto God; consecration, as the soul's surrender of itself in absolute faith to Christ, to be kept by Him, to be guided by Him, to be used by Him in His work in the world. Compelled to believe in sin as a dire reality of evil regnant in all men by nature, the doctrines of Grace exalted themselves before his thought and glorified themselves in his teaching. None could delight more than he in the beauty of the ethical Christ. As the example of all that is pure and lovely, all that is sweet and true, he rejoiced to present Him to men. But with all his mind and heart he also believed in the suffering Christ. It was of Him, and of the Christian's fellowship in His sufferings, he spoke his last word to his people in that Easter communion service with which his ministry closed. With all his mind and heart he believed in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, that mystery deeper than the sea out of which rises up all the beauty and music of His transcendent life. With all his mind and heart he believed in the sure forgiveness of sin, through the believing sinner's acceptance of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And so he preached for forty-five years.

Doctor Parsons was also a man of great heart. If he was serious, just as truly was he cheerful. Genuine cheerfulness played through the solid substance and stuff of his character like iridescence through the opal gem. His sympathies were enlarged and liberal. They were always ready to meet every demand. Without hesitation those who needed counsel turned to him for it, assured that the counsel he would give would be well considered and thoroughly prudent. Without hesitation those who needed comfort, coming to him with hearts beset and struggling and sore, knew that if there were any healing branch for their bitterness, he would find it. His friendliness was large enough to touch and bless with its recognition all who came within the horizon of his acquaintance, in his congregation, in the Presbytery, in the Seminary, of whose trustees he was the honored and trusted president, in the State and Nation. We have beautiful witness here to-day that, outside of his own congregation, among Christians of every creed and citizens of every class in this community, his heart had an interest and a blessing for all. Yet in his more intimate preferences and friendships he was strongly discriminative. All were his friends, but all were not alike his friends. There was love in his heart for everyone, but there was selecting and special love for the few who gained access into his heart's holy of holies. And toward these there was a charming simplicity and wholeheartedness and constancy such as none but the finest natures can show, such as in its own nature must be special and selecting.

To those who in any true sense knew Dr. Parsons, it is needless to say that he was a profoundly spiritual man. Christianity was much more to him than knowledge and belief. It was also experience. The doctrine which he accepted intellectually, and over which his wondering spirit hovered with studious search to entice its meaning into manifestation, was also an enrapturing life to him. His soul fed upon it as upon heavenly manna, and grew into the strength and sweetness of the heavenly life. What all this meant to him, in his personal life as a Christian man, is a secret with which

none may intermeddle. But wherein its sweetness and life broke through his sermons, and lighted up with wondrous illumination his prayers, and trembled under the wisdom and pathos of his pastoral ministrations, and glorified his face with the calm serenity of his soul's peace, we all knew it and shared with him its blessings. There have been times in the relation of many of us to him, when consciously to ourselves he has led us very near to God.

And now into that immediate presence he has gone. Another friend is added to the growing number whose blessed memory we shall carry with us through our own future years. One after another our homes and sanctuaries, united and beautiful in every loving and sanctifying relation, are darkened by the coming in of death and saddened by the going forth of some beloved and cherished one.

Brief indeed must be our fellowships were it in the power of death to end them. But if these are fellowships and pastorates and fatherhoods in Christ, this power cannot pertain to death. Our loved ones go out from the daily intercourse and the face to face communion, yet are they as truly one with us and we with them as when they were here beside us. In the immaturity of his youth and the overwhelming of his first great grief, Tennyson could only think of death as the shattering of the sea against the cold gray stones, a hopeless breaking up of the waves. But as later years brought to him their ripening and mellowing experiences, and the time of his own departing drew near, death seemed rather like the full tide turning back in unbroken swell to the boundless deep from whence it came.

Friends, humanity is one great, undivided sea, the waves that break on the shore of time are the same that sweep back toward eternity's shore at the turning of the tide. "Saints on earth and saints in heaven but one communion make."

Our beloved brother Parsons has gone on in advance. But we are following fast, and we will soon be with him again. We will find him glorified, transfigured, his faith consummated in vision, his power released for such service as we cannot now imagine. Thank

God for what he was here! Thank God for his strong nature, his faithful life, his honorable work! Thank God, even though we must choke back our sobs to do it, and look out towards the glory through blinding tears, thank God for the heaven into which dear Dr. Parsons has gone."

Immediately after Dr. Riggs, Rev. J. E. Kittredge, D. D., of Geneseo, spoke as follows:

"Looking upon the face of this beloved brother, our Doctor Parsons, last Friday morning, how could one fail to note the impress of the perfect peace that passeth understanding, or help exclaiming,

**Servant of God, well done.  
Rest from thy loved employ.**

For fifty years he has been a servant of God, consciously, by glad confession, and by a full manifestation to men. And all this time he has been doing God's work well, doing it with conspicuous fidelity, with a thoroughness and effectiveness that have been growing steadily with the years on to the end; for as you know, the best sermons of his life, he has been preaching in these recent years. His wise counsel was never wiser and his spirit, which has always been so gracious, has seemed recently just a degree more gracious, if possible, than ever. He has gone from us in full-orbed strength.

It is just fifty years since God's call reached him. He was at East Bloomfield, a teacher in the village academy, when the awakening came through the magnetic touch of the pastor, Dr. Henry Kendall.

Yet back of East Bloomfield and Dr. Kendall were Marcellus and the Christian home. And extending back was a long line of a godly ancestry—six generations of them—reaching to Northhampton, Mass., and the training school of that giant, Jonathan Edwards, and yet back to the early Hartford settlement, in the year 1630. It was a line abounding in men of the typical New England stock,

men of brawn and brain, men of solid oak, men of sanest sense and saintliness, men who kept the faith.

Our Doctor Parsons was born in Marcellus in 1829, the second day of January. It is recalled as a feature of the boy that on the farm he was fond "of putting things to rights," revealing the love of order that always distinguished him and made him worth so much to us all and to the church at large. He has always been trying to put things right. He was prepared for college by his father with some previous study in the village school and Moravia Academy. Hamilton graduated him in 1849 with high honor, and later, after twenty-five years, added his Doctor's Degree. To him the Master's call meant the full ministry of the Gospel. So he entered Auburn Theological Seminary, was licensed to preach by Cayuga Presbytery in 1853, was graduated in 1854, and for nearly two years had charge of the Otisco church, the largest and ablest church at that time in Onondaga county.

Then it was in 1856 that he came to Mt. Morris and began his memorable ministry of more than forty-five years. What he has been to this community, in worth, no man can compute. You cannot reckon up the value of a true Christian man in any community. He is a power for goodness, his presence a benediction.

Doctor Parsons has been here an eminent citizen, and this fact will grow with you. He loved this village, as Paul loved Tarsus. Every interest, of business, educational, moral, political, was dear to him. You made him with propriety, your historian, and he gave you, in 1894, your 'Mt. Morris Centenary.' He kept abreast of the times, was alive to present problems with a mind broad as the nation and the world. \* \*

Doctor Parsons, dear friends, will be missed in no ordinary way. He really left us at Easter. That sermon on the day of Resurrection was his last. Only now and then, in the interval since, has he been visible to any of us. Like his blessed Master, he was taken up and a cloud received him out of our sight. He has dropped upon us in the going, a benediction. Oh, there ought to be now a Pente-



cost following, a fresh Baptism of the Spirit of God. He has joined the choir of the invisible. We feel the upward attraction anew, and unite in the prayer,

O, may I join the choir invisible,  
Of those immortal dead who live again  
In minds made better by their presence.

Prof. Edward W. Miller, of Auburn Theological Seminary, then said:

“Those who have just spoken, have referred to our departed brother in his relationships as a friend, as a pastor, and as a fellow Presbyter. \* \* It is because of a service of long and loving and self sacrificing devotion to Auburn Seminary, rendered by this man of God now gone to his reward, that I am given the privilege of offering, on behalf of that institution, our tribute of grateful appreciation.

Dr. Parsons' relations to Auburn Seminary were peculiarly intimate. They were in a true sense a heritage. As far back as 1830 when the seminary was in its infancy his father became president of the Board of Trustees. This responsible position he held until his death in 1864.

The son, whose memory we to-day honor, entered the seminary as a student in 1851, was graduated in 1854, and ten years later at the death of his father was elected trustee as his successor. In that capacity he served the seminary for thirty-seven years, or until his death. So that the combined service of father and son covers the long period of eighty years, the entire life of the seminary. Dr. Parsons Jr. was in 1893 elected president of the Board of Trustees, which position, like his father, he held until his death.

And now that God has called this noble servant of his to the joy of his presence, we of the seminary he so long and faithfully served unite with you, his parishioners and neighbors, in a deep sense of loss and bereavement.

For in the death of Dr. Parsons we have lost not only an administrator wise in counsel, and sedulous in devotion, but we have lost a dear personal friend. He was a man who won the reverence and affection of his associates. He grappled them to his large heart with bonds stronger than 'hoops of steel.'

A colleague of his in the Board of Trustees, a prominent judge, who but for illness would be here to-day, speaking with me yesterday referred to Dr. Parsons in the terms of warmest affection, and spoke of his death as a deep personal grief. He spoke of the grace and dignity with which he presided in the board, of his wise counsel, his sound judgment, his broad outlook, his keen prescience, and also of the atmosphere of noble, generous thought and feeling which surrounded him. He mentioned the beautiful prayers with which Dr. Parsons invariably closed the meetings of the board—prayers so reverent and simple and direct that they seemed to lead one into the very presence of God. Every word and deed of his was an expression of his deep, calm soul life of faith and prayer. \* \* Hence we his friends of the seminary which he served so long and nobly, mourn to-day not only the loss of a revered and beloved friend. We lament the removal from our midst of an inspiring example of devoted Christian manhood."

The concluding address was given by Rev. Loren Stiles, of the M. E. church of this village :

\* \* "When Elisha, the prophet of God, was sick of the sickness wherewith he died, Joash the king came and wept over his face and said, 'O, my father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.' So standing beside this dear form this afternoon I say, 'O! my father, my father, the bulwark and strong defence of Christ's cause in this community.' For nearly a half century his noble form has been seen on these streets and in this pulpit ; his rich and powerful voice has been heard in defence of the truth as declared in God's word. \* \* \*

He has done a notable work for the Presbytery, for the Seminary and for the church at large. They have recognized the value of his work and have honored him again and again, but the very best there was in that life has been expended for you. Your interests, your uplifting, your salvation was always first in his thought and effort. How fully was his life woven into the life of this community! Not only has he moulded your thought by his clear and forcible preaching of the truth, but he has been in your homes, at your marriages, at the christening of your children, in the times of sickness and sorrow and bereavement. His sympathy has never been lacking, his words of consolation have always been exactly suited to the needs of the hour. You will bear witness this afternoon that his ministrations were just as freely given in the homes of the poorest and most lowly as they were in the homes of the rich and great. Like the Master he served, he was no respecter of persons. A heart so great as his could not be limited in its interest by the circumference of his own parish. He must reach out and seek to win any who might be drawn to Christ for miles around. Frequently during his ministry here he has arranged for services to be held during the summer months, by the pastors of the village, in the school houses lying out in various directions from the village.'

Well do I remember that two years ago, when such a plan was proposed by Dr. Parsons and heartily entered into by the other pastors, he said of the work: 'We shall not get any money in payment for our services. We may not induce many to come regularly to our churches, but if we can reach one individual who has been indifferent to divine things, and turn that soul to God, we shall be amply rewarded for our summer's work.' Such was his love for men.

It is a high privilege to be permitted to speak our words of appreciation and love to our friends while they are still with us. I had such a privilege about ten days ago, when I was admitted to Dr. Parsons' bedside and took his hand and listened once more to his words. I said to him, 'Doctor, I want you to know that the people of this village appreciate your life and work among them.'

