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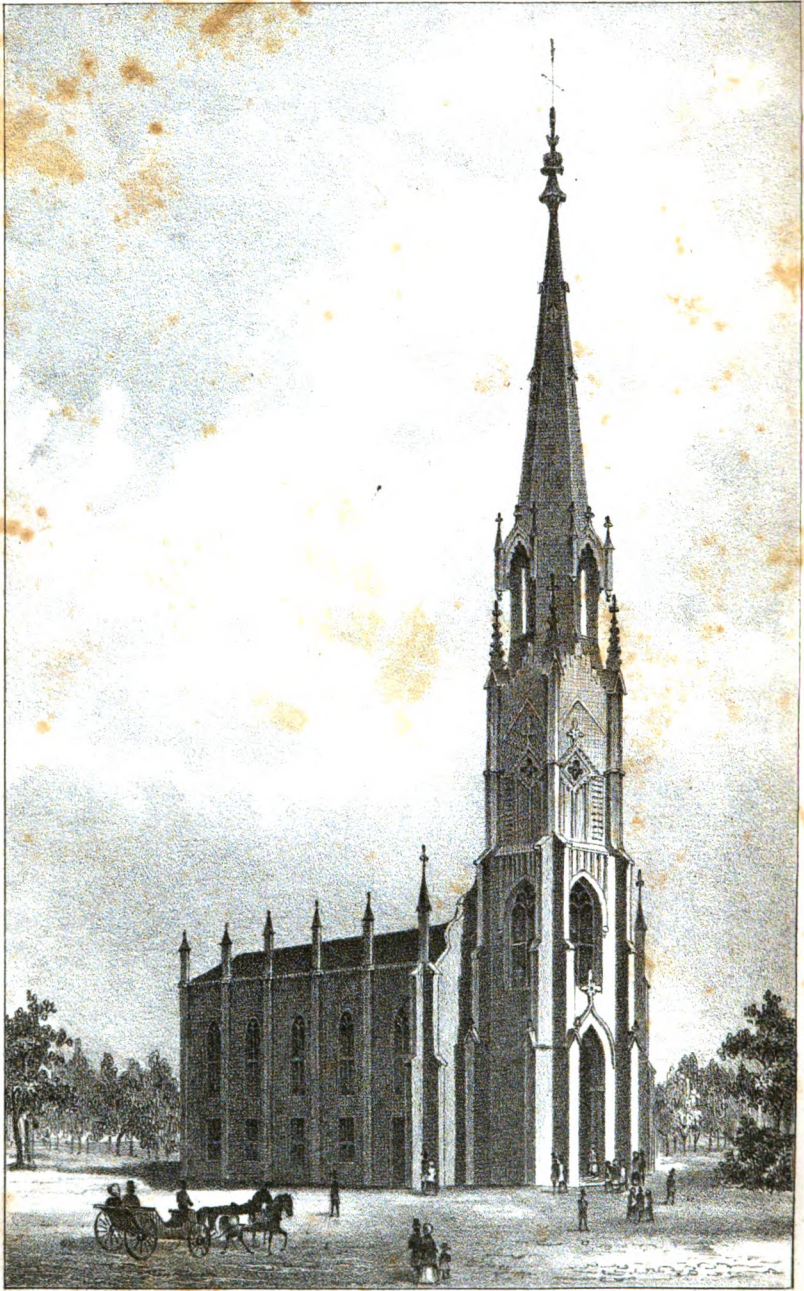


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FROM

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**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
Cincinnati.**

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

CITY OF CINCINNATI,

September 21st. A. D. 1851.

BY SAMUEL R. WILSON, PASTOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

1851.

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DISCOURSE.

PSALM LXXXVII. 1-3.—“HIS FOUNDATION IS IN THE HOLY MOUNTAINS. THE LORD LOVETH THE GATES OF ZION MORE THAN ALL THE DWELLINGS OF JACOB. GLORIOUS THINGS ARE SPOKEN OF THEE, O CITY OF GOD. SELAH.”

WE are met to-day under circumstances of no ordinary interest. God has accomplished for us the desire of our hearts. We have been permitted to build this house to his name. He has heard our prayers, he has prospered the work of our hands upon us, and now we are all here before him, to present as a thank-offering that which our hands have wrought, and ourselves anew to devote as living sacrifices to his service. It is a season for rejoicing, and methinks each heart, bounding with joy at these tokens of divine favor, is ready to cry out responsive to the holy singer in Israel, “The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” “We will go into his tabernacles; we will worship at his footstool.” “Praise ye the Lord, Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise ye him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good; sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.”

Occasions like the present have always been reckoned as memorable in the church, exciting the thankfulness of the people of God, and calling forth special expressions of joy. When David and all Israel brought the ark of the covenant up from Kirjath-jearim, they accompanied it with manifestations of heartfelt exultation, “playing before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals and with trumpets.” And again, when that work, so happily begun but so suddenly interrupted by the fatal consequences of

Uzzah's rashness, was perfected, and they carried the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to its resting place in Jerusalem, the happy event was celebrated in fitting manner, and the delighted feelings of Israel found utterance in the words of that magnificent Psalm which David then first delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren, to be sung to the sound of cornet and harps, and which opens with a call to thanksgiving—"Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." When David had collected materials for building, beautifying and enriching the temple, "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the King also rejoiced with great joy." When the first Temple was finished, Solomon consecrated it to the service of Jehovah in the presence of an exulting nation, with the most august ceremonies that were ever witnessed in the church on earth. And when, after much toil, and protracted delay, occasioned partly by the apathy of the people and partly by the opposition of enemies, the second temple was at last completed through the zeal of the great Zerubabel, the laying of the cap-stone was hailed with loud acclaim by the rejoicing church, shouting in praise of God's mercy, GRACE! GRACE! UNTO IT!!

The people of God have always taken pleasure in his worship, and in the places where that worship has been publicly celebrated. To satisfy yourselves of this fact, you have but to run your eye over the records of sacred history, for the Bible is full of evidence upon this point. Or if you think this is the testimony of partial witnesses, open the volumes of those secular writers whose credibility is esteemed by many, all the greater in proportion as they evince an antipathy to the faith and worship inculcated in the Bible.

Nay, I need not send you to the history of former days to find evidence that the truly pious love the house of God; the voices of ten thousand witnesses may be heard this day ascending toward the heaven of heavens, from places where prayer is wont to be made in every valley and upon every mountain, in each city and hamlet throughout our land; and these thousands of thousands are singing in sweet accord with the music of heaven, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together; Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord: Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee."

