

A Pastor's Memorial:

SERMONS

PREACHED IN

THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH OF RARITAN;

AT INTERVALS OF FIVE YEARS,

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS SETTLEMENT

AS PASTOR,

BY

ABRAHAM MESSLER, D. D.

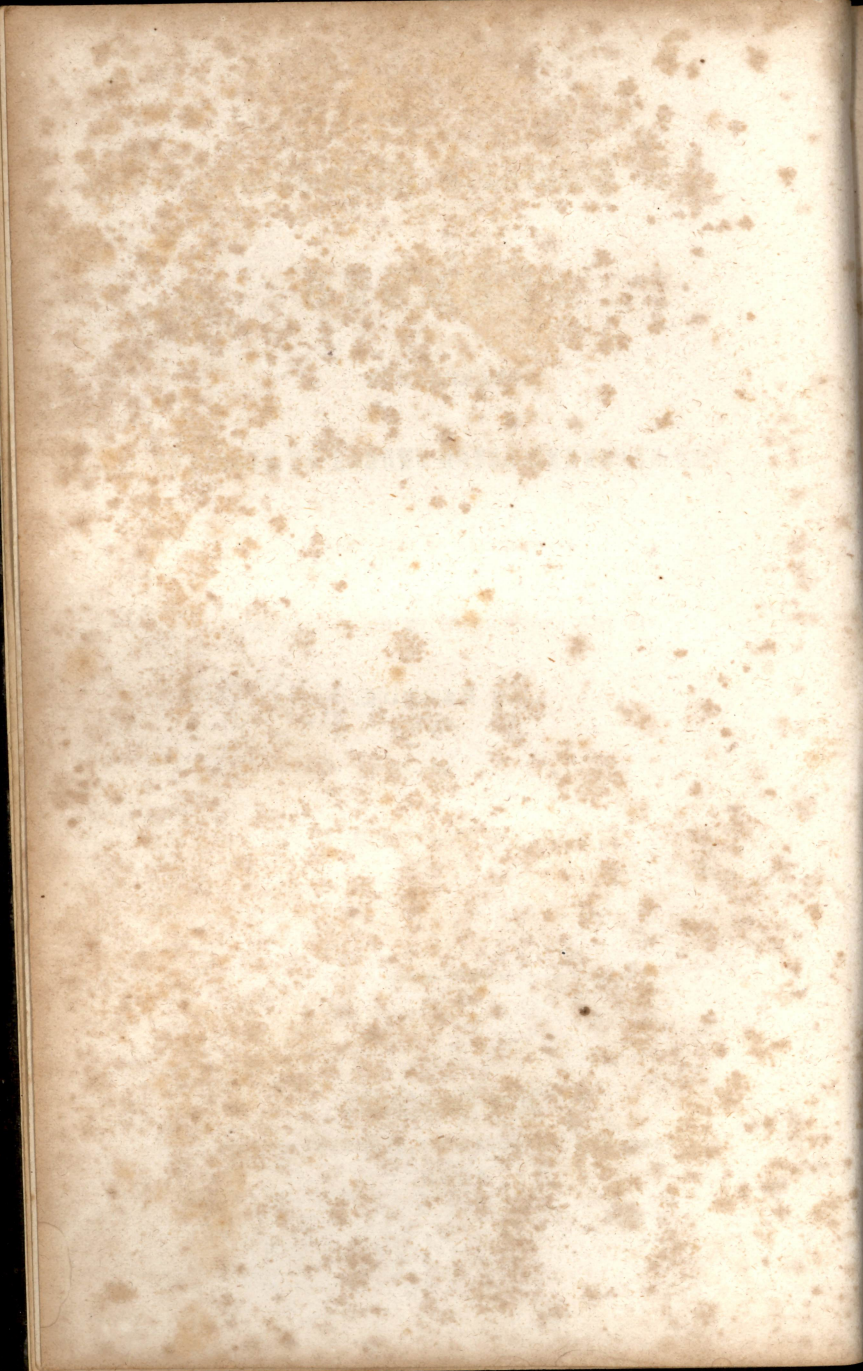