As I go up and down the streets almost every person I meet stops me and asks about your condition and then expresses his high regard for you and his hope that you may be spared to us yet many years.' The tears came into the Doctor's eyes, and he replied, 'I am glad to know that I am remembered. I thank them all. I should be glad to work a little longer for them. I pray God to bless them all.' That prayer, dear friends, was for you. The Doctor's voice is stilled in death. In the flesh we shall never again hear him praying for us, or speaking to us, but in truth 'he being dead yet speaketh.' \* \* The lofty ideals that he has held up before our eyes will still inspire us to proper living. The story of that noble life we will repeat to those who come after us, that they too may reap some of its fruits."

Rev. Peter Lindsay, D.D., of Rochester, offered the closing prayer, after which Rev. F. G. Weeks, of Gates, read "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord," a favorite hymn of Dr. Parsons, which was sung by the entire congregation, standing, when the benediction was pronounced by Rev. G. W. Woods, D.D., of Geneseo.

To the mournful tolling of all the village church bells the funeral cortege mounted the hill to the cemetery, where Revs. Edward Bristol, Charles Coit, D.D., and Newton G. Conklin conducted the simple burial service, and the mortal remains were laid to rest awaiting "the resurrection through our Lord Jesus Christ."

## Tributes of Respect.

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[From the *Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester, N. Y.*]

**M**T. MORRIS was Dr. Parsons' first and only pastorate, and throughout the long years of his ministry he has been entrenched in the affectionate regard of all denominations as no other village pastor has ever been. His long term of faithful service, consuming the best years of a true and high manhood, his zeal as a public spirited citizen and his deep love for his fellowmen, will make the announcement of his death a message of profound sorrow throughout Western New York."

[From *Rochester Presbytery News.*]

"Outside of his pastorate, as well as within, the Doctor wielded a wide and beneficent influence, and held important positions, serving the church at large. \* \* He was always careful to know the facts in any case, and then was faithful to those facts. He never set out to find facts to suit some theory or prejudice. What he always wanted to know was the truth, and by this he was ever guided. Hence he became the strong character that he was, and hence his influence. We knew him to believe in him, to trust, and honor, and love him, for he was to us both a father and a brother in a very blessed sense. We, therefore, know and realize why it was that his tenure in the one pastorate was for life, and why he had such an influence as the one great leader in all the community. It was because he was a man of faith. He believed, and God's word was his rule of faith and practice. His character rooted deep and firmly in the "thus saith the Lord."

[From the *Auburn Seminary Review.*]

"His sound judgment, sincere piety, unswerving loyalty to the

interests of the Seminary gave him a deserved pre-eminence in the councils of this institution. Auburn was very dear to his heart, and he never failed to serve her faithfully and well. He was a true minister of the Word, greatly beloved of his people and honored of his Lord. He was a man of singular simplicity of motive, far-sighted sagacity, gentleness of spirit, and purity of life. His power was that of a man who lived close with God and knew the mind of the Master."

[*From the Picket Line Post, Mt Morris.*]

"He loved the village of his first pastorate with the love of a mother for her first-born, and his reward was the affectionate regard of her people through all these years. In the local parish over which he presided with such tact, ability and adroit administrative talents, he was ever a dominant spiritual force as well, and the influence of his powerful personality became a radiant energy for good. \* \* In the fullness of his powers before the twilight came, while engaged in the work which God gave him to do in the world, even as a son reports unto his father when his labor is done, Levi Parsons has returned unto his Father's house. With zeal, with humility, with courage, with love, he went about his Fathers' business, steadfast unto the end."

[*J. M. Hastings, Esq., in Mount Morris Enterprise.*]

"It is no small thing for a man to maintain without friction, his leadership of any body of people for so many years; and of itself, it is evidence of superior mental and spiritual attainments. What our community revered, and will sorrowfully miss, was the strong pure manhood, and the clear bright record of practical Christianity that the Doctor exemplified. We knew him as men know each other after daily intercourse extending over long years. Years of trial, sorrow and care; years of joy, success and fruition. And in all these years, under all the varying circumstances, in joy or sorrow, in success or disaster, he has been the same; calm, deliberate, safe. His faith in the eternal verities of God was unswerving, his confidence in the justice, wisdom and love of his Heavenly Father was absolute. Such a man and such a life must impress the moral, social and religious character of any community fortunate enough to have known them.

No man ever heard a harsh criticism from the Doctor ; no man ever heard an unkind remark made by him ; no man ever heard his business integrity questioned ; no man ever heard his character aspersed ; no man ever heard aught of folly from his lips ; no man ever heard his Christian example questioned. These things are true and known to all men.

Dr. Parsons' great strength lay in his unquestioning, complete, confidence in the God he served. This it was that dominated his life ; this it was that made his life strong, constant, even, and that gave men implicit confidence in his integrity and good judgment.

During all the busy years of faithful work, no friend of Dr. Parsons ever had to blush at his utterances or actions. A dignified Christian gentleman at all times, with nothing sombre about his mind or character, but sunny, cheerful, hopeful, always ready to see the bright side of life and to show it to others. With a keen sense of humor and a ready appreciation of innocent fun, the good Doctor in his moments of relaxation, was a most enjoyable companion. In his pulpit, his sermons were strong, full of the rich imagery of a large and cultivated intellect, and dominated at all times by an earnest desire for the welfare of humanity. Time and again his delighted congregation have insisted that his sermons should reach larger audiences through the public press. Such discourses as add lustre to any printed page, have frequently flowed from his ready pen. When the minds of men have been stirred by the unwonted course of great events ; when great doings were being accomplished in this or foreign lands, no truer or more judicial opinion was expressed than that emanating from this great man.

Dr. Parsons was not only great in the pulpit, but outside ; his strong, clear mind, and cogent, logical reasoning, compelled men to see through his eyes and think as he thought. His conservatism made him a safe counsellor, and his broad knowledge of the springs of human action, enabled him to see clearly the ultimate results of almost any business proposition. He was an active man, always keeping all his varied interests in a high state of efficacy. Through all his activities ran as a strong, steady, compelling current the thought, 'How shall I best serve my Master.' In the last analysis Dr. Parsons' great strength lay in the singleness of heart and mind, his absolute devotion to his Master's work. It was this that gave all men absolute confidence in him at all times. We knew with unerring certainty that his stand was always on the side of righteousness and high spirituality."

[*Mrs. Mary Joslyn Smith in the Enterprise.*]

“Mount Morris must seem strange indeed without Dr. Parsons. Long and tenderly he watched his village flock. ‘They were dearly beloved and longed for’ and a great multitude are his joy and crown.

I am pleased to quote from a letter of his own writing, concerning the life and death of my beloved father and mother, (Dr. and Mrs. Joslyn,) he spoke of missing them, then wrote: ‘But it is precious to think that these friendships abide, even though the bodies pass away and that death is so powerless to destroy these treasures which are laid up in Christ.’

So the memory of Dr. Parsons is precious to those who have known Mount Morris. \* \* \* It is almost impossible to analyze the life of a friend, but some of the reasons for the successful life of Dr. Parsons must be plain.

First of all he was an earnest disciple of the Lord Jesus. His sincerity and honesty were marked. While he was decided in holding the tenets of his own chosen church, I am pleased to again quote from his letter: ‘I have earnestly tried to cultivate friendly relations with the other churches, believing that the points of agreement are far more in number than those of disagreement.’

Other calls came and alluring fields opened for his guidance in the tillage, but to him Mt. Morris was that part of the garden of the Lord in which he believed he was placed once for all, and nothing moved him, nor allured him from this plain path of duty.

His financial ability in helping tide over hard places in the earlier history of his ministry, led many to realize what a successful business man he might have been, had he chosen to use his gifts in those directions. He was full of tact too, and while he never swerved from the right, he was careful to put no rock of offence in the way of any. So there was in him the making of a politician, but he cultivated none of these gifts except as helps to his ministry. With him it was always ‘this one thing I do.’ There has been no good thing that pertained in any way to Mt. Morris in all the years, that has not had the uplift of his influence.

Now at the close of his helpful and beautiful life, are not all ready to say that he was wise in the use of his life? By enriching the lives of those that came under his influence for forty-five years, what a crown of rejoicing must await him.

Silver and gold are but dross when put in the balance against such a self-denying life. And another of the beautiful things of that life was, that he never showed by word or deed that he had ever



made any sacrifice, and never did he seem to feel that he deserved any word of commendation.

When he and Mr. Rockfellow had finished their labor of love in preparing the 'History of Mount Morris,' after the century celebration, he said, 'I am very happy in the good feeling which the celebration has produced, and if the book shall serve to perpetuate it, that will be better than money.'

His interest in the schools, different phases of his life, come vividly before me, but after all few words express it. He was Christ-like, and the beneficence of such a life will remain with the people for long years to come."

*[From Report of the Synod of New York and New England for 1901.]*

"The death list of the Synod for the past year is exceptional for its length and for the distinction of its members. The contemplation of it stirs the heart with profound sorrow because of our bereavement, while at the same time we are reminded of the way in which God has honored and enriched our church in the gift of such men and of such service. Tried veterans like Ezra A. Huntington, George W. Wood, John C. Lowrie, L. Merrill Miller, Levi Parsons, James Gardner, J. Jermain Porter remind us of spotless characters and lifelong as well as distinguished service."

At its regular Fall meeting held at Avon, N. Y., on September 24th, 1901, the Presbytery of Rochester adopted a memorial on the death of Rev. Dr. Levi Parsons, from which the closing paragraphs are taken:

"Dr. Parsons was a devoted pastor, an instructive preacher and an invaluable presbyter. We have loved him and honored him greatly. His wealth of information, his practical wisdom and fine judicial sense coupled with a supreme modesty, for real greatness is always modest, have made him a boon and a joy to our Presbytery. For thirty-one years, its entire life, he has been its stated clerk. He has served the church in many directions and in the able discharge of many trusts. Repeatedly he has gone as commissioner to the General Assembly, just as often as the Presbytery could induce him to go.

He was pre-eminently a man of God. He lived in God, he walked with God, he is not with us now because God has taken him. And he was also eminently a man of men. The human instincts and sympathies in him were universal. To the end he was keenly

alive to every question and interest and movement and problem of the day. By the testimony of his people no sermons he ever preached were more vigorous and timely, and spiritually inspiring and helpful than were his very last. He is a beautiful example to us all that we should walk in his steps."

[*Memorial of Presbyterian Ministers' Association.*]

"The Presbyterian Ministers' Association of Rochester and Vicinity would hereby put on record the deep sense of sorrow and personal loss felt by its members on account of the death of our honored and greatly loved brother, Rev. Levi Parsons, D. D. We desire also to extend to the people of Mt. Morris, to his church and congregation, and especially to Mrs. Parsons and all the members of his esteemed family, our sincerest sympathy with them in their bereavement.

On the records of his church, of the presbytery of which he was a member, of the theological seminary of which he was a chief officer, and of other bodies, we know that fuller statements regarding his life and labors will be placed; but here, in the Minister's Meeting, it was our privilege to meet him from time to time in a more especially social relation, and we wish to testify to the joy it always brought us to have the honor of his presence and the advantage of his always cheering and helpful converse. His was a strong, harmonious, stable character. It did us all good to know him. We rejoiced in his cheerful, hopeful heart, his pure spirit, his profound wisdom and in his abiding and ever glad-hearted faith in God.

We esteem it an especially noteworthy tribute to the love and respect in which Dr. Parsons was held that at the time of his funeral all the places of business in his village, including even the saloons, were closed. The auditorium of his church was crowded with representatives from all classes of the community. At least fifty clergymen were present to do honor to the beloved minister, not alone fellow members of his presbytery, but pastors and rectors and priests from surrounding churches of other ecclesiastical names. Forgetting for the time every separating fact these all joined in the one witness that a pure and noble life had ended and that a true friend of all mankind had passed away.