This delight in the public ordinances of worship is a characteristic of true piety. It is a test, and not the least important test, of the genuineness of our love to God. It is one of those evidences which lie patent to the regenerate and unregenerate alike, by which the validity of a Christian profession may be ascertained. A man may go to church as a matter of form or of fashion, and his presence there will in all probability be signalized by stupidity or coldness, or perchance something worse. It is as like to happen now to the ministers of religion and the solemn services of the sanctuary, as God testifies against the people in the days of Ezekiel, "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words but they do them not." Eloquence may be as attractive in the pulpit as elsewhere. Learned disquisitions, metaphysical disputes, the speculations of philosophy, and well-composed lectures on history or ethics, may

draw men as readily to the church as to the forum or the academy. And it is not an infrequent occurrence that men have mistaken the pleasure derived from an intellectual entertainment furnished by the preacher, for delight in the sanctuary and its heavenly provisions. But a little reflection upon the workings of their own minds, should serve to discover to such persons the deception they are practising upon themselves. Take away the tongue of the eloquent, and the novelties of the learned, and how vapid the simple truth "as it is in Jesus" becomes to their taste! Let even an Apostle Paul preach Jesus and the resurrection, not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and how quickly are such attendants upon the house of God disgusted with the weakness of his bodily presence, and the harshness of his contemptible speech!

It is the *renewed* heart alone that loves the assemblies of the saints, because there are gathered the friends and followers of Christ, and there the great God of heaven especially appears in power and in glory. The Christian eye can admire the beauties of art as well as other men; his ear can as readily be charmed with the melody of sweet sounds; his piety renders him none the less capable of deriving pleasure from the efforts of genius or learning. But he is not drawn to the house of God by these attractions. The charms of music, of architecture, of eloquence, and of learning, may all be wanting, and still he will love the place where prayer is wont to be made. It will be the greatest drawback upon his happiness to which he can be subjected, if he be kept from the sanctuary. He languishes for spiritual refreshment, and his fainting soul cries out, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts?" "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

This attachment of godly men to the public worship of

God, has manifested itself in their setting apart particular places for that especial purpose, and the holding them in such sense sacred as that they should be wholly or for the most part used for the celebration of the rites and ordinances of religion. The social principle of our nature is sanctified by grace, and called into active exercise in new and holy employments. If a common depravity leads the wicked to join hand in hand for purposes of sin, the mutual participation in a new nature enjoyed by the renewed, binds them together in services of holiness. Bad men have their assemblies for sympathy and counsel, for instruction and amusement, and they expend their wealth and labor in adorning the houses where they are accustomed to meet. Good men have no less affinities for each other; they love to come together for mutual advantage—to hear what God the Lord will speak, to see his beauty in the sanctuary; to commune with one another, and “to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing, with grace, in their hearts to the Lord.” And when God has given them the opportunity, by increasing their substance and affording them rest from the persecutions of their enemies, they have taken pleasure in bestowing of the first fruits of their increase for building and beautifying the place of his Sanctuary; as when God had given David rest from all his enemies, and he was established peacefully and firmly on his throne, he at once began to plan a suitable temple to Jehovah, saying to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.” And though he was forbid of God to accomplish the full desire of his heart, yet he set himself to gather materials for the work, called upon the nation for their donations, and before he slept with his fathers was permitted to witness the cheerful liberality of princes and people for this work, and to leave their costly offerings a consecrated legacy to his son and successor, with which to enrich the earthly dwelling place of the Most High. So the people

had given before in the days of Moses, until their readiness to bestow so far exceeded the demand for gifts that their hands had to be stayed. And afterwards, when the captives were restored and the second temple was to be built, true piety produced a beneficence which furnished every thing necessary for the work.

It is certainly true that God does not dwell in temples made with hands, as holy Stephen declared to the Jewish Sanhedrim, in any such sense as superstition had supposed. And this was a truth as well known to the ancient church as to us. The enlightened mind has never, under any dispensation, been left to imagine Jehovah confined to one particular place, where alone acceptable worship could be rendered. God has always sought for and has found worshippers in spirit and in truth, whether in Jerusalem or in Samaria, or in Babylon. There were in the Ancient Temple peculiar symbols of the Divine presence; above all others the Shekinah. There were typical rites pertaining to the tabernacle service which could be performed nowhere else and only by the priests; and there were national religious festivals for the celebration of which all must go up to Jerusalem. But this did not hinder the erection of synagogues for uses of devotion, and as places where the Levites should teach the people out of the Word of God. The pious met for prayer and praise in the synagogue, or by the domestic altar, or under the open canopy of heaven—as in the days of general apostacy, when the chosen faithful took refuge in dens and caves and mountains—in any and all these places they could claim and expect the divine presence and blessing. Their father Jacob had found his lonely resting place at Luz, a Bethel, resplendent with the vision of angels, descending and ascending through the opening heavens, as messengers from the dazzling throne of God; and the God of Jacob was their God, known to their faith in such assurances as this: “Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy;

I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." The abolition of the Tabernacle service after its shadowy uses had been rendered unnecessary by the advent of the substance, was but placing the church in this regard upon the ancient patriarchal basis. *Then* they neither worshipped "in this mountain nor at Jerusalem," any more than we do since Christ nailed to his cross the hand-writing of ordinances, first blotting it out with his own blood. Wherever God appeared to the Patriarchs, that was to them "none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven." Wherever Abram pitched his tent, there he gathered his whole house and worshipped his covenant God. And whether in the plains of Mamre, or sheltered by the Grove himself had planted; whether standing before the Lord with anxious eye turned toward the doomed cities, or amidst the thickets of Moriah calmly arranging the altar and the wood for the unwonted sacrifice, the Father of the faithful was permitted to behold the glories of an ever-present God, and received comforting assurance that He was "the hearer of prayer." Just so the Apostles and primitive Christians, whether met in the Temple, or in an upper room, or in the synagogue, or in the cells of a prison, or upon the river side, always could claim and always found true the promise of Christ, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