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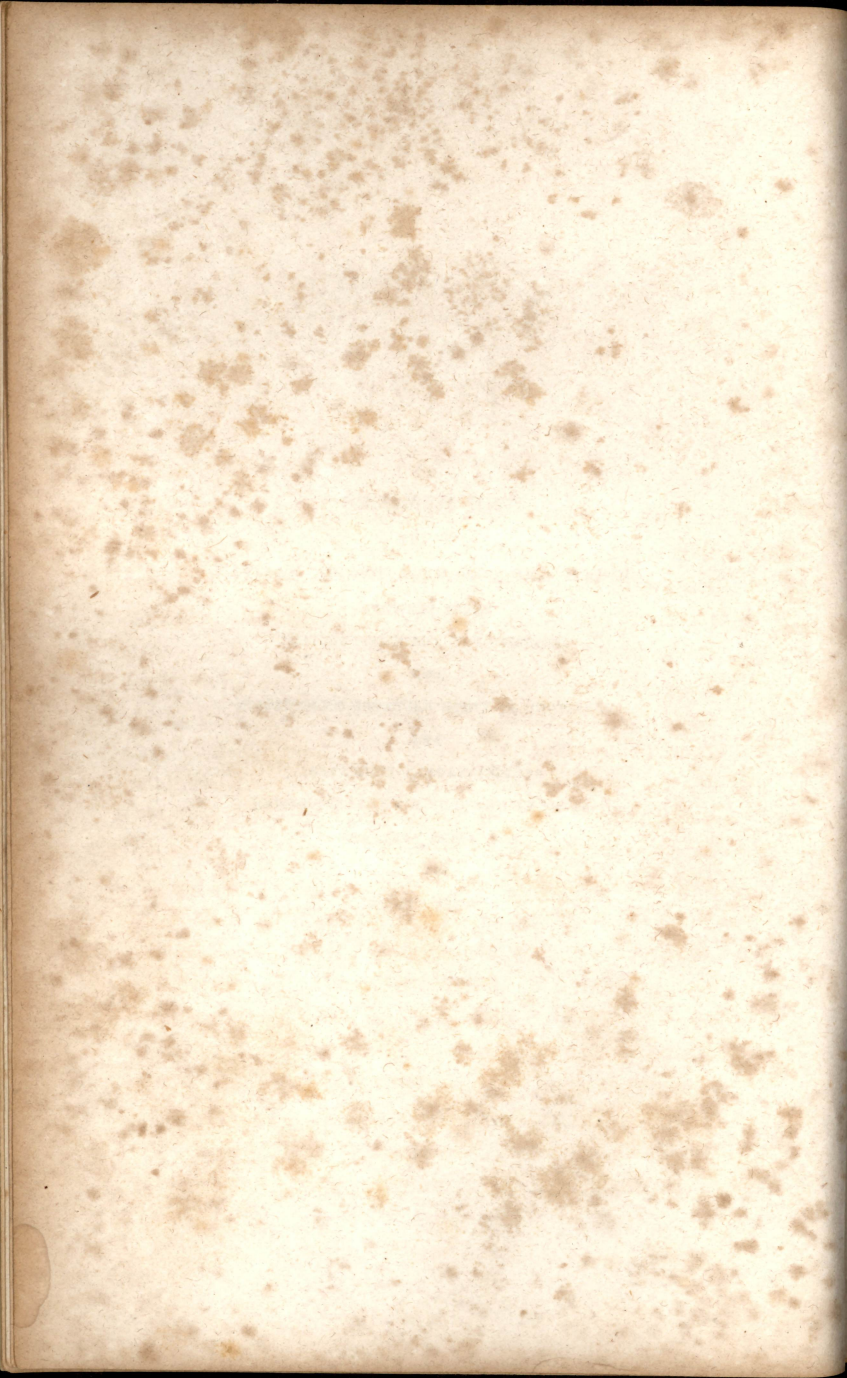
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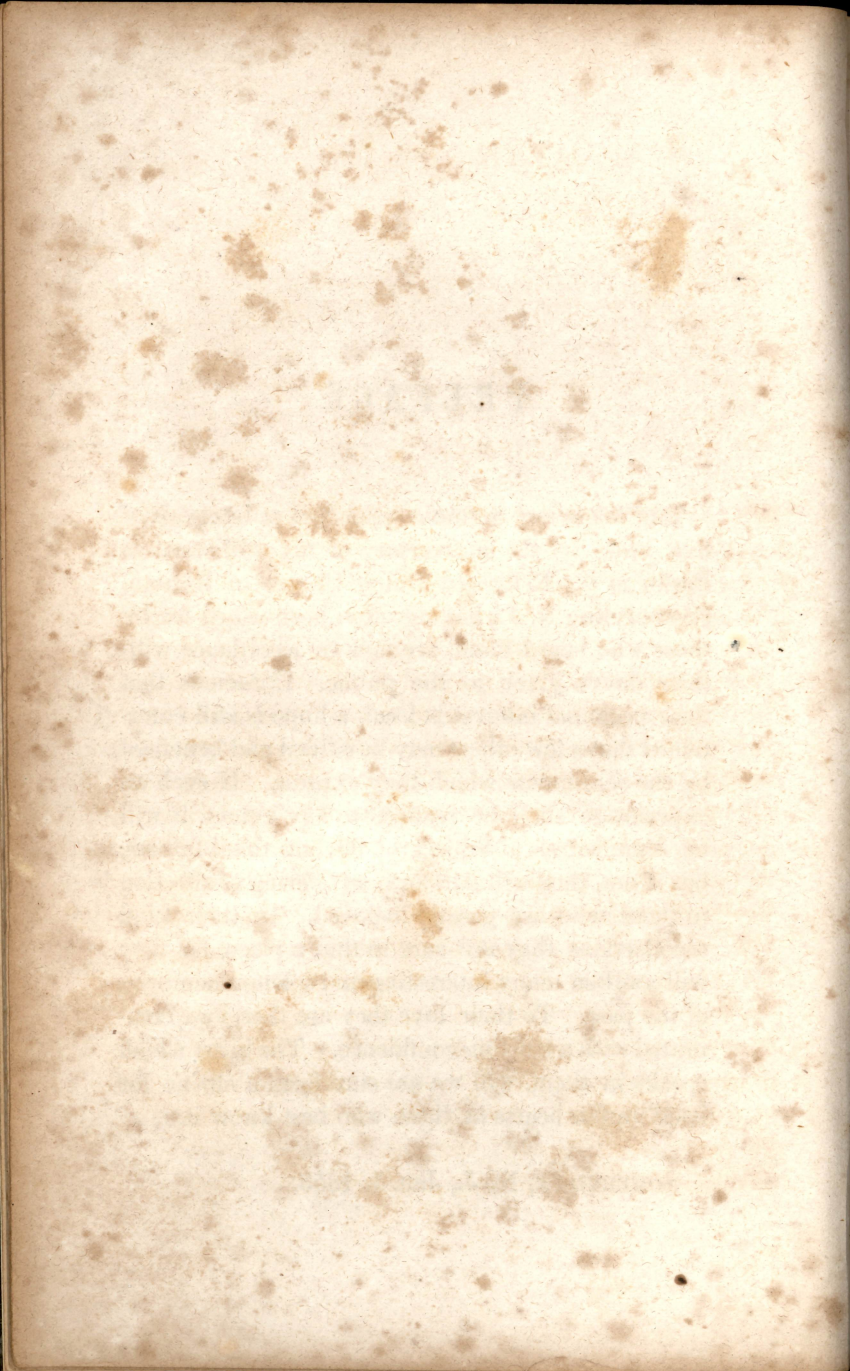
TO  
THE MEMBERS  
OF THE  
CHURCH AND CONGREGATION OF RARITAN  
THESE SERMONS  
PREACHED FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION  
AND  
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REPEATED SOLICITATION  
ARE  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,  
AS AN EVIDENCE OF HIS EARNEST DESIRE  
FOR THEIR WELFARE,  
BY  
THEIR PASTOR.