G. B. F. HALLOCK,  
N. J. CONKLIN,  
EDWARD BRISTOL,  
J. P. SANKEY,  
HENRY H. STEBBINS,  
Committee.

Rochester, N. Y., June 17th, 1901."

At a meeting of the officers of the First Presbyterian church of Mount Morris, held June 3rd, 1901, appropriate resolutions on the death of the pastor were adopted. These were placed upon the church records and a copy of the same sent to the pastor's family.

[*Sabbath School History of Mount Morris Presbyterian Church for 1901.*]

"1901 will go down in the annals of our Sabbath School history as a black letter year, for it marks the death of Dr. Parsons, our dearly beloved pastor for forty-five years. All the events of the year have been overshadowed and saddened by this one great sorrow. How unreal it seems not to see his commanding presence in our pulpit or before the Bible class, which for so long he taught! His sermons were during the last months of his preaching, sublime. Indeed he was inspired to utter words that are indelibly fixed in our memories. \* \* How faithfully did he minister to his flock! What a friend he was to the poor and afflicted of all faiths and conditions! How genial in intercourse! How kindly in judgment! How true to his principles! And that last Communion Sunday, how pathetically tender was his heart to heart talk to his people! Through it all we had a presentiment of impending sorrow, but what blank despair took possession of us the first Sunday our pastor was unable to leave his bed, and we realized the end was near! During the weary weeks of sickness following, the whole community were watchers with us, being gladdened by any change for the better or depressed by unfavorable news from the sick room. At last, on Decoration Day, the spirit of this valiant soldier of the cross left its worn temple of clay, and returned Home. \* \* And so he rests from his earthly labors, but his work ends not here, for so long as love and memory endure, so long shall the influence of Dr. Parsons' life remain with us."

FREDERICK H. McNAIR, Historian.

The following are extracts from some of the many letters of condolence sent to Dr. Parsons' family:

[*From Rev. Byron Bosworth, Rochester, N. Y.*]

\* \* "Your dear husband's death came very near to me as we were classmates in college and also in Auburn. \* \* His consci-

entious, devoted, Godly life and work glow all along his path-way with the abundant faithfulness and fruitfulness of an eminently successful life for the Master. We shall greatly miss him everywhere."

[From Rev. F. F. Ellenwood, D. D., Secretary of Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York ]

"I was grieved to learn of the death of my highly esteemed friend and college mate, Rev. Dr. Levi Parsons. \* \* Dr. Parsons was one of the most genuine men that I have ever known. Free from personal conceit and inordinate ambition, he stood for his convictions and his sense of duty. \* \* Dr. Parsons had won a high place in the esteem of the Presbyterian church."

[From President Stryker of Hamilton College.]

"It is with pain that we learn by your kind note of the death of Dr. Parsons of our class of '49. A noble man, beloved and full of ripe fruitage, has gone to his rest. All who shared in the influence of his faithful life are poorer now. I can imagine how great the loss is to his community and church."

[From Hon. Charles Dwight, Vice-President Board of Trustees, Auburn Theological Seminary.]

"His death is a serious bereavement to the Seminary, and to us of the trustees, who have been associated with him for many years, there is a sense of present loss. We revered the character and shall cherish the memory of Dr. Parsons."

[From Henry A. Morgan, Esq., Aurora, N. Y.]

"During his long association as trustee of the Theological Seminary at Auburn, N. Y., and a chairman of its board, he was ever looked up to for his conservatism, clearness of judgment and lovable character."

[From Rev. Charles P. Coit, D. D., Rochester.]

\* \* "Words cannot express the personal loss we all feel; and then the loss to the Mount Morris church, the Presbytery of Rochester, the Auburn Seminary, yes, and I may say the Synod and General Assembly, is such as seldom comes. Measured at every point of character and influence he was a great man."

[From Rev. Theo. W. Hopkins, Rochester, N. Y.]

“My own sense of the loss which our Presbytery has sustained is so great that it almost seems as though the very judicatory had passed away with him. To me Dr. Parsons seemed its very impersonation.”

[From Rev. H. P. V. Bogue, D. D., Alliance, Nebraska.]

“He has finished a worthy and honorable course, and fallen asleep with the love and respect of the community and all who knew him. As far as earthly conditions are concerned one could ask no more.”

[From Rev. George P. Folsom, D. D., Mount Clemens, Mich.]

\* \* “How much I loved and enjoyed him. The dear old Genesee Valley will not seem the same without him. I always feel thankful that a kind Providence led us to Genesee, and among the sweetest memories of my ten years pastorate there are the social and spiritual interchanges with him.”

[From Rev. Samuel Jessup, D. D., Oneida, N. Y.]

“There is no word that so well expresses my impressions and recollections of him as the word *good*. It always did me good to have him look at me and speak to me, there was such a friendly look and tone about him. So thoroughly genuine and strong was he that I always looked up to him and revered him, while he drew me with a peculiar attraction of trust and friendship. Perhaps you will remember that I was associated with him in the old Presbytery of Ontario with Page and Folsom.”

[From Rev. W. H. Roberts, D. D., Stated Clerk of General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.]

“Your letter informing me of the death of my dear friend, Dr. Levi Parsons, of Mount Morris, N. Y., has been received. It gives me deep sorrow to receive this news. The sadness of such an event is, however, alleviated by the thought of the useful, prolonged and distinguished services rendered by Dr. Parsons throughout his life to the Presbyterian church and to the church of Christ in general.”

BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rochester, N. Y.

The life of a personality like his is a real divine influence in a community, and one of God's best gifts to any people. For substantial worth of character he stood eminent in this whole region.

W. R. TAYLOR.

Presbyterian Parsonage, Lancaster, N. Y.

MY DEAR MRS. PARSONS—

\* \* I do not fail to remember how poor to you must seem all words of even the best and most esteemed of your friends in the midst of such bereavement as you have suffered. Still it is something to know that others are bearing part of the burden under which we groan. \* \* I am a mourner with you. The death of your noble husband was a sad surprise and an affliction to me. I loved the man, and there are none who stood higher in my esteem for those admirable qualities of sincerity, fairness, charity, sound judgment, high purpose, and unswerving righteousness and devotion to our common Master than Doctor Levi Parsons.

WILLIAM WAITH.

*[From Henry W. Miller of the Baptist Church, Mount Morris, N. Y.]*

“Your family, the church and the community are under the shadow of no ordinary loss. Personally Dr. Parsons was one of my most cherished friends. We who remain return thanks to our loving Heavenly Father for his Christ-like example among us for so many years. We thank God he is at ‘rest from his labors and his works do follow him.’”

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH,  
Mount Morris.

DEAR MRS. PARSONS—

This note is to tell you that my sister and I heartily sympathize with you and your family in your great bereavement. Your husband was one of Nature's noblemen—broad-minded, charitable and sincere. Of him many friends are saying and many more feel that “We shall not look upon his like again.”

JAMES H. DAY.

As one of Dr. Parsons' boys I want to tell you that I am mourning with you that we shall see his face no more this side the river. Not mourning for him but for ourselves; for he has been translated to a higher and a greater and holier service. The sorrow is ours because of the separation. \* \* As I have from time to time thought of visiting the old home the very pleasing thought has come, I shall see Dr. Parsons. What a benediction his greeting always was; all the world seemed brighter after it. \* \*

HENRY D. AMES.

East Oakland, Cal.

MARCELLUS, Dec. 10th, 1902.

DEAR SISTER—

My visit with you made quite an impression on me. It was pleasant, it was sad. I never realized so fully that brother had left us permanently as at this time. Sickness, death and the necessary flurry connected with funeral arrangements, somewhat befog us in regard to the realization of the occasion. But now the master of the house was not to be seen. An occasional sound would (without thought) imply his presence here and there, because in all of my previous visits he was out and in. The house with all its arrangements, the garden with its terraces, told of his handiwork, and the hilltop where so many times we mounted, to look over the plain, and the hills with their several villages; but now his presence ceases any longer to give enlivenment to the scene. Even the waiting at the depot was without his cheerful face and social ways, and the always good-bye shake of the hand failed to give the amen to the visit. Sabbath day at the church I missed him, and also at the Sunday school. The walk to the cemetery, bordered a portion of the way by his plot of land, brought him vividly to mind, and at last, further on, in the midst of his dear old flock, we found him lying in sweet repose, and wonderful to tell, among his immediate surroundings such a troop of Gospel Messengers.

Brother, thy work is done, well done. What a glorious morning the resurrection morning will be, when all of God's chosen ones shall come forth from those graves in the image and beauty of their Savior and they shall see the King in his beauty.

Yours truly,  
I. PARSONS.

## A Glimpse of the Home Life.

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**A**FTER all, the story of no man is complete that fails to picture his home life. If this is pure and strong and sweet, it gives an added flavor to that which may be considered external or public.

Brought up in a minister's home of the old New England type, Dr. Parsons had the highest ideals regarding the importance of the family life, as well as a strong love for his home. His boyhood's home had been one where the rare principle of "high thinking and plain living" was put into daily practice, where the greatest reverence for all that was good and great and pure was inculcated, and a profound respect for true wisdom and learning. A thrifty, busy, hospitable home it was. How the hearts of its children were bound to it. How they clung to the memory of its ancient wood, its sparkling brooks, its sunny meadows, and the hills that stand when those who loved them have passed away forever. How they loved to gather about the glowing fireplace for long, long talks, and, as their number gradually diminished, how that bond of love waxed stronger, aye, ever stronger that held those hearts to each other and the sad, sweet memories of the past. Going forth from such a home, little wonder was it that each sought to found a home that should in some fashion reproduce the one they loved so well.

It was in the second year of his life in Mount Morris that Dr. Parsons purchased the house that was to be his home during an unusually long pastorate. Such a purchase would be considered peculiar if not rash in these days, for at the time the minister's salary was but eight hundred dollars. However, he was economical,



thrifty, ingenious, fond of planning ways and means, and this trait which so often shone in the trustee meetings of later years was put to immediate use. The house was remodeled, and afterwards was frequently altered until at last it became a family joke that "every seven years instead of changing pastorate, Father contented himself with changing the house," adding a wing, altering the piazza, or making the interior more convenient.

The result pleased him. His home was to him a delightful place. "The home-coming is the best part of the journey," he would frequently say. His own sunny sitting-room was the pleasantest room he found. His home was "his castle" in which he could find a happy retreat from the besieging cares of life. He loved the seclusion of it; he loved the comfort of it. He loved in winter to see the fire glow, for brought up in a home where wood fires rollicked and roared up capacious chimneys he would never consent to do away with all sign of fire,—an iron grating in the floor was no equivalent.

The grounds about the home were to him a most important part of it, and he spent much time in their improvement. In summer he took the greatest satisfaction in the fruits that grew on the trees of his own planting, the grapes from his own carefully trimmed vines, and the early peas and lettuce of his own garden. Alas! with what hope did he plan out this garden each spring and plant the early seed, leaving towards nightfall his study with its accumulations of presbyterial work for this communion with nature; and then with what regret did he see the advantage gained by the weeds during his series of absences at presbytery, at the Auburn commencement, and possibly the General Assembly. The weeds might gain an advantage, but he never yielded them the victory, stoutly persisting in the unequal contest; for the reward was, after all, great,—work where music of birds and apple-scented air and even the bursting clods of earth all spoke of life and growth, the reaching out towards that which is above and beyond.

He loved this work in the open air, he loved country life and

scenes ; and it was with no feigned interest that in his pastoral calls he talked of the crops or various farm improvements. As he had come to the door, he had remarked the condition of field and orchard, had noted with pleasure the probability of a plenteous harvest, or was ready with sympathy for the unfortunate. Of all classes of men, none to him were to be more envied than the farmer, "who might live like a king on the best of the land" he would say.