We are sure however that this important and heart cheering truth, that God is not limited in the manifestation of his perfections and the dispensation of his grace to particular places, can furnish no legitimate ground of objection to the setting apart of suitable places as well as convenient times for the services of religion. The wandering patriarch in his vow giving utterance to the grateful feelings of his heart, promised when returned from his banishment, upon the place of his vision to build an altar to God; a promise

of which a divine admonition reminded him when afterwards in his prosperity he seemed to have forgotten it. It was said by the Jews in commendation of the Centurion whose servant Jesus healed and upon whose faith he pronounced so high an eulogium, that he had evinced his love to their nation and its religion by building them a Synagogue. And it is evident that from the first gathering of the Christian Church, it was found necessary to have houses set apart where the believers might come together to celebrate the worship of God in Christ with singing and praying, and hearing the gospel preached and receiving the Sacraments. The very design of the organization of the church required this, not less than the social nature of Christianity and its peculiar forms of worship. And as the Gentile nations with their wealth were gathered into the bosom of the church, and the sword of persecution fell from the paralyzed arm of Jewish and Pagan power, opportunity was afforded for beautifying the place of God's sanctuary. This, Primitive Christians were ready to do, for the expansive power of an Apostolic benevolence had not yet spent its influence, nor were those who had lavished their wealth upon the temples of Unknown Gods, content to serve the God of heaven with that which cost them nothing. And in imitation of their example, as also the example of Patriarchs, Prophets and Kings, in other periods of the same Catholic Church, the converts to Jesus of all nations have not deemed it unworthy the simplicity of the gospel nor of their high calling to bestow of their substance to enlarge and adorn the house of their God; as our fathers in their day and we also in these ends of the earth have done, and come this day to give with humble and thankful hearts, to the Head of the Church that which we have first received at his hands.

If any one inquire the reason of this delight which the good man feels in the public worship of God and the places where it is celebrated, it will be found in the fact that God himself loves the assemblies of his church. "His foundation

is in the Holy Mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." This language has nothing in it peculiarly applicable to a ceremonial dispensation; the Psalm is rather prophetic of the delight of God in the church, when by the calling of the Gentiles and under the ministration of the Spirit, she should become more glorious by reason of that glory which excelleth. No one who believes the Scriptures doubts for a moment the divine complacency in the whole church as embracing the subjects of saving grace and constituting the spiritual body of Christ, the spouse of the Son of God, the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Of which in its New Testament state the Apostle gives that glowing description when contrasting the glory and terror of the legal economy with the milder yet brighter splendor of the evangelical, "Ye are come" says he "to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of Just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." A glorious assembly, the object of God's eternal love, the subject of his promises, the repository and witness of his truth, and the abode of his Spirit; the medium through which unto principalities and powers he makes known his manifold wisdom. Now we know that each member of this church is a member of the mystical body of Christ and as such, beloved of God. Each separate congregation of the redeemed may in their measure claim the promises made to the whole church of the first-born, for He as the head of the whole body cares for every member in particular, and as the Saviour and Ruler of the church, holds in his right hand the stars, and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. In warning, instructing, reproving or comforting the whole com-

pany of the Redeemed on earth he does it by his Epistles to particular churches. And when he causes Zion to break forth on the right hand and upon the left, enlarging the place of her tabernacle, lengthening her chords and strengthening her stakes, it is by the special effusion of his Spirit upon each of his ministers and upon all the churches. It is by inspiring those who labour in the Word and Doctrine with a holy zeal for the conversion of sinners and exciting the congregations of his people to provoke one another to love and good works. And when God would show his anger against the sins of unfaithful or lukewarm Christians, he does it by withholding the influence of his Spirit from the church in which they are found; when he would curse a gospel-rejecting community, it is by removing the golden candlestick out of its place. And the most direful calamity that can fall upon a nation is the shutting up of the House of God and the dispersion of the remnants of His saints, so that they can no longer assemble together to hear the Word, and celebrate the ordinances of the Gospel. From such a nation would have departed their chiefest protection and their highest glory.

We need not admire that God's love should be thus displayed in its actings, especially toward His people in their associated capacity as churches; for it is in this way, alone, they are enabled to celebrate the highest acts of New Testament worship; in no other way can they present to the world a united testimony to the truth of the Gospel, the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, their subjection to His laws, and the oneness of their faith, hopes, joys and sorrows, as partakers of a common salvation, warriors under the same leader, citizens of the same country, and heirs of the same inheritance. True, indeed, the Christian must enter into his closet, and his heavenly Father will meet him in secret. There he must seek for that life-giving spirit through whose inward workings, alone, he can hope to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. But then, his reward, we know, is to come openly, chiefly too, we are sure, in the house of prayer. There he will see the divine glory, there receive of the goodness of God. There every sinful passion will be held in subjection, and every holy affection called into lively exercise. There all the graces of the new nature will be called forth in their harmonious manifestation; some nowhere else have any occasion for activity. Well might the apostle admonish the Hebrews against imitating the example of those who had fallen into the habit of forsaking the assembling of themselves together, seeing that without fidelity in attendance upon the public preaching of the Word, and ministration of the ordinances of the Gospel, their piety would decay, their comfort be lost, and an end be put to their usefulness as professing Christians.

We find other and still clearer evidences of the greatness of the divine love toward the Church, in the gifts with which she is endowed and the position assigned her by her Head. To her pertain all the promises which have ever cheered the despairing heart of man. To her hands have been confided the oracles of Truth, the ministry of reconciliation and the means of grace. With her has been ratified the covenant of redemption, and she has received the commission to make disciples of all nations. To her, God has given His Incarnate Son as a Redeemer, Intercessor and King, to be with her alway even unto the end of the world. Upon her ministers and members the Holy Ghost rests as a spirit of grace and of glory, and in her midst he displays His gracious almighty power for the regeneration and sanctification of sinners. In short, and to express her endowments in one divine sentence, "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

And what shall we say of the position assigned the Church in our world? It is most exalted and glorious. It is a position of antagonism and superiority. Of antagonism to falsehood and evil; of superiority over all other systems and kingdoms. This position was assigned the Church immediately after man had lost his innocence and become an apostate: then it was announced, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Here was the proclamation of protracted warfare between the enemy of God and man, and his progeny, the Haters of Christ and his Church, and the "seed of the woman," Messiah and his redeemed people, the household of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. A warfare which should only then end when Satan is bruised under the feet of the Saints and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ.

It would detain too long were we to attempt to instance in every important particular, the evidences from history and prophecy of the exalted eminence of the Church above all the most admired systems and governments of human invention. Take but two of the very many furnished to our hand. First, you discover that the most remarkable revolutions that have ever occurred, whether resulting in the overthrow of old empires or the founding of new dynasties, have evidently been ordered for the protection, purification or extension of the Church. The history of Providence over the nations has certified the prophetic announcement of God's purpose—"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." All the affairs of nations were overruled for four thousand years in such manner as to preserve a remnant of Israel "according to the election of grace," and to prepare the world for the advent of God manifest in

the flesh. And all the changes that have been going forward amongst the nations ever since Christ ascended up into glory, have been tending to the furtherance and final universal triumph of that kingdom which is not meat nor drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Here is the key to unlock the mysteries of Divine Providence in God's dealings with the nations; here is the only clue which can ever lead us through the mazy records of the past to the clear sunshine of a true Philosophy of History.