## P R E F A C E .

THE following Sermons, preached at intervals of five years, on the anniversary of my settlement as Pastor in the Reformed Dutch Church of Raritan, (Somerville, N. J.) having often been asked for by those who heard them, are now in accordance with their desire given to the public. Conscious that their principal interest is local, a hope is still entertained that a few others may be edified and benefited by the sentiments which they express. If such an expectation shall be realized to any extent, it will be regarded as a subject of devout thankfulness, but if not, they will still form an offering of affection to those who are greatly beloved. In their kind recollections they are sure to find a place, for they will awaken many interesting and solemn memories of the past. To their love they are therefore committed with a trusting confidence. The heart which speaks in them, will we are sure form a shrine for itself in the hearts of those who best know it.

SOMERVILLE, N. J., Jan. 1, 1853.



# A PASTOR'S MEMORIAL.

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## SERMON I.

THE PASTOR LONGING FOR THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE.

O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.—JEREMIAH IX: 1.

THE immediate occasion prompting this pathetic language on the part of the Prophet, was the anticipated destruction of the city of Jerusalem, as a consequence of the sins and apostacy of its inhabitants. He could not see that sacred city where was the sanctuary of Jehovah and where "the tribes went up to worship, even the tribes, in the temple of the Lord" given to desolation, and all his kindred involved in its ruin, without tears. The "slain of the daughter of his people" awaked his tenderest sympathies and made him feel as if he ought to weep, even more than nature allowed him to do. When he saw the dreadful scene it appeared to him that he was not adequately affected by it—his conceptions were not as vivid and his heart as sensible, as the magnitude of the evil rendered

proper; and he prayed for "a fountain of tears," that they might flow continually; for his "head to dissolve in waters," that he might "weep day and night."

When he considered the state of the people, he did not find any thing in their moral condition to afford him any hope; nor did their obstinacy seem to forebode any thing but a certainty, that God would execute his threatened vengeance. He had not even pleasure in associating with them, on account of their marked impiety, and the filthy conversation of the wicked which pained his ears; and he longed for the solitude of the desert, where he might be alone and unvexed. "O that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them." On every side their provocations seemed rapidly to increase; and from every place the evidence of their apostacy appeared to rise up, convincing him that it was impossible that the threatened vengeance should fail. Ninevah had repented and its guilty inhabitants been spared; even Sodom would not have been consumed if there had been found five righteous men in it: but for Jerusalem, in its abounding corruptions, and hardened impenitency, there was no hope: from the people even to the Priest, all did wickedly—all perverted judgment, and hastened on the direful calamity that was to sweep them almost entirely from the face of the earth, and make their name a by-word among the

nations. Was not the prophet justified in manifesting such deep emotion? Was the fervor of his feelings any thing, but what the scene, as he saw it before him, was calculated to produce?

The text admits of a natural and profitable application to our circumstances. There is no sin more heinous in the sight of heaven than the ingratitude and impenitence of a christian people. There is none which sooner and more certainly calls down the vengeance of God. Have we any of it? And shall we then hope to escape? Ah indeed when we consider what our privileges have been, and how we have improved them. What hardness, impenitency and worldliness we have exhibited in our conduct. How many warnings of his providence have been in vain, and how many solicitations of his love have failed; what years of provocation and rebellion we have spent; we may well tremble; and our Pastors and Christian friends may well seek to move us, and express their sympathy for us in the affecting language of Jeremiah. "Oh 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."

Here is a striking and beautiful sentiment. Let us endeavor to improve it by making it the theme of our present meditations. It may express the solicitude with which, after so many years of vain effort, we regard you to-day. If we consider it carefully we shall find it to yield us most important and varied instruction. We remark—

I. It shows us the feelings of a Christian Pastor, when his warnings are unheeded, his expostulations fail, and he sees his people stupid, impenitent and hardened, while wickedness increases and the word is, as if it were sown among thorns or on a rock.

Without feigning any thing or pretending what is not experienced I appropriate it to myself, as I stand up before you this morning, on the anniversary of my settlement as your Pastor, and after five years of earnest and prayerful expostulation, find so many of you yet in your impenitence. If weeping would effect any thing I could weep over you;—if tears had in them power to move, my tears could flow in copious showers. Like the Prophet I could wish to weep even more than nature allows; exhausting the fountain of sympathy in my heart, in order to reach yours, and subdue their enmity to love. There is in the condition of impenitent men under the means of grace, every thing to induce such feelings in the heart of a faithful Pastor. Let us consider this for a moment; it may be you have not reflected upon it, and are not prepared to accredit what we avow; and therefore the appeals which we make to you may not reach that place in your heart, in which we would fain lodge them.—They are more intimately connected with your Eternal State than you imagine.

The ministry of reconciliation is the only instrument which grace in its deep compassion, has determined to employ for the salvation of sinners—and

it is a sufficient instrumentality. A faithful ministry makes constant appeals to the understanding and the heart, to convince the one of sin, and win the other to God. No one can attend such a ministry and remain in a state of impenitency, without making constant opposition to his convictions of right, and to the dictates of his conscience. The process which is going on necessarily, in the mind of every impenitent man under the Gospel, is a hardening process. In the awakening appeals which every sabbath are sounded from the sacred oracles, there is created a necessity for renewed and increasing opposition, if he refuse to hear them and submit to God. Under such an influence it is impossible to remain unaffected—the heart of necessity grows harder, and the mind becomes more insensible to the interests of eternity and to the salvation of the soul. Every day is therefore in effect a step backwards from the path of life, and renders the probability increasingly certain, that no means will be found so efficient—no warnings so importunate—no expostulations so affecting, as to bring the rebel to the foot of the cross and bow his stubborn neck to Christ.