Doctor Parsons was himself a man of simple tastes and habits, a firm believer in the value of early hours and abstemious living. He had inherited from some Puritan forbear a taste for economy, an aptitude for thrift, or was it the result of his early training? But in him this saving was merely that, as Emerson puts it, he might "spend on a higher plane." A cent was never a small thing to him when spent for a non-essential, a dollar never too large for a real comfort or necessity, especially for others, for his economy was strictest in regard to himself. Towards others he was generous, while in expenditures for the church and for missions he was a worthy example. His thrifty management of a small salary was sometimes commented upon. "God must send his ravens to help the Doctor," said one parishioner, but the ravens were prudence and economy, with the added blessing promised to those who honor the Lord with their substance.

It was always his delight to welcome guests to his home. Many a gathering has the church had under his roof. Indeed it is to be questioned whether, during his pastorate, anyone in Mount Morris has entertained a larger number of people. He was a sociable man, always interested in the little festivities of home or church life ; one who enjoyed "a good talk" to which he contributed not a little of wit as well as wisdom, for he possessed the art of telling a good story and had a fund of humor which was not infrequently a surprise to those who saw but the clerical side of his life. He was one who enjoyed to its utmost contact with the sympathetic, the cultured and bright, those to whom he might reveal his deeper thoughts and experiences with surety of appreciation and responsiveness.

I do not need to speak of his courtesy,—that was never failing, in private or in public. During his last illness when he spoke but little, there was always a “thank you” for any little assistance given him. He had always been appreciative whether the matter in question was an “A No. 1 dinner,” which caused him regretfully to wonder whether “Queen Victoria had such good fare,” or was some achievement of public importance. He was a firm believer in the duty and value of commendation, even preaching a sermon upon this subject. One peculiarity was his desire for counsel. “In the multitude of counsellors there is safety,” was a proverb frequently quoted by him. Not only in matters of ecclesiastical importance but in those pertaining to the home as well, not only when great interests were at stake but even in the little things of life, not only of the wise ones of the church but even of his children, would he seek counsel. How often were they gathered in the study that he might gain the united judgment of the family regarding some important letter,—and how often did they feel that he would have depended on broken reeds had their judgment been all. In connection with this he was accustomed to refer to a little joke at his own expense in regard to the purchase of a horse. The seller being asked whether Dr. Parsons had decided to take the horse, replied, “No, not yet, I believe there is still one deacon to consult.”

But if he were ready to ask advice, how ready, too, he was to bestow it, how willing to turn from his work, though it was a sermon, to listen to troubles or plans, and give the best of his wisdom. There was ever a welcome to that study; no “blue Mondays” there, only a “royal welcome,” a ready sympathy, the delightful assurance that there was plenty of time for a little talk and that it was a pleasure and a satisfaction to him.

His pleasure in his home and family seemed to increase with years. The home-coming of the children was always a joy to him, their departure a trial. Who can forget his fervent “may the Lord bless you,” as he bade farewell, or the letter that followed the wanderer telling how he “walked home from the station with a

heavy heart." How faithfully he followed the traveler in imagination through the hours of the journey, how eagerly he welcomed each letter from the absent loved ones, how impatiently he gathered the family so that all might enjoy it together.

He was at his best in the home; he gave of his best. It was his custom to bring the results of his reading to the table, and if wife or children followed the apostolic injunction to ask for information at home, they were quite sure to receive an abundant store. He read but little fiction, and that little critically; but his interest in the events of the day was ever fresh.

The description of the home life would scarcely be complete without some reference to its music, which is considered by a sweet Southern poet as the one essential of a true home.

In the old Marcellus home there had been an enthusiastic love for music, especially singing. People *sang* in those days, sang for hours at a stretch when the inspiration was on, and the musical influence of his youth remained throughout his life. After a Thanksgiving dinner, when most people would be ready for a siesta, he generally called for "a little music," which comprised the old hymns, although in his earlier days he enjoyed the secular songs and ballads of the times. It was the delight of his children to hear his enthusiastic rendering of "Van's a used up man," "Trancadillo," and "Tramp, the boys come marching," enriched by his fine voice. But he loved the old hymns best, and among those best loved and often sung as the Sabbath twilight deepened, were "Softly now the light of day," "Safely through another week," "Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah," and "Jerusalem, my happy home." He never seemed to weary of singing, and it is beautiful to think that his eternal home is filled with sweetest melody and praise.

During the last years of his life, his growth in spirituality became more and more apparent. The outward man might perish but the inward man was indeed renewed day by day. There was a perceptible strengthening and ripening of all Christian graces and virtues. To his faith was added meekness and humility, an increasing love

toward all that was good and pure, a growing tenderness for the faults and frailties of human nature, a personal interest in even the little things that might make or mar another's happiness, the gracious spirit of sympathy and helpfulness that so surely wins the love and honor of all; until at last when he passed from this earthly home to the home all-glorious, not only his own children, but many "another daughter," and those who called themselves "the Doctor's boys," now mourn a father's loss. To them as to all comes this message from the distant West: "You and all of us have a most precious memory of a noble, honored, saintly life; and the more we dwell upon it the sweeter and holier and more useful will our lives be."

# Shepherdless.

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In Memory of Rev. Levi Parsons, D. D.

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[Published by permission of New York Evangelist.]

**A** SABBATH DAY of perfect rest and peace,  
Of deep, abounding joy, alas, how rare !  
There may come days when in the praise of God  
All nature joins, and sounds discordant, toil  
And strife are hushed, and earth, resplendent earth,  
Radiant with beauty, all aglow with light  
And love and joy, seems very part of Heaven.  
And yet, methinks, the bluest skies may tinge  
Of sadness wear, the sweetest earthly song  
May leave some mournful thought, and ev'n in June  
When, if at all, should come the perfect day,  
The passing breeze may whisper soft of death.  
Such Sabbath day was this.

At earliest dawn

The little birds their happy matins sang,  
And as the sun climbed up the golden stair  
To azure heights, louder the chorus swelled.  
The insect world, a busy throng, beat low  
And soft their monotone as basal note,  
Above which soared exultant, carols glad  
Of robins and melodious orioles ;  
Tuneful and sweet the air, and full of peace.

But not until the sun has nearly reached  
Its height, comes there to man, neglectful man,  
The call to join in worship of the King.  
Then slow the church bell tolls its solemn tone,  
And at the summons to the house of God  
The village people wend their way. Some pass  
With gladsome heart, rejoicing in the day  
The Lord hath made, a Sabbath day in June.

But others walk with sad and downcast face,  
And half reluctant mount the steps that lead  
Up to the Holy Place.

Ah, can it be  
That God's least creatures give him joyful praise  
And we, the favored ones, our worship grudge?  
But hark! the organ sounds a sobbing note,  
A mournful melody insistent swells,  
Then soft its anguish whispers till it sinks  
Into some minor strain – a threnody  
That causes hearts to beat in sad accord.  
Aye, meet it is to tread the aisle with slow  
And mournful feet, and banish all light thoughts  
And every careless smile, for here are signs  
Of grief, black draperies whose gloomy folds  
Droop unresponsive to the gentle touch  
Of summer breeze, which steals away abashed;  
Nor ventures in the sunshine glad, but leaves  
The place to shadow and to grief. Sad thoughts  
Abound, deep sighs and tears; for Death has dared  
The fold and taken one much loved away,  
The Shepherd of the flock, leaving instead  
From his unwelcome train, mournful lament  
And silent grief, grave care and anxious fears.

There is the sacred desk where he for five  
And forty years did preach salvation free,  
Warning the sinner from his downward way,  
Pleading the beauty of the paths of peace  
That he might win his flock to holy life  
And lead them all at last safe home to Heaven.

There stands the massive pulpit chair now swathed  
In black, where oft he sat, perchance in prayer,  
Whilst anthems high ascended or the hymn  
Of praise; and there the Bible where his hand  
Was wont to rest as earnestly he sought  
To lead his people to the Mercy Seat.  
To-day that hand rests in the silent grave,  
That voice on earth shall never more be heard.  
His work below is done; and in his place  
A stranger stands to preach the word of God.

And many list attentively, but some  
Avert their eyes and give scant heed; yet blame

Them not, for even Holy Writ hath said  
 That stranger's voice the sheep will not obey  
 And some of these no other Shepherd's care  
 Have known. Strange eloquence attracts them not,  
 Let them alone. Shall not the child bewail  
 His father dead, or friend lament a friend?  
 And he was friend to all and watched o'er all  
 With more than common father's love, and deep  
 Solitude. And he was loved by all,  
 By all revered. The little children scanned  
 His face and knew him as a friend, for was  
 He not their minister, who talked with God,  
 And preached to them the words that God had said.  
 The aged ones, whose comfort he had been  
 As Death's remorseless hand successive swept  
 Away their loved ones, all that made life sweet  
 And dear, now falter in life's dreary way,  
 And dread to pass the lonely shadowed vale,  
 And grieve that stranger priest their bodies shall  
 Commit unto the grave. And even those  
 Of other faith now mourn the good man gone,  
 Finding the world a lonelier, sadder place,  
 For one life vanished, whose mere presence was  
 A benediction.

A Christlike man was he,  
 Who sought to preach God's word in purity,  
 And by his own true life to show how near  
 Man might attain to that fair pattern set  
 By Christ. All marked him as a man  
 Of peace, meek, patient, full of charity,  
 And yet when 'gainst the weak and helpless gaped  
 The ravening powers of sin, or when within  
 The church strange doctrines rose and doubts were cast  
 Upon the inspired Word of God, ah, then  
 He fearless was as man of war with stern  
 Rebuke for aught that dared contend the right  
 And true.

For th's all honored him and for  
 His thought profound, his insight keen in ways  
 And thoughts of men, his knowledge deep of truths  
 Which God alone reveals, his counsel wise  
 With wisdom sought of God and granted him  
 In measure full. Yet on that Sabbath day



As midst the signs of grief his people sat  
Methinks 'twas not of honor that they thought.  
Nay, rather did each mutely grieve as child  
Forsaken, missing the dear familiar face,  
Longing to hear again that gracious voice  
While Memory with a sad insistence dwelt  
Upon some helpful word, some thoughtful deed,  
Or whispered low of Eastertide when last  
He broke the bread and passed the wine and preached  
The blessed hope to all sad hearts God-given  
Since from the dead the Saviour rose again.  
Then blessed his people, from among them passed  
Whilst troubled eyes did note with secret dread  
The pallid face, the trembling voice and step.

Yes, from the Table, passed he forth, as passed  
His Lord, to learn those last sad lessons which  
A Heavenly Father sends, of patient trust,  
Though led along the suffering way to death.  
To death and joy beyond ! while we are left  
To mourn, to grope in darkness where once shone  
The steady light of that pure, faithful life,  
To wander in strange paths since he who knew  
So well the narrow way, no longer leads  
Our weary feet therein. Ah, helpless we,  
And scattered and in sore distress ; we know  
Not where to turn. Dangers assail, dark fears  
Beset our path, and faith lies low and hope  
Has sped away.

O God, our Father, Thou  
Who didst remove our shepherd and our guide.  
Look down with pitying eye. Bind up sore hearts  
And pour the balm of consolation in,  
Send faith with surer power, and joyous hope  
Recall ; and though we still may tread the rough  
And saddened path, oh, grant that vision rare,  
The vision of the perfect day, when grief  
And sorrow shall have fled away, and we  
With everlasting joy upon our heads  
Shall in the Zion of our God with those  
Who passed before and those who after come—  
When we, thy church complete, shall all unite  
In holy, perfect praise forevermore.

MARY ALMIRA PARSONS.

# Addresses.

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## The Uses of Political Parties.