To prevent the last remnants of his people from being corrupted by the pernicious influence of an universal apostacy, the old world was swept away with the flood. Lest the world should succeed in overwhelming the Church by a compact and firmly rooted system of Idolatry, the language of the earth was confounded and the families scattered abroad. For the sake of the Church, the pride of Egypt was laid in the dust and her power forever broken. Babylon fell before the conquering Mede, that captive Judah might be sent back to their own land. And the victorious legions of Imperial Rome were permitted to plant their eagles upon the extremities of the earth, that thus a wide door and effectual, might be opened for the spread of the gospel among all nations. And who that has read even an outline of the history of modern times can have failed to see everywhere verified the promise of 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 thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me; * * for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. * * * No weapon that is formed

against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.”

It is in the history of the progress of the Church we find the most numerous and striking illustrations of that principle of the moral government of God over our race expressed by the Psalmist in these terms—“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” The attempt of that Egyptian monarch who knew not Joseph, to crush the increasing power of God’s covenanted people, precipitated his own destruction and their deliverance. The descent of the Assyrian Lion upon the fold of Judah, gave occasion for that awful display of divine vengeance which left the blackening corpses of twice ten myriads of stalwart warriors a warning to every one forgetting the emphatic caveat—“Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm.” Even that direful calamity which left the city solitary that had been full of people, her eyes sore with weeping and her cheeks suffused with tears, resulted in glory to the Church. For did not the children of Zion stand first amongst the princes in Babylonia; did not holy Daniel survive each change in the dynasty as the wisest counsellor in the kingdom; and was it not through his instruction the heathen monarch was led at last to issue that remarkable decree which closes with these memorable words—“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the king of heaven, all whose works are truth and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” Events seemingly the most adverse, have been turned to the furtherance of the interests of Christ’s kingdom. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. The winds of persecution have only served to scatter the ministers of Christ, so that they might go everywhere preaching the gospel. Paul and Silas must be thrust into the inner prison to gratify an infuriate mob, but God brings them out to announce salvation to the penitent jailor and his house. It is necessary that the Jews should

be gratified with the sight of the aged Apostle going bound as a prisoner to Rome, for God designs that the Church shall gather some trophies in the palace of Cæsar. By the fan of persecution three nations were winnowed, that fitting men might be found to carry the truth and order of the gospel to a new continent. And at this moment another free Republic and a pure Church are rising upon the benighted shores of Africa, founded and reared by the sons of those doomed by the cruel avarice of man to a perpetual servitude, but through the preaching of the cross made free with the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Closely allied with the thought just suggested is the fact that the Church has always exerted a commanding influence upon the well-being of man; and this is the second proof I would adduce of the pre-eminence of the Church over all human organizations. The promise made to Abraham "in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed" has been fulfilling ever since it was given. It is true the progressive enlargement of the Church in its influence has often been slow and not always perceptible. But its development has been constant and irresistible, like that leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. The principle by which the growth of the Church's influence amongst men for good, has been regulated, is embodied in that beautiful simile of the Prophet, "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon."

The patriarch Jacob, a fugitive from his justly incensed brother, passes alone with his staff over Jordan; and in a little while he returns back again multiplied into two bands. Three score and ten souls go down into Egypt to sojourn, and after a while we behold them a nation of three millions, coming back, harnessed and triumphant, to possess the promised land. And there in Canaan, the civil center of the known world, the Church becomes a focus of light to the

surrounding nations, and alike as conqueror or captive, exerts a controlling sway over them all. The sublimest poetry, the purest philosophy, the best jurisprudence, of which we have any authentic account, or which have come to us from those ancient peoples, attest the enlightening and ennobling influence of but a partial contact with the Church.

We come down to the New Testament times, and examples cluster upon us of the mighty power of the Church with the weapons of the Gospel to pull down the strongholds of Satan. A word breathed softly in the ears of a multitude upon the seashore, in the temple, or upon the mountain side, agitates all Judea, and, borne onward over the earth, changes the whole face of the nations. A few unlearned fishermen and publicans, with a small company of mourning women, meet in an upper room for prayer, and presently all Jerusalem is in a blaze of wonder and delight. These Galileans utter a few simple words, and recur to events of recent occurrence, well known to all their audience, and the multitude are stricken with remorse and astonishment, and in their consternation cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" and directly myriads are obedient to the faith, and the church claims her converts, gathered from the utmost parts of the earth. The influence of Christianity began in Jerusalem, upon the day of Pentecost, and before the last of the Apostles had gone to his mansion in heaven, a preached Gospel was elevating and saving the most distant and degraded tribes. A little later, the Pagan temples are utterly deserted, their idolatrous rites fallen into desuetude. The Christian faith is emancipating, the Christian worship purifying, the whole race. A divine religion has inspired man with the sublimest hopes, a divine morality is fitting him to enjoy those hopes. Within THREE CENTURIES from the death of the first martyr, the banner of the Cross was waving over the palace of Augustus, the fire of persecution had died out, churches and bishops were numbered by thousands, Christians filled the schools of philosophy, Roman

slavery had ceased, and the hearts of the multitude, softened by the grace of the Gospel, could no longer endure the bloody scenes of the amphitheatre. The wolf and the lamb reposed side by side in peace, and the leopard with the kid, the little child could play upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child put his hand on the cocatrice's den. Instead of the thorn had come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar, the myrtle tree.

But the Gospel was capable of accomplishing yet greater things for the good of mankind. The Church's mission for blessing the world was not yet consummated. Let us see.

In the close of the fifteenth century, a new continent was discovered by the most wonderful of all adventurers, led by an inspiration all but divine. This virgin soil was assigned to the dominion of a false religion. But man's ways and thoughts are not as the ways and thoughts of God. He had given this new world to His Son, and His Church must recover her possession. The instrument for the work is at hand. A secluded monk finds in his cloister a curious volume, covered with the dust of neglect. He opens its pages! Wonderful revelation! It is the long lost Word of God. He reads, and his soul is charmed with its sublime disclosures. He reads on; tears of sorrow flow down his cheeks, and the anguish of repentance wrings his heart. Yet he cannot close the book, but pores over its contents until light and peace break in upon his mind, and he stands forth a regenerated and emancipated man, prepared to become the herald of truth and freedom to the enslaved nations. What then? Let the story of the Reformation and its following effects furnish the answer. The hopes of the world lay hid within the leaves of that Latin Bible, for thence was to be drawn that life-giving energy which was to make the scholar of Erfurth the liberator of the Church from the bondage of a thousand years. Whatever of liberty, of genuine civilization, of pure Christianity, the world now enjoys, or confidently looks for in the future, does it not

owe them to this *revival of the Church*, through the simple preaching of the doctrines of the Cross? Beyond all question. For is it not true that Protestant England and America now control, under God, the destinies of the world, and whatever of hope there is for the regeneration and emancipation of the race is centred about the principles of that religion which constitutes the foundation and cement of their political systems? And if, as all confess, the eyes of struggling nations are turned with most affection and hopefulness toward America, it is only because God has given us a freer Bible, a freer press, and a freer pulpit.