Estimate now, if you can sufficiently, the demerit of such a state. All sin is a great evil in the sight of God; but impenitence is a dreadful and aggravated evil. Its character is hateful and its consequences are most appalling. It not only turns our hearts away from God, but it makes him our enemy.

“It is an evil and a bitter thing (says the Prophet) that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that his fear is not in thee.” It produces a blind insensibility to all the mercy and compassion of God, and leads us to disregard his vengeance and to dare his wrath. It obscures the understanding so that we cannot see our true interest, and hardens the heart so that we cannot estimate the danger of our position and our relation to eternal things. It has an infatuating power, which produces blindness and leads us to call evil good, and good evil, and waste upon the pleasures of sense and the vanities of time the treasures of immortal glory.

Impenitence is opposed to the character of God, and the claims of his righteous law. It contravenes directly his right in us and the authority which he claims to rule over us. It cannot exist in any of his creatures without obligations of the utmost moment, in the moral government of the world, being violated, and claims the most affecting and tender being disregarded.

Impenitence makes the character of man as a creature of God hateful in the sight of his maker by making him a despiser of his goodness and long-suffering. There are no circumstances possible which can so mitigate its evil or extenuate its ingratitude as to deprive it of this hateful feature, or prevent this fearful result. Hence he cannot away with it. Hence his determination to punish it; because if it were suffered to continue in this his

moral empire, it would not only destroy his right to reign as a sovereign, but absolutely endanger the happiness of all his creatures. To refrain from punishing it would be to abandon his cherished purpose, forego the most solemn declarations of his truth, and prove unfaithful to himself, where both *his* authority and *our* dearest interests were involved. Hence there are so many threatenings of wrath—so many warnings—so many assurances that the sinner shall certainly die—and that all the impenitent shall perish forever from his presence in the burnings of his indignation. “The wages of sin is death.” The sinner though an hundred years old shall die. “God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon the wicked and rain it upon them.”

The Gospel furnishes to an apostate world, the only means of escape from the consequences of impenitence, which grace has been enabled to devise, and in which God can be just and the sinner obtain salvation. In the Gospel the character and work of Jesus Christ are clearly exhibited, and all suitable promises of encouragement presented, to persuade us to embrace his righteousness by faith and live; while in its moral influence we have the most effectual means to overcome the enmity of our hearts and the pride of our unbelief. Through the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, it is “the power of God and the wisdom of God,” to renew the heart and cleanse the soul from sin. If this great instrument fails and these means

prove inefficient, there remains to a sinner no more hope, for there is no other sacrifice for sin—no other name by which we can be saved—no other instrument to awaken us to life.

This the faithful Pastor knows—knows it well. He has a double evidence of this solemn truth. He has the determination of God as expressed in his word; and a consciousness resulting clearly from the work of grace in his own heart. He has seen God's truth fructifying in the humble and contrite heart, and producing a meetness for heaven.—He has witnessed too how upon the impenitent it produces hardness and blindness, and how the savour of it, being lost, it works death.—If he be a true Christian, he has besides this, experienced in his own soul, the terrors of the wrath of God, and felt the fearful dread of his indignation against sin. When he pleads with men, he speaks consequently, with all the earnest importunity of real conviction, and with all the persuasive eloquence inspired by a sense of the danger which he sees; declaring what he hath seen, and urging what he hath known in his own experience.

In many cases moreover he feels a peculiar interest. For some he is conscious of strong affection, for he is dealing with those whom he loves; in others a yearning tenderness, for he is pleading with those for whom he would willingly impart not the Gospel only but his own soul also to bring them to Christ. What affecting associations at the same