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*[Delivered by Dr. Parsons before the Alumni at Hamilton College, July 1st, 1885. Published in The New Princeton Review, May, 1887]*

**I**N attempting to point out some of the uses of political parties, we shall make no comparison as to their relative merits, nor shall we trace their origin, nor the various changes which they have undergone; it being our object not to vindicate any party or party measure, but rather to meet the common objection that the influence of party politics is demoralizing both to the Government and the masses.

Admitting that the very terms, rings, caucuses, and political conventions, have an unpleasant flavor, suggestive of trickery, rascality, the buying and selling of votes, and the misleading of honest men into the support of demagogues, we claim that all these evils are attributable to the abuse and not the proper use of the political party, which, so far from meriting condemnation, must be recognized as furnishing important wheels in the machinery of our Government which the fathers of the republic failed to provide, and through whose agency alone the most obscure citizen can make his influence so felt as to become a potent factor in the Government.

And here, in the opening of this discussion, we cannot fail to be impressed with its importance when we consider the magnitude of these parties. We think of them as filling the land; with not a

township, a school district, or a hamlet but contains their ardent admirers and firm supporters. These parties, as they stand confronting each other face to face, far outnumber any armies which were ever marshalled on the field of battle ; each is composed of its millions of free voters, while each represents still other millions of women and children who feel hardly less interest in their success. But these parties are not less marvellous for their extent and the diffused power which permeates the masses, than for those agencies by which that power is concentrated and rendered effective. For these are organized bodies, and in their organizations they recognize the principle of civil liberty, which is simply the right of every man to his share and no more than his share in the Government ; he is to bow to the will of the majority, and is to respect those rules and processes by which that will is ascertained. Here, then, in the party drill which is so common, are to be found the training-schools in which men are fitted either to stand in the ranks as the uncompromising defenders of good government, or to execute the high and responsible duties of office if called to the same by their fellows. It is in these training-schools that men are taught how to work together and how to combine their influence ; they are taught that submission is the first duty of the citizen, and that only those who, in obedience to rules and regulations, work in harmony with others can ever be safely intrusted with the exercise of power. And certainly the drill of these great parties, by which the millions of their adherents are brought into line and made to keep step, is a fact that challenges our admiration, and all the more so when we reflect that it is accomplished without the slightest compulsion. Think for a moment of the interest which culminates in those quadrennial nominating conventions in which these parties, through their representatives from every part of the nation, select their candidates for the highest honors in the gift of the people ; think of the zeal of the various factions, which rises to a white heat as they urge the claims of their favorites—a zeal so intense in its antagonisms as to threaten the very disruption of the party ; and yet, as the culminating point

is reached and the one successful name is announced, how suddenly does this turbulent sea become calm, how quickly do these discordant notes change into one grand chorus of harmony. And shall we give no credit to agencies which, without coercion, exert such power to hold the selfish aspirations of men in check, and so concentrate their influence as to render it most effective ?

Just at this point, however, we cannot leave unnoticed the agency of the political press, with its postal and telegraphic facilities, in promoting and securing this unity of action to which allusion has been made. We yield our preferences in order to work in unison, just because we have been counselling together through these marvellous agencies by which mind is brought in contact with mind, though widely separated all over these States and Territories. Our Congress, our State Legislatures, and even our political conventions are not the only deliberative bodies which we have ; the people themselves, with the daily newspaper in hand, constitute the great and controlling deliberative body of this country. At every fireside, through means of the press, questions as to governmental policy are thought out, discussed, and settled. Thus it is that public opinion is wrought out into a definite and reliable form. No man can understand American politics without recognizing the leadership of the press. These editorial chairs have come to be thrones of power and centres of influence such as the fathers of the republic could never have dreamed of. They have far more to do in moulding public opinion and shaping the policy of the Government than all the debates of Congress and other legislative bodies. But while they are acknowledged leaders, it is a gratifying fact that they cannot lead the people arbitrarily, but are themselves controlled by the public opinion which crystallizes under their influence.

And the surprising tenacity with which people cling to the party of their choice very naturally directs attention to the historical character of these parties. They are like large trees which cannot be blown over, because of the years during which their roots have been striking deeply into the earth. To become acquainted with either of

the great political parties of our land, you must trace its roots all through those agitations which have followed each other ever since the birth of the nation, and, especially, through that great conflict which almost accomplished its disruption. These parties are what they are to-day because they are not a fabrication, but a growth, and therefore they cannot be taken apart and built up at will. When we look at our mighty rivers and discover the large tributaries which flow into them, we say that they are where they are and their channels are broad and deep just because they have been obliged to dispose of the waters which have come to them through these tributaries; in like manner do we account for the deep channels which these political parties have cut for themselves, and for the direction of the current which flows through the same, by tracing them back to those tributaries of influence in the past which have served to define their policy and impart to them the character which they now possess. We cannot forget that, in the years gone by, men who have held high positions in our national councils, and who have been respected for their disinterested patriotism, have counted it an honor to enroll their names as members of these parties. The men of to-day are not a little indebted to those worthy names as furnishing a constant incentive to high-minded patriotism, and as constant a rebuke to everything that is narrow, selfish and base. It is thus that the best elements of any one age contribute more to the stream of party influence than those of the opposite character. The former live because they are cherished, while the latter die, being ignored.

Added to this we must not fail to notice how largely this party zeal is the fruit of an ancestral spirit, and as such is worthy of being cherished. We are accustomed to honor the children when we see them following in the footsteps of their fathers and glorying in their party banner because their fathers once carried the same. Instead of calling this a blind enthusiasm we rather commend it as a noble sentiment, and discover in it a conservative power for good.

And this leads to the more general remark that the free institutions with which we, as a nation, have been blessed for more than a

century have furnished the very soil out of which these political parties have sprung, and by which they have been nourished. To conclude, therefore, that they are corrupt and demoralizing, would be a very sad reflection upon the life of this republic. If, in the political history of our land, we discover only a deteriorating tendency, then are we forced to the conclusion that the spirit of liberty has fallen in her own home, and is being destroyed by her own children. For the masses who compose these political parties, with all their virtues and with all their faults, are the product of the mighty and prolonged effort which has been made to establish upon these shores a republic which shall be a model to the world. In all our criticisms of these parties, and they deserve very severe criticism, let us never forget that they are composed of none other than those who, with not less pride than the ancient Roman, can each exclaim: "I am an American citizen!"

We now invite attention to the relation which these parties sustain to the Government; and we do this not with the design of engaging in a general discussion of the subject, but, rather, that we may point out our indebtedness to these parties for the protection which they afford us as the bulwarks of civil liberty. Not that either party is so pure that it could be trusted alone, but our safety is to be traced to the attitude of antagonism in which we find them always arrayed toward each other. And if to any it seems impossible that this party hostility can be any other than an unmixed evil, if to any the organizing of clubs, the wearing of uniforms, and marching with torch-lights to the beat of the drum shall seem like a menace to our liberties, let it be borne in mind that all this is but the arousing of two giants to watch each other. Each is saying to the other, "Thus far mayest thou come, but no farther." Each is ready to take advantage of the other's mistakes, and each is promising a better Government than the other has afforded. Neither could be trusted without the other to watch it; and to suppose a collusion between the two would be to suppose ourselves at the mercy of an oligarchy. For there are bad men enough in either party to wreck the Government

if they could; but they are powerless to accomplish their purposes outside of party lines, and they are almost as powerless within party lines, by reason of the check which these parties hold upon each other. We know that the accuracy with which the planets move in their orbits is the result of counteracting forces; we know also, in mechanism, that the great strength of the arch is the result of the opposition of its two sides. These two facts may serve to illustrate how the reliability and accuracy of the great departments of our Government, which, like the planets, move in separate orbits, are secured by counteracting political forces; or, to change the figure, how the amazing strength of our free institutions is seen when we think of our Government as an arch composed of these two political parties which fill the land, each leaning against the other. And if these illustrations have force, then the importance of keeping these parties as nearly equal as possible must be obvious; for the whole arch is weakened just in proportion as you weaken either side. Those, therefore, who call for the destruction of either or both of our present parties expose their ignorance as to the important service they are rendering. If it be said that they are corrupt, it is quite obvious that they are not more corrupt than are the people who compose them. And should they be abandoned, and other parties organized in their places, unworthy and unscrupulous men could not be kept out—they would be sure to push themselves to the front, if possible. In other words, the vicious element of society cannot be eliminated by any manœuvring. But an arch may be reconstructed, section by section, without demolishing the structure; and so a party may be readjusted to meet new issues, while all the time it does better work in sustaining the interests of the Government. The lessons of history are proof that parties themselves do change, and, indeed, are very quick to conform to a popular demand. The sudden abandonment of a political party is analogous to revolution in a Government, warrantable only in extreme emergencies.

This view of the case is also very suggestive as to the value of

an opposition party when thrown out of power. We often think of it as laid aside until it shall be again invited to assume control. But this is far from the proper measure of its value. It is needed incessantly as a check to undue legislation, which is one of our greatest dangers; while, often, in positive work, and in shaping the future policy of the Government, it exerts hardly less influence than the dominant party.

But, interesting as is this view of the relation of the political party to the Government, we claim for it even a still higher value, when we consider its direct relation to the masses of the people as an educational power. We have already directed attention to the fact of its furnishing training-schools for those who are called to the exercise of power, and also that it is itself the outgrowth of our free institutions; the additional point which we now adduce is that it stimulates the masses to think and study, and educates them to a better appreciation of their privileges.

When we deplore existing corruptions, and question the expediency of permitting foreigners so soon to vote, and regard it as a mistake that the freedmen were endowed with the right of suffrage, we do not consider how difficult a problem has been given our nation to solve; which is nothing less than the assimilating of these heterogeneous peoples to American usages and American ideas. The question before us is not how the descendants of the Puritans, holding similar views respecting religion and government, shall furnish for themselves the pleasantest homes, and live with the least annoyance, but the far greater question is, What shall we do with these people who worship other gods, and have every variety of opinion as to morals and government? And the only reply to this question is, We must either Americanize them, or they will destroy us. We cannot afford to repel them, and thus throw them into a class by themselves; but we must welcome them, we must win them; and this we must do by introducing them to the same rights and privileges which we ourselves enjoy. And this is just what the political party, compelled by self-interest, has ever been forward to



do ; and, in so doing, has reached clear down to the very bottom of society and brought up the lower classes, which have been neglected, oppressed, and abused ; brought them up into the light and pure air of our free institutions—a kind of sub-soiling process, which is not less important in the interests of civilization than in successful agriculture. With our fastidious notions we have given but little credit for this kind of work, and have called it demagogism, just because too largely it has been inspired by unworthy motives. And yet the fact remains that our great political parties have laid right hold of these heterogeneous masses, and have done more in this work of assimilation than any other one agency that can be named. Nor should we underrate this as an educational work because it recognizes neither text-book nor class-room ; any influence that awakens a man to new life, so that he respects his own manhood, and feels that no man, not even a king, has a right to tread upon him, is in the best sense educational. And we know that this is just the influence that the political party exerts in securing recruits. Indeed, it goes further than this ; it impresses each man with a sense of personal responsibility, and seeks to make him feel that there is a place in the party which no one can fill but himself.

There is an educational influence, also, in those party agencies which bring men together ; mind is brought in contact with mind. Men are called upon to think, to discriminate, to answer objections, and to invent means for the attainment of given ends ; and, when brought thus closely together, each feels the magnetic current which runs through the entire party. An additional point, showing its educational power, is the sense of proprietorship which is fostered by this party spirit, making the man to feel that he not only belongs to the party, but that the party belongs to him—a proprietorship which renders him solicitous that his party shall fulfil its pledges in the matter of honest legislation ; and no man can exercise this care and feel this solicitude without being more of a man than he otherwise would be.