I would have you consider with particular attention the evidence to be found in the origin and history of our own republic of the influence of the church in favor of all the best interests of the human family. The theme is aptly fitted for meditation upon this occasion in which the Past is so intimately associated with the Present; and moreover, I am persuaded that no clearer illustration of the mighty power of the church of Jesus Christ for all good can be found outside the leaves of the Bible, than that afforded by the wonderful history of the colonization and emancipation of these United States. And the American citizen, whether native or adopted, who can plead the cause of infidelity, revile the Christian church and ministry, or look with an indifferent or favorable eye upon the pretensions and progress of the hierarchy of Rome, must be as ignorant of the history of this Republic as he certainly is of the doctrines and order of the New Testament church. Or if not ignorant, he is recklessly determined to resist the convincing force of truth, and for some temporary honor or emolument to imperil the subversion of the fairest human work the sun ever shone upon. Yes, in his selfishness, such a man would aid in bringing moral blight and mildew upon the most fertile fields of earth; he would clothe the heavens with sackcloth, blot out the stars from the firmament, and once more draw

over the face of the world the darkness of a mediæval midnight.

Why, my brethren, if we are exalted to heaven as a nation, we have climbed to that high eminence upon the ladder of the gospel, the foot of which, like that one seen by him of Luz, rests in the House of God, and its top touches the base of the Eternal throne. And let any rude hand drive from it the messengers of God, or shake it from its base, and with lightning speed we topple down the deepest hell; and in that deepest hell should find "a deeper hell still opening to devour."

In the dawn of the sixteenth century, the people of God burst from their long bondage, worse than Egyptian, and the church in full panoply started forth conquering and to conquer. The Bible was first emancipated, then the pulpit, then the schools. The gospel had free course and was glorified. Did the enmity of the serpent and his seed lie dormant? Nay, but with flattery and fraud, by cunning and by force, it was attempted to check the momentum of the church, and again bind her in the captive's chains. Partial success attended these efforts, the onward march of the reformed religion was in a measure arrested, and obedient to the direction of their Lord many of the friends of truth were compelled to flee from the sword of persecution, not with cowardly but with bleeding hearts.

God had provided them a refuge. The new world but late discovered, offered them a safe asylum. They came as the church flying into the wilderness, bearing with them the pure oracles of God, the true sacraments of the New Testament, an apostolic polity, and heaven-taught principles of civil government. They came from France, Great Britain, and Holland. They planted upon this continent the standard of the cross—they unfurled to the breeze the bright banner of the Reformation, inscribed with the motto, OBE-
DIENCE TO GOD, SEPARATION FROM ROME, FREEDOM TO MAN!
These true Knights of the Cross were inspired by no vain

dreams of conquest; they came not to recover the sepulchre of a crucified Christ, but to find a secure resting place for that church for which He died, and to found an empire to the praise of Him exalted. These men of God began their work with prayer; they built first the church, then next and by its side they placed the school; for the disciples of Luther and Calvin, of Knox and of Farrel, taught a system which came from the Fountain of Wisdom, and practiced a morality which was not afraid of the light. Education was with them the handmaid of religion, as Ignorance had been the nourisher of superstition. And how prospered they in their toil? Let the answer be heard in the high hallelujahs which this day are rolling upward toward the throne of Jehovah from the lips of twenty-five millions of Christian freemen, in praise of Him that is Prince of the Kings of the earth. Or let the response come from the Spirit of God in that simple declaration, so oft confirmed, "THERE SHALL BE A HANDFUL OF CORN IN THE EARTH, IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS; THE FRUIT THEREOF SHALL SHAKE LIKE LEBANON."

It was just a hundred years from the time when Luther openly renounced the authority of the Pope, until the refugees from papal and prelatical persecution disembarked upon the shores of New England. Upon the 10th of December, 1520, that bonfire was kindled at the Cross in Wittenberg which shed a bright and burning light over all Europe; and in December, 1620, that band of pilgrims—a hundred chosen men—who, "for the love of a pure Christianity," "had left their pleasant and native land," began to lay the foundations of this Republic. A hundred and fifty years later, the work they began is completed, and America set free from the swathing bands of a too-long endured pupilage, stands forth as a giant rejoicing to run in the stadium of nations. And now, at the distance of three centuries and a half from the landing of Columbus upon these western shores, through the blessing of God upon the church, and the blessing of the church upon the land, the

heathen have been cast out, the Roman usurper of Christ's heritage has been despoiled of his unlawful prey, the wilderness and solitary place is redolent with flowers and vocal with praise, "a little one has become a thousand and a small one a strong nation."

The train of remark in which we have been indulging, has been mainly suggested by the remembrance which this day brings of God's dealings with this church, and the fact that its history is not only identified with the history of this great metropolis, but also by a singular chain of providences with that of the first founders of our republic and witnesses in it for the purity and order of the gospel.