time urge him on in his work, and point the language in which he addresses them! He has seen them in affliction—he has sought to comfort them in their sorrows. He has stood by their sick bed to warn—by their death bed to entreat.—He has met them in the path of pleasure as a faithful mentor—and in the vale of sorrow as a tender sympathising friend. He has borne them on the arms of faith and prayer, in his retirement, at the throne of grace, and with many strong cries and tears sought to bring down the blessing of God upon their souls. For many long years he has followed them, and endeavored to impress their minds with a sense of sin, and win their hearts to holiness. But all seems to be in vain. Every means which he has contrived—every instrument which he has adopted, fails. All the avenues to their heart appear to be closed, and insensibility grows more insensible—impenitence more impenitent. Years roll on—death approaches—judgment draws near, and the day of grace is just ended! What is he to do? He knows they must die—he knows just as well that they are not prepared to die.—Shall he abandon them? shall he throw off from his mind and heart all interest in their welfare? How can he do this? They are associated with all his recollections of the past.—Their name rises up in all the solemn scenes of his life, and their image is entwined with the tenderest feelings of his heart. He must therefore be sad, very sad when thinking of their end; and many

gloomy, very gloomy anticipations must crowd upon his mind as he follows them to the conclusion of their course. He expects to stand by their death bed, when the hand of the destroyer is upon them, and the swellings of Jordan come into their souls: and he knows that *that last struggle* must be a fearful one—that *that last hour* must be without hope. Can he then cease to feel for them—to warn them—to pray for them? Ah no! no! Like the Prophet he will weep in secret; and complain that the fountain of his emotion is dried up. He knows too well the whole of their dreadful condition, and sees but too certainly the whole terror of their fearful doom. If his head were waters and his eyes a fountain of tears, he would weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people.

This is one application of the sentiment in our text. It is almost literally that of the Prophet himself. He saw a temporal ruin coming upon his friends and fellow citizens. We have described the spiritual and eternal ruin which awaits the impenitent. This is as certain as that which he foresaw, and infinitely more awful in its consequences. If the vision of the former filled his mind with dreadful forebodings and drew a flood of tears from his eyes, how much more must the latter overwhelm an affectionate Pastor with sorrow! Oh impenitent man, you do not know how much prayer and kindness it becomes necessary for you to oppose and prevent in order to hold on your guilty course.

You do not know how much you grieve the heart of your friend. How affectionately desirous he is of your peace; and how truly he can say with Paul, "we are willing, not only to impart unto you the Gospel of God, but our own souls also, because ye are dear to us!" Oh when will you be wise, and cease to grieve his heart, and the heart of that affectionate Saviour, who once died for you on the cross, and still pleads for you in Heaven.

Need I pause to tell you personally to-day how much I desire your peace? Need I remind you that I have been seeking it earnestly for five years? Shall I call to your remembrance all the prayers sent up to heaven in your behalf, which you have prevented—all the warnings urged with importunity, which you have disregarded—all the expostulations earnest and repeated, which you have set at naught? May I not ask you—is it nothing that all this has been in vain? Are there no forebodings in it? Does it give no evidence of a moral state, or a coming retribution? Five years of earnest effort to save you, but in vain! Then you have five years of neglected gospel privilege to answer for, and I charge you to look to it; for your eternal interests are involved in the answer you will give to God when you stand in judgment.

II. Another illustration is furnished in the feelings which grow up between Christian friends. Suppose the existence of strong bonds of affection between two individuals. Such endearments are

often formed to cheer and bless this scene of misery through which we are passing in our earthly pilgrimage. They may have resulted from habitual intercourse and many acts of reciprocated kindness. They may be the effect of family alliance leading to intimacy and the appreciation of mutual good qualities, as in the instance of David and Jonathan. Or perhaps they result from similarity of sentiment and taste—from kindred feelings and attractive accomplishments. Love may have endeared the sacred bond, an anticipation have desired and agreed that it should be cemented and consecrated at the matrimonial altar. The two hearts are now perfectly united in sentiment and feeling, in taste and desire; but there is one subject where their views separate, and they have nothing in common. The one is a follower of the Lamb—the other rejects Christ and his Gospel. The one sees a beauty in Christ and loves him; the other is more than indifferent, he tramples him under his feet. The one experiences all the power of faith and hope, and tastes all the sweetness of communion with God; the other knows only the pleasures of sense, and is moved alone by the fascinations of the world. They are one in all things, except that which is the most important to be agreed in, because it is capable of exciting the strongest feelings, and really has the largest share in forming character and shaping our destiny. Here they are obliged to separate. Here there is no common bond of sympathy; and they are mutually

afraid to touch the tender chord lest its vibrations should produce discord—perhaps even excite feelings of dislike. Is all this nothing to their happiness? It is; for how can the voice of affection and conscience be silenced? the thoughts of eternity be prevented?