The danger of giving the right of suffrage to the illiterate classes

is usually exaggerated ; first, for the reason that even among the educated only a portion are to be found who have so comprehended the questions at issue, in any given election, as to vote independently ; all others simply follow what they regard as the better judgment of those who have studied these questions ; and this is precisely what the illiterate voter does. But, again, the illiterate, as a class, are impotent for harm to the Government, except through the agency of political parties, and we have already seen the powerlessness of parties to do us harm by reason of the check which they have upon each other. We concede that illiteracy is a serious obstacle to good government, and therefore rejoice in the power of the ballot, when placed in the hand of an ignorant man, to wake him up to a new life and nobler aspirations, while it is his passport to the political party which immediately helps him in securing his rights. A man who was asked whether he did not think the playing of children upon his lawn injured the grass, replied that he did, but that he failed to see that it injured the children ; a reply not inapplicable to the question before us.

But the powerlessness of the illiterate, as a class, to harm us, so long as we are protected by these political parties, at once suggests the still wider application of this same principle, as furnishing a corrective for all those combinations which may threaten the perpetuity of our free institutions. We are not fearing that a Cæsar or a Napoleon will capture the Government by the sword, and establish a military despotism, for the reason that the tastes of the people are agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing, rather than military ; but fears are entertained lest our vast moneyed corporations shall come to be a power greater than the Government itself. The fathers of the republic very carefully guarded the rights of the smaller against encroachments by the larger States ; but we have lost sight of that danger in the far greater one that threatens us from our railroad, telegraphic, manufacturing, and other corporations, which, unrestricted even by State boundaries, have become truly national, both in extent and influence. But, while the power

of these corporations is incalculable, and their heartlessness proverbial, we must not forget that their self-interest holds them largely in restraint. First, for the reason that capital is very sensitive to any governmental disturbance, it can ill afford to invite anarchy; and second, it is the true ally of the laboring classes; those classes must be conciliated in order to its own promotion and highest prosperity. Still, after making all these allowances, it cannot be denied that capitalists have tampered with our legislation, that money has corrupted the ballot-box, and that these monopolies are a constant menace to our liberties. A true self-interest does not always control these corporations, for the reason that they are blinded by their greed. And the point which we wish to make is that our large and thoroughly organized political parties are needed to protect us from these abuses; they alone are competent for this work. Were we divided into a dozen political factions, these moneyed interests would rule us with a rod of iron. But, it may be objected, do not these moneyed interests even now corrupt our present political parties? We answer, yes; but they cannot control them, for the reason that neither party can afford the reputation of being the special friend of the capitalist. Both alike offer the largest facilities for the laboring classes to organize a successful resistance to all such encroachments of power.

Again, the different nations of the Old World represented on these shores might give us untold trouble by making this their battle-ground. We might find clan meeting clan, were it not for the power of these political parties to neutralize these antagonisms by dividing the clans. Happily for us, neither party takes all of any one nationality, and therefore old issues and old feuds must be forsaken.

The same is true of sectional interests and those divisions which spring from the same. Our territory is very broad, and different classes of people live in different sections, representing civilizations so diverse that what is esteemed noble and honorable in one section is sometimes regarded as mean and degrading in another. Our

true policy as a nation, is not to permit such interests to crystallize by themselves and squarely to clash ; and therefore we discover the serviceableness of these parties whose platforms are broad enough to invite men from every section, and thus prevent section from being arrayed against section, as was the case in our civil war, which was itself the result of the disruption of the parties of that day.

For a similar reason we may rejoice that our parties are large enough to prevent our cities, which are attaining marvellous dimensions, from exercising such control over the rural populations as has characterized the cities of the Old World. We want no such centres of power, with the corrupt influences which usually gather in the same.

But of all the combinations which may endanger the republic those of a religious character are the most to be dreaded. No student of history can contemplate the possibility of a religious war without a shudder. No tongue can describe the amount or degree of human suffering which has resulted from the attempt to propagate religion by coercion. The relation which these political parties sustain, therefore, to the great religious and moral movements which agitate the public mind is suggestive of questions replete with interest, and demanding patient study and nice discrimination. Happily for us, our Constitution and laws proclaim religious liberty, which is in perfect harmony with the spirit of a pure Christianity. Both alike warn us against using this liberty as a cloak of maliciousness—it being a liberty to think as we please but not always to act as we please—a liberty which is so restricted as to prevent one man from making his religion to interfere with that of another man. Our policy as a nation is, therefore, at war with every religion which does not recognize this cardinal principle. Again, the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of our institutions agree in recognizing a complete separation between Church and State. These are co-ordinate institutions—both have been ordained of God, and each is amenable to Him directly, while neither is amenable to Him through the other. Whatever of religious restraint is imposed by the Government

upon its subjects is done for its own sake, and not for the sake of the Church ; its own health and prosperity being conditioned upon its adherence to the principles of the Decalogue promulgated from Sinai. Because the Government is non-sectarian it is not godless. The State, however, has no right to interfere with the Church, nor the Church with the State. The two, in their relation to the same God, have separate functions, and are clothed with very different powers. To the one, God has handed the sword, with the instruction that the magistrate shall not bear it in vain ; while to the other he has said, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The one compels, while the other persuades—the one applies its force outwardly, while the other sets up its kingdom in the heart, and thus purifies the very fountain of moral action. With such very obvious distinctions, it must be equally obvious that our true policy, as a people, will be found in a very strict observance of these lines of demarcation. The Church should never attempt to wage its battles upon ground belonging to the civil power. All it can ask of the Government is simple protection. In its own department it wields a power incomparably greater than that of the sword. In view of these distinctions we may greatly rejoice, as we study the composition of our political parties, to find that they so largely disregard all Church lines, and that men belonging to these various denominations, with equally good standing in the same Church, are intensely at variance in their political views. This is as it should be. We want no Protestant party as opposed to a Romish party ; we want no one religious denomination to mass itself in either party for the purpose of seizing the reins of Government in its own interests ; and should it accomplish such an end, it would only be to its own injury. All our interests, both religious and civil, are best subserved by having the churches themselves divided in politics. When a Protestant and Romanist find themselves standing shoulder to shoulder in the same political party and working zealously for its advancement, they will become better acquainted with each other, and as a result will lose

much of that bitterness which is the fruit of ignorance and bigotry. Thus it is that the very churches themselves are compelled to give credit to the political parties for having fostered that spirit of catholicity which has become so prevalent in our land, and which is the pride of every true American. Similar considerations should restrain us from inviting those extreme moral issues upon the arena of politics which will tend to drive all the dissipated and lawless classes into a party by themselves. Our true policy is to divide their forces. They are capable of inflicting incalculable harm. As with the increase of wealth and luxury these criminal classes are on the increase, they suggest some of the most difficult problems for our statesmen to solve. The virtuous portion of society must restrain them, and this can be accomplished far better through party affiliations than through party antagonisms.

It is the narrow view of politics which disgusts us; while it is only by these broader views that we rise to a comprehension of the importance of the political party as an indispensable factor in the administration of our Government, and discover in the honorable partisan the qualities of the true patriot.

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## Character Building.

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[*Baccalaureate Sermon preached by Dr. Parsons to the class of '95 of the Mount Morris High School* ]

1ST CORINTHIANS, XII : 31. "*But covet earnestly the best gifts.*" While the Greek word *charismata* here translated gifts, often refers to certain miraculous endowments, yet we do not here use it in such a restricted sense, but rather extend to it that larger

signification, which includes all those powers both of mind and heart, either natural or acquired, for which the individual is indebted to God as the great giver. And while we should ascribe all honor to God, for these free unmerited gifts, we must be careful not to regard them with a mere fatalistic spirit, as though they were distributed without any reference to our own earnest desires and longings; and willingness withal to co-operate in their future development; in other words we must be careful in this relation, not to assume a merely passive attitude, but rather as our text would imply, we must be very positive in our desires, and thus "covet earnestly the best gifts."

The Greek word *zaloute*, here rendered covet earnestly, is of the same root, from which our word zeal is derived; and signifies very intense desire after any thing; which indeed is the happier rendering, inasmuch as the word covet ordinarily expresses a desire after things to which we have no right.

How we are to be intensely earnest without being selfish, and how we are to make the most of our own powers, and render our lives grand and successful, without holding others back, or in any way trespassing upon their rights, is often in practical life a very difficult problem. The apostle, however, in the connection in which we find our text, would make its solution quite easy, as he makes God's will so prominent a factor in our lives. Again and again he refers to God, as the author of the powers, of which as individuals we might be tempted to be proud. He says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Here it is very obviously suggested, that in character building—in the making the most of our lives, we are simply to strive to work out God's plan with respect to us; in our very faculties we are to discover God's gifts, in our opportunities—we are to trace the leadings of his Providence, while the very obstacles which may seem to hinder us, we are to welcome as only trials of strength. Nothing so

changes our views of human life and all its activities as this placing of God first. What before was confused and distracting becomes clear and orderly. Especially in this way are we relieved of all those sharp antagonisms which have ever been so destructive of happiness, because our efforts are not that we may realize superiority to others, but rather that we may work out whatever plan God may have arranged for us. Therefore there is nothing necessarily selfish in the direction to covet earnestly. It is true that the church at Corinth was unhappily divided by their rivalries; but the apostle would have them not a whit the less active—he would only have a change of motives.

It is a false view of humility, that we are to suppress all ambition. Ambition can be pure and lofty and grand. Our powers have been given us to be used; and we should use them to the best possible advantage, just because God himself has given them to us. The noblest thing that can be said of any of us, is that we are God's workmanship.

There cannot be a grander motive to call out our most intense activities, than the fact that God invites us to co-operate with himself, in such a development of our own powers, and such a rounding up of our own characters, as will render us in the future, objects of interest and admiration to the very angels.

But in this work of self-improvement, we must not forget that we belong to a sinful race, that we have perverted faculties, that we have inherited from our ancestors unhappy tendencies, and that therefore, as we take an inventory of what really belongs to us, we have much that we need to throw away. Science, as well as the Bible, assures us that we are the degenerate plants of a strange vine; while the Bible alone points us to the remedy for this otherwise hopeless defect. To try to build character on merely natural endowments, is like building a house upon the sand. Says the apostle, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." When we invite the spirit of the Lord, to direct our energies, then and only then, can we feel that we are making a



happy selection of material, and that what we construct will prove substantial and satisfactory.

With these preliminary considerations, in regard to coveting earnestly the best gifts, or in other words the development of useful characters, let us now notice a few points which deserve special attention. And first, we would urge the importance of magnifying our individuality. Consider for a moment, what a fact it is, that of all the countless myriads of intelligences, each in very important respects, stands as much alone, as though God had never created any other. It is not therefore selfishness for us to take an interest in ourselves, that we do not, and cannot in others. We have a power to direct our own energies, which we do not have over others; we have a responsibility for our conduct, which we cannot exchange with our neighbor. Each can know his own heart, as others cannot know it. Each has a consciousness which bars others out, and compels him to live in a little world by himself. What that little world is, must be of more consequence to him, than anybody else; for that is his home, he must live there, whether it be agreeable or disagreeable; he cannot move away and leave it. And can there be any thought more important, than that God has located us in his universe, and given us the power of self-direction and self development so that no matter what may take other people, we can through Christ be successful; and that no one can hurt us only as we let them. Personality is like a castle whose walls cannot be scaled—the enemy can enter only as the door is opened from within.

Now we magnify this individuality when we take it just as we find it, without any murmurings, or invidious comparisons, and feel that in it we have our problem to work out. We are to be ourselves, and not somebody else. As no two faces are exactly alike, so no two individuals are exactly alike. God does not want them to be. The unity he desires, is not made up of sameness but diversity. To each he gives an entirely separate problem, which is simply to make the most he can of himself. Says the apostle, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to

think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." That is to say, they were neither to exaggerate nor depreciate their own importance, but they were to make a truthful estimate of themselves.