It is known to most if not all in this assembly, that the foundation of this city was commenced in December, 1788, by three pioneers originally from New Jersey, but later from Maysville, Kentucky, (then called Limestone;) their names MATTHIAS DENMAN, ROBERT PATTERSON, and ISRAEL LUDLOW. They were all attached to the Presbyterian church, Denman and Patterson being in full communion. In laying out the plan of their future city, they did not forget the claims of the religion they professed, but set apart for the uses of a Presbyterian church a plat of ground of ample space, and composing the south half of the square bounded by Main and Walnut, and Fourth and Fifth streets, the ground upon which we are worshipping to-day. It was not, however, until a year and a half after the first settlement of the town that a regular church was organized. But this did not prevent the people from engaging in social worship, though in the howling wilderness surrounded by relentless savage bands. Their hope of safety and of prosperity depended upon the blessing of the King of kings, and to him they sought by prayer. "Myself and others assembled in prayer meetings before the society was organized," is the recorded testimony of David E. Wade, one of the most active and efficient officers of the church for the long period of thirty years, and not many years since gathered to the grave like

a shock of corn fully ripe. Yes, let those who now in their prosperity and ease forget to pray, be reminded this day how much they owe to the effectual fervent prayers of those righteous men who were not ashamed to acknowledge God in the wilderness. It was not long, however, until their prayers were answered in the sending to them of a regular ministry. In the fall of 1790, the Rev. David Rice, of Kentucky, visited Cincinnati and preached to these praying people, at which time they organized themselves into "a society under the name of the Presbyterian Congregation of Cincinnati, for the purpose," as they say in their constitution, "of worshipping God and mutually promoting our own and others' spiritual edification."* The whole number

* The following is the CONSTITUTION which was then adopted :

"We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the Miami country, earnestly imploring the Divine presence and blessing, do, this 16th day of October, 1790, voluntarily associate ourselves together in a religious society or church, for the purpose of worshipping God, and mutually promoting our own and others' spiritual edification, on the following principles, viz :

1. A church is a society of Christians, voluntarily associated together for the worship of God, and spiritual improvement and usefulness.
2. A visible church consists of visible or apparent Christians.
3. The children of visible Christians are members of the visible church, though in a state of minority.
4. A visible Christian is one who understands the doctrines of the Christian religion—is acquainted with a work of God's Spirit in effectual calling—professes repentance from dead works and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and subjection to Him as King; and whose life and conversation correspond with his profession.
5. Sealing ordinances ought not to be administered to such as are not visible Christians.
6. A charitable allowance ought to be made for such whose natural abilities are weak, or who have not enjoyed good opportunities of religious instruction, when they appear to be humble and sincere.
7. Children and youth, descended from church members, though not admitted to all the privileges of the church, are entitled to the instructions of the church, and subject to its discipline."

The church thus organized consisted of eight persons, as follows: Daniel Ketchel, Jacob Reeder, Joseph Reeder, Annie Reeder, Samuel Sering, Sarah Sering, Jonathan Tichnor, and Isaac Morris.

In 1791, the following additional rules were adopted :

- "1. No person shall be received a member, whether formerly or elsewhere a member or not, but by being examined and approved as to his knowledge and piety.

composing this newly organized church amounted to but eight persons. "In June, 1791, the Rev. James Kemper, then a candidate for the ministry under the care of the Transylvania Presbytery, visited the church, and agreed to return in the autumn and labor for a year amongst them; and in October a company was formed for the purpose of escorting him and his family from their residence in Kentucky to Cincinnati." After the return of this party with Mr. Kemper, a subscription was raised for building a meeting house.* This was finished in the year 1793. Previous to the building of that house, the congregation met on the same ground—the spot upon which we are now assembled so peacefully to consecrate this new edifice to the service of God—here they met to hear the word preached and sing the songs of Zion, with no dome but the canopy of heaven, no aisles but the majestic trees of the ancient forest, and no carpet but the greensward. And both then and afterwards for several years, they came to worship with their arms in their hands, to protect their lives against the sudden attacks of their savage foes. As of Israel it was foretold, so of them it might be said, the city and the street were built in troublous times; "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other hand held a

2. This examination shall be made by the male members, in conjunction with the Pastor, until their number shall be so increased as to render that inconvenient, and to make it convenient to elect a session out of their body.

3. The person or persons applying for admission, shall ordinarily be examined at two different times at least, especially where it is the first application."—*Pres. West.*

* Shortly after his settlement, a subscription was raised amounting in money, labor and materials, to about \$700, "for the purpose of erecting a house of public worship in the village of Cincinnati, to the uses of the Presbyterian denomination." This sum was contributed by 121 persons, all of whose names are preserved with the subscription paper on which they appear—the highest sum subscribed in money was \$10. In 1794, another subscription paper was circulated for the purpose of further finishing the Presbyterian meeting house in Cincinnati; also for paling in the door yard and fencing in the burying ground.' The sum contributed at this time is upwards of \$400, subscribed by 156 persons."—*Pres. West, 1850, and Wade's Dep.*

weapon ; for the builders every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded."

Not long after the erection of the house of worship, a school-house was built alongside of it, the Church proving herself then, as since, the firm friend of education, and aiding in cherishing that germ from which has sprung that beauteous tree from whose invigorating fruits so many multitudes now partake.

By the close of the first year of Mr. Kemper's labors,* the number of communicants had increased to nearly fifty; and on the fifth of September, 1793, (fifty-eight years ago this current month,) "the whole number of male members being met, and now consisting of nineteen heads of families, proceeded by joint vote and elected to the office of ruling elder the following persons, viz: Moses Miller, Joseph Reeder, Capt. Daniel Reeder, David Reeder and Jonathan Tichenor; and to the office of Deacon, Col. Oliver Spencer and Jacob Reeder." Ten days afterwards these officers were ordained; and then on the Sabbath following—fifty-eight years ago this day—the first communion of the Church was celebrated. But those who sat at that communion have long since rested from their labors;† yet if the spirits of just men made perfect ever visit the assemblies of the saints upon earth, methinks could our eyes be opened as were those of the servant of the ancient seer, we should behold in this sanctuary

* "On the 23d of October, 1792, the Presbytery of Transylvania, the first Ecclesiastical body ever convened in Cincinnati, met here for the purpose of ordaining the Rev. James Kemper. It belonged to the Synod of Virginia, and embraced the whole of Kentucky, the settlements about the Cumberland river in what is now Tennessee, and after the organization of a Church in this place, in 1790, the Miami settlements in Ohio. At the time of its meeting here, it had been in existence just six years, having been organized in Danville, Oct. 17, 1786, when there were but five ordained ministers of our denomination laboring within that whole extent of country."—*R. Pres. West*, 1850.

† One person was present at the delivery of this discourse who was a spectator of that first communion. For many years she has been herself a communicant in this Church, a mother in Israel still waiting in the house of God and serving him with fastings and prayers night and day.

a bright company of holy ones who from the sacramental table here have passed to the marriage supper in heaven.

But we must leave these pleasant reflections and hasten toward a conclusion. A description of the first meeting house may not be uninteresting. It is from the pen of our venerable fellow-citizen, Judge Burnet, one of the very few survivors of those early days, yet remaining as links to connect the present with the past. In his *Sketches of the West* he says:—"It was a substantial frame building about 40 feet by 30, enclosed with clapboards, but neither lathed plastered nor ceiled. The floor was of boat plank, laid loosely on the sleepers. The seats were of the same material, supported by blocks of wood. There was a breast-work of unplanned cherry boards, called the pulpit, behind which the clergyman stood on a piece of boat plank resting on blocks of wood. In that humble edifice the pioneers and their families assembled stately for public worship, and during the continuance of the war they always attended with loaded rifles by their sides."* And yet that humble dwelling was probably more superior to the ordinary dwellings of the citizens then, than is any church edifice in this city to our ceiled houses of the present.