In this state of things therefore how will the christian be affected? He knows the importance of the grand reality; but how shall he communicate his sense of it? He is deeply convinced of its value in every point of view, and for every purpose of life, now as well as hereafter; but how shall he impart his convictions, and persuade *his friend* to entertain the same sentiments? Can he prevent his thoughts from wandering to death and judgment; or his imagination from picturing the awful condition of *that very friend*, when the soul is lost: or fail to feel the anguish of a separation forever? Think of all his love—how often he has borne that friend on the arms of prayer to the mercy seat—how many contrivances he has adopted to win his heart from sin and bring him to Christ—how closely he is bound to him, and how many ties must be broken in a final separation.

Is there nothing now in such a scene as we have painted? Will it not naturally engender the greatest anxiety, and produce the strongest yearnings of heart?—anxieties and yearnings proportioned to the blessings to be secured and the evils avoided? It is not a mere temporal good which is sought; but an inter-

est in the grace of God. The pearl, is the pearl of great price; and no earthly treasure has ever been desired more ardently than christian love hath often sought to enrich the object of its affection with that priceless gem, or than it has striven to turn away the wrath of God from him who is dear to it. Tears have been copiously shed; and oh how many ardent prayers have ascended to heaven. Think of it! How can we suffer a friend whom we love, to go down to destruction without efforts to save him? How can we day by day see his onward course and not attempt to draw him back? How can we realize the wretchedness of his condition, and his hopeless end, without feeling impelled by the interest which he has in our hearts, to endeavor to arrest his career, and turn his feet from death? Ah! yes indeed! Many a tender christian heart hath wept in secret bitter tears—many a friend importuned heaven to have mercy upon and spare his friend. Many a pious wife or daughter pleaded long and earnestly for husband or father; and even sorrowed like the Prophet after the fountain of her tears was dry, that she could not weep on and make them flow night and day. If tears and prayers could save souls, tears would flow and prayers ascend perpetually to accomplish that end; but they will not always succeed. Impenitence is proof even against the power of the heart; and who can tell the anguish experienced when hope is lost and despair throws its dark mantle over such a loving spirit!

Oh that the impenitent knew how much they always resist to continue in their sin! The church prays for them—their christian friends pray for them, and their associates and bosom companions in secret weep over their condition, and by strong cries and tears seek to move heaven to save them from perdition. Oh that the impenitent knew what anguish of heart their ungodly course causes those who love them to suffer! Yes, and there are some of you who do know this, but it does not move you. Your nature is so perverted—your heart so hard—you love your idols so well—that after them you will go, even though friends and lovers should weep ever so much. Let me tell you however, that you are sinning against your own souls as much as you are sinning against affection; and that the bitterest dreg in your cup of trembling will be the thought of what you have done all your life, in resisting so stoutly the kindness of christian affection.

Is it necessary now to remind you Christian brethren that I stand related to each one of you individually as a friend? that I experience all the solitudes of that relation?—that all the earnest importunity that love has ever engendered in the heart and employed in prayer, has been employed for you—employed for these five long years; and that all the bitterness of disappointment mingles in the cup which you commend necessarily to my lips, by your remaining in sin. Need I appeal to you on this ground, and remind you as the apostle

did his Philippian converts, that "I have you in my heart?" that I have been willing to impart to you all the treasures which grace has laid up for us in Christ? If kindness could have won you, it must have done so before to-day: or if importunity had power to overcome your disinclinations to holiness, it must have brought you to the feet of the Redeemer. Alas! that it has not: and that the close of a cycle of years, finds you yet in the attitude of an opposer to Christ's authority, and a rejector of his mercy. Will you continue so until you die?

III. We may suggest another application of the sentiment in our text. The anguish of parental bosoms when their instructions, prayers, warnings and expostulations, all prove vain. Many a bleeding heart has felt the import of the Prophet's language. Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Among the interesting relations which are formed by that ordinance of heaven which has "placed man in families upon the earth," none is more sacred—none is stronger, than that which exists between parents and children. On the one hand there is all the instinctive love of a father or mother for their offspring, strengthened by the care which it has rendered necessary and the kindness which it has prompted. On the other there is all the gratitude which a consciousness of these expressions of love originates. No ties can be more sacred than these:

and no relation involves more feelings that are naturally calculated to awaken sentiments of interest and kindness. A parent experiences pleasure in seeking the welfare of his child in all possible ways. He subjects himself to toil and labour, to lay up for him a store of good things for the present life. He denies himself many gratifications which he furnishes willingly to him; and in doing so he regards not the self-denial—he does not even count it a sacrifice; for he finds satisfaction in it—so deeply solicitous is he to advance the interests and secure the welfare of those he loves. If he could bestow a thousand times more, and deny himself a thousand times oftener, he would not grudge it, could he only shower down *all* upon the object of his affectionate solicitude.