Our next point in regard to the development of character is, that we must do this with reference to others, who are doing similar work. Says the Savior, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Says the apostle, "For ye are laborers together with God."

It is a blessed thought that we can help others and be helped by them. The view which we have been taking of individuality is only one side of a great truth; it has its other side, which is not inferior in importance, and which introduces us to the manifold complications of social life. We are born for society—God never intended that we should live alone. Says the apostle, "Ye are members one of another." Indeed, it is one of the most vexatious of problems, how to get along with others, how to adapt ourselves to their peculiarities, how to develop our own characters, so as to blend with theirs. Our life work as individuals, is something like the fitting of different blocks of marble for some magnificent temple. The master workman wants to bring all these different pieces of work together, in something that shall be grander than is even suggested by any individual part of the same. It is this thought that makes us unselfish; because we come to realize, how much we need the work of others, in order that our own may appear to the best advantage.

Again a point of the greatest importance in character building, is the material out of which it is to be constructed. And here we shall greatly err if we regard character as simply a piece of mechanism, and its construction the mere putting together of parts, as in ordinary building; character is a growth, it is like a plant which must be developed; it needs to be fed with the proper food, in order to be

strong, healthy and fruitful. And now let us consider that we feed our characters, we supply the material out of which they are to grow very largely by the trains of thought which we encourage. We talk of education and we are impressed with the relative importance of this, that, or the other department of study; but none of these subjects can have the practical importance to us, of that one question, what are we thinking about? This is more to us than all schools and all courses of study. Says the Wise Man, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." To know what we are, and what we are to be, we must ask what are the hidden thoughts and what are the trains of reflection which we encourage. No fact connected with human existence can be more wonderful than that of the continuousness of thought.

In all our waking moments, think we must—we cannot stop thought; we have only the power to say into what channel it shall run. But this is enough. It is all we should desire. To be able to determine what course of investigation we will enter upon, and what train of thought we will pursue, is the power to determine what we are to be and what kind of characters we are to develop. The Psalmist says, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul;" from which we conclude that he had a choice in regard to what he should think about, and encouraged such thoughts as were elevating and consoling. No matter where we are, at school, at home, in business or in pleasure, in youth or in old age, this is a part of our education which we never can afford to neglect.

But next in importance to these trains of thought, as food for character, we would name the books and papers which we read. Reading is letting others do our thinking for us. We then think their thoughts and make those thoughts our own, or not, as we choose. In reading there is the widest range, from that which is positively corrupt and debasing, to that which is pure, elevating and Godlike. We must read with reference to enriching the mind, purifying the heart, and elevating the aspirations. We cannot read every

thing, and therefore we are compelled to choose ; and here we should heed the exhortation of the text, to "covet earnestly the best gifts." We cannot be too thankful for this power of choice by which we are enabled to brush away all that is vile, to refuse also that which is vapid and characterless, and absorb only that which goes to strengthen character and results in permanent good. And in thus selecting food for character, we make no mistake when we rank the Bible as supreme in all the range of literature ; not simply as a religious book, but as having special value to the scholar and the man of business. On this point the words of Charles A. Dana, the editor of the N. Y. Sun, in an address to the students of Union College on the subject of journalism will be pertinent. He says, "There are some books that are absolutely indispensable to the kind of education that we are contemplating, and to the profession that we are considering ; and of all these, the most indispensable, the most useful, the one whose knowledge is most effective, is the Bible. There is no book from which more valuable lessons can be learned. I am considering it now, not as a religious book, but as a manual of utility, of professional preparation and professional use for a journalist. There is perhaps no book whose style is more suggestive and more instructive, from which you learn more directly that sublime simplicity, which never exaggerates, which recounts the greatest event, with solemnity of course, but without sentimentality or affectation, none which you open with such confidence, and lay down with such reverence ; there is no book like the Bible. When you get into a controversy, and want exactly the right answer, when you are looking for an expression, what is there that closes a dispute like a verse from the Bible. What is there that sets up the right principle for you, which pleads for a policy, for a cause so much as the right passage of Holy Scripture ?"

But again, we notice as food for character, those impressions which we are receiving in our every day life from our fellow men.

The wide, wide world is bringing its contributions and laying them at our feet, that we may choose what to take, and what to

refuse. We may think of the busy world as a great university with an elective course, in which we are permitted to select our own teachers. We are told that President Garfield said that his idea of a university was a pine bench with President Hopkins on one end, and himself on the other; which was only a strong way of expressing his appreciation of the power of all great educators of impressing upon others their own personality. It does us good to be brought in contact with men of large brains, and larger souls. We feel their power, something as we feel the warmth of fire. In the realm of thought they make us to be partakers of their victories, and they impart to us that which makes them none the poorer nor the weaker. This dealing with the world is an educational process to which we are all subjected; and we can, if we will, gain from our fellows very much valuable material to work into our own characters.

But we remark again, that in this great battle of life, this effort which we put forth to make the most of ourselves, we shall do well always to bear in mind the difference between reputation and character.

Our reputation is what the world says about us, our character is what we really are. The two may very nearly agree, or they may be widely apart. We hardly need to be told that our own work is the building of character; while we must leave to others the building of our reputations; nor need we be told that character is of greater importance than reputation. Not that we ever should be careless of our reputations by expressing indifference as to how people regard us, for a good reputation is second only to the character itself. The wise man says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." The apostle says, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of," in which it is implied, that a good action may be so ill-timed or unhappily expressed as to make a bad impression, and that we ourselves are responsible to a certain extent for the impressions which we may make. Also in his injunction to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth," he as much as tells him that he has it in his power to

compel people to respect him. The public have rights in us which we are bound to respect, and we never can afford to ignore their opinions, or treat them with contempt. Indeed it is one of the very highest arts, in character building, so to build, as that our work shall produce the best possible impression.

But we notice again, that in the development of our characters we should enrich them with the very best material. Here if anywhere, we should covet earnestly the best gifts. Too often the impression prevails that it is quite allowable to do as you please, provided you do nothing that is positively bad. Our lives seem to be made up of a succession of choices. In unnumbered little things we are making selections, by taking this and refusing that, or by doing this and refusing to do that, and our characters are the products of these choices. Now while we admit that the most important choice is between good and evil, yet the point which we wish here to emphasize is, that even among things that are good in themselves there is always a preference, and that this preference we cannot afford to treat as a matter of indifference.

The sale of the birthright by Esau for a mess of pottage illustrates this point. There was nothing wrong in the mess of pottage; a hungry man is not to be blamed for securing food; the unspeakable wrong was that he preferred it to his birthright; that having a choice, he should exercise it so greatly to his disadvantage. It is just this defect that accounts for the many weak characters to be found among good people,—people of no moral force, and who never can be relied upon to meet important emergencies.

If we work poor material into the fabric of character, we only cheat ourselves, and the fraud will surely be disclosed. We must reap what we sow. "If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." What more can we ask than the privilege of making our own selection, and then be told to choose the best.

I am happy in the thought that our subject cannot be other than appropriate to those who have honored me by asking that I should

preach a sermon with reference to their graduation from our academy. No subject can be more important to any one than this which we have considered, and especially to those who are soon to assume the more weighty responsibilities of active life. Already, my young friends, you have been doing much in the formation of your characters. These years of study and discipline now past have not been in vain. Your self-denial, application, and earnestness, have been making their contributions toward achieving the victory, which is to be expressed in the diplomas which you are soon to receive. You have been learning how to study, how to use your own mental powers, and how to investigate the truth by separating it from error. Both yourselves and teachers have cause for mutual congratulation over work so happily accomplished.

Very properly you have regarded these years of study, as preparatory to your life work; you have been getting ready to take good positions in society. But you hardly need be told, that the whole of this life is preparatory,—that at the best we are only learning how to live, by correcting our mistakes, and trying to do better work than we have done. While, therefore, you are to be congratulated for your success, you are much more to be congratulated for the grand possibilities which are before you. Human existence is sublime, because it has the power of an endless life.

You are permitted to labor with God, to work out his plan, to develop powers which he has given you. Do not be misled into thinking you can be any thing you want to be. Very few ever realize their childish fancies and youthful aspirations; and doubtless it is far better for us that we do not. Too often we are thinking only of what others will say of us; we are adopting earthly standards and are trying to adjust ourselves to a worldly environment. God loves us too well to let us have our way in these respects. In all our disappointments he is reminding us that he has better plans for us than any which we can arrange for ourselves. It would be wrong to tell you that your lives are to be all happy and all joyous; you will certainly have your dark days, as have all others who have pre-

ceded you. But remember that life is a series of steps, and that it is only one step at a time. A successful life is none other than the faithful performance of every day duties. The Lord would have our work easy and delightful; it is our own pride that loads us down with burdens grievous to be borne. You will find life to be a battle; and as the conflict shall deepen, remember that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them," and that they that be for you are more than they that be against you.

As you start out with high hopes and a bright future, we exhort you to covet earnestly the best gifts. Make your lives grand by making them useful; and make them beautiful as crowned at last with that benediction of the Master, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

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## God's Sovereign Power over the Nations.

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[Delivered by Dr. Parsons before the J. E. Lee Post, G. A. R., Mount Morris, N. Y., May 29th, 1898.]

HAGGAI II: 7. "*And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.*"

I have selected this text as expressive of God's sovereign power over the nations of the earth, and the use which he makes of that power in establishing the kingdom of the Redeemer. Haggai prophesied after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and about 500 years before the coming of Christ.



He was raised up for the encouragement of God's people, in the rebuilding of the temple. The people had become neglectful of the higher duties of religion, and were leading worldly selfish lives; and so we find this good prophet remonstrating with them for living in their ceiled houses, and permitting the Lord's house to lie waste. At the same time, he addressed them with words of generous exhortation; and as they were giving way to discouragement, because the foundations of the temple they were then laying were insignificant as compared with those of Solomon's temple, he assured them of the superiority of the future temple, because it would be glorified by the personal presence of Christ; which suggests that Christ subsequently employed these very words "But I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the temple."

The first thought to which we call attention in our text is God's promise that he would shake all nations. The Jews, in their feeble efforts to rebuild the temple, must have trembled in view of their liability to be overpowered by the other nations of the earth. It was true that Cyrus had favored their return; but how could they be sure of a continuance of his good will?

But God answers all these distrustful questions by assuring them that all the nations were under his immediate control, and that however firmly they might seem to stand he had the power to shake them. And let us stop right here and consider the sublimity of this claim. How arrogant the nations of the earth have been, as they have risen one by one in their might, to human appearance how strong a front have they presented. Think of the Egyptian nation, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek and the Roman, how they have seemed to laugh at opposition and feel that they had an unlimited tenure of power. And yet God claimed that he had the power to shake them when they were at the zenith of their strength and glory; and one by one he has shaken them, and so fulfilled his own promise; so that we now look for them only upon the pages of history. They are no longer factors in the great problems which we are now studying; other nations occupy our attention, other nations are

dividing up the earth's surface, other nations are busy watching each other with jealous eye, each claiming for itself a glorious future, and an almost unlimited supremacy ; but God's hand has still hold of each ; nor has he abated one whit of his claim, "I will shake all nations."

What He has done He will do,—thus far He has controlled them, and He will never cease to exert this control. He will not resign his sovereignty, or cease to execute his eternal purposes. The history of the world has been simply the unfolding of God's great plan with reference to the race of Adam.

And can there be anything more sublime than this view of God's raising up one nation and putting down another for the sake of accomplishing his own purpose ? Isaiah says, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance ; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. \* \* \* All nations before him are as nothing ; and they are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity." And the Psalmist says, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed saying. Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh ; the Lord shall have them in derision."

But we notice in the second place, that in shaking the nations, God is not making an arbitrary use of his power simply for the sake of displaying the same. In His own nature, His natural attributes may be regarded as subordinate to his moral attributes. He does not represent himself as essentially power, but He does represent himself as essentially love ; his power therefore must be employed to give expression to his love.