For seven years after the organization of this Church, there was no other religious society in the place. During that time, Mr. Kemper continued his ministrations. He was succeeded in August, 1797, by the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of New Jersey, whose connection with the congregation terminated with his death in June, 1799. His mortal remains

*The building was afterwards neatly finished, and some years subsequently was sold and removed to Vine street, where it remained for some time the property of Judge Burke, until it was disposed of by him and removed in pieces to the north-west part of the city.

In 1810, some steps were taken toward the erection of a new and more commodious house, and in 1812, a subscription drawn up by the Pastor, was circulated for that purpose. The object, however, was not accomplished for several years. The affair progressed so slowly that the Pastor found it necessary to stir the people up to the work by preaching from Psalm 127: 1—"Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it."

repose underneath this Church. He was followed in the care of the congregation by the Rev. Mathew G. Wallace, who still survives an old man and full of years. Upon his resignation, the Rev. Peter Davis, of New Jersey, took the charge, but died shortly after his settlement. His place was supplied for a little while by the Rev. John Davies. The Church having again been left vacant, through the request of Rev. Robert G. Wilson, recently deceased, the Rev. Joshua L. Wilson, then at Bardstown, Ky., was induced to visit it. This visit resulted in an invitation being given him to preach to them for a year, which he accepted, and having removed to Cincinnati, on the 28th of May, 1808, commenced those labors which after continuing without cessation for thirty-eight years, were terminated with the close of his life, in August, 1846. It is now ten years since he who addresses you was called to the duties of the Pastoral office in this Church; five of these years were spent in pleasant association, both filial and Christian, with the Senior Pastor, until inexorable death sundered at once both paternal and ministerial ties, the father being taken to his reward, and the son being left to win his by doing and suffering for Christ and his Church.

We have seen that the history of this Church runs parallel with the whole history of our city—or rather is inseparably inwoven with it. In every enterprise for the promotion of good, and in every struggle for the arrest of evil, begun in the spirit of wisdom and giving promise of substantial results, she has been found in the van. Ready for every good word and work, unyielding to the flattering or forcible attempts of error and vice, she has kept on her way, at every step becoming stronger and stronger.

It may be interesting to observe that there is a link which unites very intimately our history with the events connected with the first establishment of Presbyterianism in this country. We have already stated the fact that the

founders of the city and the Church were originally members of the Presbyterian Church in New Jersey. Two or three of the first Pastors were from the same State. But it may not be so generally known that the Rev. David Rice, by whom the Church was first organized, and the Pastor under whose watchful care it grew to such strength and usefulness, were descended from the same ancestry in Virginia; an ancestry that had endured privation and persecution in the maintenance of a pure gospel, and the fruit of whose sufferings, toils and prayers we are now reaping. In confirmation of this statement, you will indulge me in an extract from the autobiography of my venerated father. In giving an account of his early religious instruction, he says: "My mother was born in Hanover county, Virginia, Dec. 3d, 1738. Her father's name was Lacy. The name of her maternal grandfather was Rice. Mr. Rice and some of his neighbors could not conform to an established religion which consisted of a clergy without morality and forms without godliness, and they used to meet on the Lord's day to read the Scriptures and to pray for a gospel ministry. These meetings, at first small, soon increased, so as to attract public attention, and some of the leaders were summoned before the Governor and Council, at Williamsburgh, to answer for their departure from the established Church. They obeyed, not knowing what apology they could make. On their way to the seat of Government, at a place where they stopped for refreshment, they found a Scotch Confession of Faith, which, to their surprise, contained their own religious belief: They borrowed the book, presented it as their plea, and were honorably dismissed as members of the established Church of Scotland. They returned with joy, renewed their prayer meetings with zeal and delight, the Lord poured out his Spirit upon them and sent them a godly minister from Scotland, who preached the gospel and distributed some Bibles, one of which was our "old family Bible that lay on the stand." A Presbyterian Church was organized

by this missionary, and before his departure they offered him a sum of money, which he accepted, not for himself, but to educate some pious young man for the ministry, promising to send them a preacher, if possible. This promise was fulfilled, and the preacher sent was the Rev. Samuel Davies, afterwards President of the College of New Jersey." Truly in the mystery of Providence there is a wheel within a wheel, and in evolving his plans God uses the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. From that prayer meeting, gathered in solitude under the shadow of the Peaks of Otter, what mighty influences have gone forth over this whole land. We are refreshing our souls from the weariness of worldly cares, from that broad and crystal stream, which bursting at first from the mountain side, has poured its cool and fertilizing waters over this whole valley, causing it to spring with the verdure of a spiritual life. Our God is a covenant keeping God—he is the hearer of prayer! The little one has become a thousand—the handful of corn upon the top of the mountains has yielded a fruit which shakes like Lebanon!

This Church thus honored of God in its origin and in its progress, has always believed and maintained the doctrines and discipline of the gospel after the form in which they are held by that branch of the Church of Christ, called Presbyterian. Her position has never been equivocal. In the midst of a fickle world she has ever stood erect, a rallying point for the friends of virtue and order, a bulwark of strength against the encroachments of error and confusion. Ever striving for advancement toward perfection, she has proved herself the friend of all progress in the path of light, of truth and of Charity; but the uncompromising foe of disorder and revolution, however specious the plea in their behalf.

It has not been the lot of this Church to occupy her high position unmolested. It has been her privilege to experience the truth of that declaration of Christ—"The disciple

is not above his Master nor the servant above his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of the household." Of the difficulties with which she has combatted, the opposition she has encountered from enemies without, and the struggles she has had with disturbers of her peace, purity and order within her own bosom, the present occasion does not demand a particular mention. Suffice it, amid all her vicissitudes of Sorrow and of Joy, God has kept covenant with her. The same hand that chastened has bound up her wounds. If the good Shepherd has led through fire and through water, it has been that he might bring this people out into a large and wealthy place. Attempts have been made to seize her rightful inheritance—to drive her ministers by fraud or force from her pulpit—to fasten upon her the charges of tyranny and bigotry. Supposed by the uninformed to be possessed of immense wealth, her large benevolence in every good cause has been overlooked and the jaundiced eye of envy has scowled upon her. The misinformed and the malevolent have misrepresented her doctrines and denounced her discipline. Holding for divine the system called Calvinistic, she has been falsely charged with teaching fatal necessity and infant damnation, though that alone of all systems claimed as divine, exalts free grace, honors the agency of man, and lays a solid basis of hope for the members of our race dying in infancy.* Requiring of

* The doctrine on this subject held and taught in this Church, is thus stated in a sermon on IMPUTATION, preached by the former Pastor before the Synod of Cincinnati, October, 1834.