We should not be surprised therefore, that in using the nations to work out His own great problems, He should teach them that power is not the main thing, but that it is only a means to a nobler end ; that it is to be used for the administration of justice, for the defense of the poor and needy, and the uplifting of the fallen.

Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon was taught a most impressive lesson in regard to the subordination of governmental power for moral purposes. In his arrogance he had said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" And for this he was driven from among men, and was made to dwell with the beasts of the fields, and to eat grass as oxen. But perhaps we have not all thought how appropriate this punishment was to the crime. He had magnified his lower nature in which he was allied to the animal creation, he had deified brute force in the mere exhibition of power in itself, and thus he had made a beast of himself; and so God very appropriately in his discipline and humiliation, classified him with the oxen and caused him to eat grass by their side.

What an object lesson for all time to come for all governments which may pride themselves in the exercise of mere power, uncontrolled by any moral considerations, is that same Nebuchadnezzar as we see him in the field, eating grass by the side of the oxen! How impressively in this, are we taught what God thinks of the perversion of governmental power to selfish purposes.

We come now in the third place, to advance a step further, and that a very important step, and claim that God uses human governments as his agents for the purification of such nations as deserve his rebuke, and the destruction of such as are proving only a curse to mankind.

Old Testament history abundantly sustains this claim. We know that God was very careful to instruct the Israelites, that it was not on account of their own righteousness that they were to overthrow the Canaanites, and dispossess them of their homes, but it was on account of the exceeding wickedness of those nations—their cup of iniquity was full to overflowing—justice called for their destruction, and the Israelites were simply God's executioners.

Then when Israel needed chastening, God appointed the Babylonians to destroy their city and carry them away into captivity. In

a similar way the Greek nation was overthrown, notwithstanding its wonderful attainments in the realm of literature, philosophy, and the fine arts; and so the Roman empire with all its magnificence was overthrown by other nations who acted simply as God's executioners. In both instances, these nations had forfeited all their rights of existence. The Greeks with all their learning, were fairly putrid in morals; and the Romans with all their magnificence and renown were brutal to such a degree, as to provide entertainment for the masses in butcheries too awful to describe. Indeed to-day the very Colosseum of Rome, as it stands in its ruins, proclaims the justice of God in calling the hordes of barbarians to wipe from the very face of the earth a government which could build such a structure, for a purpose so base and degrading. As we think of such nations in their unrestrained power, trampling upon all human rights and fairly gloating over human suffering, we appreciate as never before, the spirit of the imprecatory psalms, and in our agony we exclaim, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself. lift up thyself thou judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud." And then when God calls together his executioners to wipe such a nation from off the face of the earth, with a sigh of relief we exclaim, "Alleluiah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

And now we take another step, which is by far the most important of all, and claim that God employs human governments for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Our text reads, "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

This looks like cause and effect as though the shaking of all nations had something to do with the coming of the "desire of all nations," which by the phraseology of the text, sustained by that of the context, we conclude to have been none other than our Lord himself. For 4,000 years, God had been getting ready for this most important advent of Christ. The events of history had been con-

verging towards this one objective point. Christ is represented as coming in the fulness of time; that is, the times were ripe for his coming, and the nations had been shaken to make ready for the coming of the King. The one kingdom to which all others are subordinate was about to be manifested more distinctly.

This subordination of human governments to the interests of the church, and for her special protection, is most abundantly taught in God's Holy Word. Isaiah represents God as saying of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Again Isaiah writes, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth and lick up the dust of thy feet." And yet again he writes, "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee (i. e. God's spiritual kingdom or church) shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Daniel writes, "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." The apostle Paul also teaches that God hath made Christ, "to be head over all things to the church."

These earthly kingdoms, these civil governments, are not to exist just for themselves. However pure their morals, or effective their administration of justice, their highest end is to be found in their helpfulness in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom. They are to anticipate the time when "The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

In all our advocacy then of the separation of Church and State, let us never count them as in necessary hostility to each other.

They are made for each other, and Christ claims headship over both. The church cannot use the sword to make converts; she must persuade men in Christ's stead to become reconciled to God. But the civil power can and should use the sword for the maintenance of justice. Christ recognized this very distinction when he said, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

And the apostle instructs us that we are to be subject to the higher powers, by which we may understand the civil magistrate, who is represented as bearing not the sword in vain; but rather as God's minister "to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The church ought to work for the government and the government ought to work for the church. They have the same great head and they have essentially the same great work—the uplifting of fallen humanity.

It is now 37 years since our government called for soldiers to put down the great rebellion, which then threatened the very life of the nation. It is not therefore strange that, of the hundreds of thousands who then responded to that call, only a minority now remains; a minority which year by year is growing less, until the last shall have passed away. The generation that since has come upon the stage of life, delights to honor the names of those who laid down their lives in battle, as well as those who survive to the present time. From year to year the people manifest an increasing interest in Memorial Day and Soldiers' Sunday. And now the cry of war is again heard in the land. After a peace of more than thirty years there is the call for volunteers; and we find the people intensely excited from Maine to California in raising armies and providing the implements of war. Indeed we almost march with our soldiers and sail with our iron clads, as from the daily press we read the graphic descriptions of events as they are transpiring. But what does this war mean? This is not for the defense of our firesides which are well protected; this is not for the support of our government, which is rich and strong and prosperous; this is not for the acquisition of

territory, for we now have more land than we need; this rather we claim to be a war, in the interest of humanity. We are turning a new leaf in our national history; we are looking outside our own borders and directing another nation what she shall do in regard to her colonial possessions. We have espoused the cause of a weak people, in their efforts to break the oppressive yoke of Spain. And in doing this we feel that we are discharging a very high and responsible duty, that as a nation we are acting the part of the good Samaritan.

Our revolutionary fathers, in their declaration of independence, presented facts as furnishing the reason for the course they pursued, and so we simply appeal to facts, in the treatment which Cuba has endured from Spain, as constituting the warrant which we have for taking up arms. We, with other civilized nations, have had our sympathies stirred to their depths by the prolonged cruelties to which the Cubans have been subjected. We have endured all this, hoping for better things, until patience has ceased to be a virtue.

Turkish atrocities towards the Armenians could be attributed to religious hostility, it was the Crescent against the Cross; but this war of Spain with Cuba reveals no such mitigation, where we find all of one religious faith. Nor is this a single instance, an unhappy exception to Spain's general policy; truth rather compels us to assert that it is but the continuation of centuries of misrule. Spain seems to have learned nothing and to have forgotten nothing since the dark ages. Her decline from the high position of a first class power four and five centuries ago to her present degradation, is one of the sad facts of history; and her decline is attributable to her tyranny, persecution and unspeakable cruelty. Away back, as the discoverer of this Western Hemisphere, her treatment of the aborigines was shocking beyond description, and subsequently her notorious Spanish Inquisition has been the horror of horrors.

The one fact, that her Sunday bull fights continue to be the amusement of her populace at the present time, is indicative that her disease is too deep seated for any ordinary reform and can be cured only by the most heroic treatment.

In these closing years of the 19th century, Turkey and Spain stand impeached by the civilized world, as unworthy a place among the nations of the earth. The voice of rivers of blood drunk up by the thirsty ground, which has been shed by these monsters, cries aloud to heaven for vengeance. As nations, they have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The verdict of humanity is, that they are not fit to bear rule over men, and that they have forfeited all those rights that justice is bound to respect.

Two years ago the world stood aghast at the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks ; but people were not more shocked by the atrocities themselves, than by the fact that the nations of Europe were so paralyzed by their international complications as to prevent them from going to the relief of the persecuted. Now that similar atrocities are enacted on one of the fairest islands of this Western Hemisphere, let us thank God that this nation finds it unnecessary to ask permission of any power on earth to go to the assistance of the down-trodden.

Certainly we are not without evidence, that God has given us our great power, that he might use us for the humiliation of a nation, that has too long resisted all reform and insisted upon filling up her cup of iniquity to the very brim.

When in peopling this country centuries ago, God shook the nations of Great Britain, France and Holland, it was that some of the very richest, choicest, ripest fruit might fall on these shores in the persons of the sturdy Dutch, the French Huguenots, the English Puritans and the Scotch Covenanters. The love for God and civil and religious liberty, which they cherished and fought for, is still a power in this land. They knew what it was to fight bigotry and intolerance, and "being dead they yet speak." Yes, their voice is heard from the mouths of Dewey's cannons, and we hope will soon be heard again, not less emphatically, from those of Sampson.

But let us be careful not to be inflated by our victories. Let us not be unmindful of the responsible position which we occupy.

If this with us is a holy war, then are we God's executioners, and



as such should cherish no hatred, no revenge, no bitter feelings. This is the time to walk humbly before God.

The sheriff should not hate the man he hangs; nor should we hate the Spaniards whom in God's name we chasten.

Grant did not hate Lee when he refused to accept his sword, and made his humiliation in his surrender as light as possible. So we must feed and clothe our Spanish prisoners and show them what Christianity can do to mitigate the horrors of war.

We are fast making history, and apparently are on the eve of great events. The fate of twenty millions of people on the Philippine Islands, long crushed by the tyranny of Spain, now wavers in the balance as we are suddenly confronted with the question of a future colonial policy. What shall we do with our victory? and greater than this what does God mean we shall do with it? are questions which must be answered, and should be answered only on our knees before God. Threatened complications with other governments, as the peace of Europe is now disturbed, will severely tax the wisdom of our most astute statesmen.

But, with all this confusion incident to God's shaking of the nations, let us listen that we may hear the sweet voice of Jesus saying, "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

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## Prayer.

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*[Offered by Rev. Levi Parsons, D. D. at the Sullivan Centennial, Geneseo, N. Y., September 18th, 1879.]*

Our Father who art in Heaven, we worship thee as God over

all and blessed forever. Thou art the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, ruling throughout the immensity of thy dominions, controlling all creatures and directing all events. We approach thy mercy-seat at this time in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, to thank thee that under circumstances so auspicious we are permitted to gather here from far and near to celebrate the deeds of our fathers and to cherish the memories of those who in the infancy of our republic fought our battles for us.

We rejoice that while one generation passeth away and another generation cometh, yet thou art the same and of thy days and of thy years there is no end; so that this day we are permitted to worship the same God whom our fathers worshipped and to cherish and perpetuate the same institutions which in thy kind Providence they planted and have been permitted to hand down to us.

We bless thy name that as the fruit of the hard toil of those who have gone before us we are permitted to gather rich harvests from the fields spread out before us; so that, where was the wilderness unbroken save by the foot of the savage, we now discover thousands of happy homes. We rejoice that these homes have been illuminated by the light of the gospel, and that in the early settlement of our land religious and educational institutions were planted which subsequently have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength. We rejoice also that we may trace thy guardian care in all the way in which thou hast led us as a nation, so that from small beginnings we now occupy a position of such influence among the nations of the earth.

We thank thee that in times of darkness and distress thou hast not forsaken us—in times when our sins have justly provoked thy displeasure, thou hast indeed remembered mercy. And now we invoke thy blessing to rest upon us in the future while at the same time we consecrate ourselves to thy service,

Defend us O Lord from the machinations of evil men. Defend us from drunkenness, profanity, Sabbath breaking, and kindred sins. Grant that our officers may be peace and our exactors righteousness.

Incline us to the cultivation of that charity which thinketh no evil and is powerful for the uplifting of the oppressed and degraded. Help us to deal justly and magnanimously with the sons of the red man who once occupied these lands which we call our own. Help us also to welcome with true cordiality to these shores the oppressed of all nations.

Incline us to cherish the principles contained in thy Holy Word and to seek their diffusion throughout the earth. Grant us thy rich grace, our Heavenly Father, that we may so fulfill all our duties that our children and childrens children may rise up and call us blessed. All which we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