"In this remedy, ('salvation by the imputation of Christ's righteousness,') we have hope also for our children who die before they have committed sin, personally. It made no part of Christ's plan to save his people from the grave, till the resurrection. The fact that infants die, proves their connexion with the first Adam, but does not prove that they are *not* connected with the second Adam. Jesus Christ has said—'Suffer the little children, (*infants*,) to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Infants, then, fallen, condemned, and treated as sinners, for a crime not personally their own, may be raised up, justified, sanctified and treated as saints, for a righteousness wrought out by one, whom they neither knew nor sought. If there be

every man who would be received to her communion a reason of the hope he professes, and asking to be certified of the faith and conversation of those who would enjoy her fellowship, she has been stigmatized as exclusive and represented as holding to "close communion."

Yet under every trial this Church has kept her steady course, onward, in the path of duty. Her aim has been not to seek honor of men, but to deserve that honor which cometh from above. What she has taught, what she has done, has never been taught or done in a corner. When the cause of Christ has demanded it, she has yielded with cheerfulness to the claims of wrong, remembering there is a day coming in which every wrong shall be righted. Through evil report and through good report by grace enabled to be faithful, this Church has received blessing from God. The cold neglect of sister Churches has sometimes made her weep in sorrow; the disorderly walk of her own members not unfrequently has clothed her in sackcloth; the apathy of the whole body of her children has once and again bowed her head in the dust. But these seasons of darkness have been followed by days of ineffable brightness and peace. If at one time her Pastor returned from the place of social prayer to complain in bitterness of spirit before God, that not one could be found ready to join with him in claiming the Savior's presence,* at another his eyes were permitted to see hundreds of God's people pleading

laudable contention in heaven, who shall sing the highest note to free and sovereign grace, methinks the 'mouths of babes and sucklings' will *sing*, if not the highest, the *sweetest* note of praise to that kind power that saved them from the ruins of a fallen world. But how dark and cheerless is that scheme, which rejects the doctrine of imputation—contemplates children without any covenant relation—without any moral character—neither holy nor unholy."

* MAY 19th, 1824.—"Attended in the Vestry at half-past 7—the time appointed for prayer-meeting—no one present—returned home. This is a deplorable state of things. 'O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.'"—*Diary of J. L. W.*

from morning to night for Jerusalem, and thousands of weeping sinners pressing around the cross for salvation.*

This church of the pioneers has been blessed like that of the pilgrims, and like it also has been made a blessing. It led the way in the cause of free school† and high school education in this city. It has always occupied a foremost position in every Christian enterprise for the reformation, elevation and evangelization of men. And in strictest verity it may be said, "its faith is spoken of throughout the world." Six fruit-bearing branches have been taken from this parent stock and planted within our own metropolis. Many a smaller offshoot from the same stock is yielding rich clusters of Esheol throughout the whole Miami valley. Scores of churches in this vast valley of the Mississippi are worshipping at this hour in houses finished through the liberality of this people. Many of the children of this church have become strong men in Christ, and as his ambassadors, are now preaching reconciliation in his name. In India and China—in Europe, Africa, and the isles of the sea, songs are this day singing to the praise of Immanuel, which had never been heard but for the alms which have been gathered and the prayers that have been offered here. And sweeter thought than all, thousands of the palm-bearing company upon the fields of Paradise, as they fold about them their robes of light and tune their golden harps to heavenly anthems, turn their eyes toward

* "During the two weeks ending the 16th inst., not less than five hundred persons have been added to the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian Churches in this city, on a profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Among these are to be found the rich, the poor, the learned, the ignorant, the old, the young, the devout moralist and the vile profligate, the man who never spoke against the Bible, and the reviling Infidel. The assemblies in the First Presbyterian Church, often amounting to between two and three thousand (?) persons, for the most part, exhibited the stillness and solemnity of the grave; or rather approached, in the various exercises of devotion, nearer to the ideas we have of that ardent zeal and profound reverence which holy beings feel and manifest before the eternal throne."—*Pandect*, July 29, 1828.

† At one time the church kept at school *twenty-five* children, selected from poor families of different denominations. *Ib.* Aug. 12, 1828.

this hallowed spot in joyful remembrance that here their ears first heard and their lips first learned to sing the chorus of the new song.

But I forbear to recount further the good of which the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls has made this church the instrument, lest in rehearsing the simple verities of history I should seem to be employing the extravagancies of flattery. Let the glory of all her efficiency for good be given unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever; and let her take a low place at the Mercy Seat in remembrance of her oft backslidings and her far remove, even in her best estate, from the perfect exemplar of her Redeemer, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of His Father and to finish *His* work.

My brethren, I would recall to your minds the fact that by a providence as propitious as it was unanticipated, the services of this solemn occasion have fallen upon the anniversary day of the first administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to this church. How changed is every thing within that time, and what an increase of responsibility do many of these changes devolve upon us! Those who sat at the communion table then and bore witness for Christ, were in the midst of a population of a few thousands; we are at the centre of many millions. They were in a state of comparative poverty; we are rolling in the profusion of wealth. They were destitute of means for acquiring knowledge and without facilities of intercourse with distant cities and countries; the richest mines of literature are opened for our use, and a few days will carry us to the farthest points upon our globe. Their direct influence was confined to a narrow sphere; ours with magnetic power and speed may circle the earth. We are standing upon a height of which not even the eyes of their hope ever attained so much as a glimpse. From hence we start forward upon a new career. As we are faithful or unfaithful to our holy trust, so will it prove a glorious career ever ascending along a path of bright-

ness toward the inaccessible light, or a dark and damning course downward to eternal shame. Set then, I pray you, as a seal upon your hearts this solemn and stirring charge of Him that is the Holy and the True, "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY ; HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN."

And "now O Lord our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name." "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all." "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers: Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." Accept, O God of our fathers, that which thou hast given us, that we might offer it unto thee. "Arise, arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed." Unto this church, O Lord, as unto Judah of old, be thou "a wall of fire round about, and be the glory in the midst of her." AMEN, and AMEN!