Such is parental affection—so deep—so self-denying—always so full of anxious concern—always so ready to make sacrifices. It is a noble, a heaven derived endowment. In it God's wisdom and his mercy to his creatures are both displayed. How much the world is benefited by it!

But the affection of a christian parent, what is it? Has it not the same deep and instinctive feelings? Has it *not all* of these *ennobled, consecrated, and directed to higher* ends? Does he not as a christian necessarily experience a strong desire that his children should enjoy the hopes of religion, and be brought under the ægis of his protecting power? He knows how much it will benefit them, for he

has himself tasted of its fruits in his own pilgrimage. He is sensible how much the heart of man needs such a kind hand to soothe its anguish in the hour of trial; for he has himself been pelted by adverse storms. He is conscious, from his own errors, that nothing can so effectually guard in temptation—guide in perplexity—and restrain when corrupt desires importune, as that blessed monitor. He has tasted the bitterness of sin—has trembled before the awful judgment seat—has gone down into “the valley of Baca, weeping,” and saw no “springs of water” there—and knows well that there is no hope but in the consolations which the Gospel of Jesus Christ imparts. His knowledge and experience both confirm the declarations of divine Revelation, and convince him that nothing but its influence, in converting the soul and sanctifying the heart, can make salvation sure.

The depth and force of these convictions may be shown from several circumstances. You may consider the *motive* of those *careful instructions* in the doctrines and duties of religion. What was it but the manifestation of a desire on the parents' part to bring his child acquainted with its power? You may consider the *motive* of *his example*, walking carefully before his house—what was it but that he might be a guide to one whom he knew to be prone to err and hard to be convinced? You may listen to his *prayers*; and if you do so, you will clearly perceive how affection deepens their tone of earnest-

ness, and kindles an ardent flame of his devotion as soon as his little ones engage his heart, and he begins to plead in their behalf.

But suppose now, that christian parent called in providence to witness the infatuated course of a Prodigal—all his instructions despised—all his affectionate counsel disregarded—all his prayers and pleadings in vain! Sin, the monster sin, proving too strong for all the barriers which he has opposed to its power; and like a victorious conqueror capturing one after another, the defences set to protect the citadel of the heart against its assaults. That beloved child who was trained so carefully for heaven, going forward in the forbidden way until his feet take hold on hell. What are his feelings now? Is any pen adequate to describe the bitterness of his heart, or paint the anguish of his bosom? *Ah it is horrible!* There is a sense of disappointment, a feeling of indignation, and a sentiment of abhorrence and disapprobation, all mingling their bitter dregs in the cup which is presented to his lips, and which he is forced to drink, which almost dries up his spirit. So many fond anticipations are blasted, and so much enjoyment prevented, that he cannot cease. Tears are shed, and bitter tears, as often as he remembers the lost one. He almost feels, sometimes, as if he could have given his life's blood, if it would have redeemed that child from ruin. He never goes to a throne of grace, but he remembers him there. He never bows himself in

confession before God, but the bitterness of his sorrow is brought to remembrance. The slain idol of his affections—the cherished jewel of his fond desires—how can he forget him? “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim,” is his constant cry! “Oh that Ishmael my son might live before thee”—his daily prayer—and often the anguish of his spirit breathes itself forth in the language of David. O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” “O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.”

And is there not in the relation of Pastor and people, *every thing* that gives force and tenderness to that of a parent and his offspring? What then, I ask you, are my feelings to-day, in being obliged after five years of patient toil, to see you yet without an interest in Christ? Some of you may conceive of them from experience. Perhaps your prodigal has wandered from the shadow of your roof, and spent all his substance in riotous living—perhaps your son has been blind to the obligations of duty, and the instincts of self-preservation, and lived in sin under a plenitude of gospel light and influence. Perhaps you have often sought to win him, but in vain; and now can only yearn and yearn, even though hope seems denied. Ah christian parent, you know the feelings of our heart. You can tell what a weight lies upon it to-day—and why it is,

that we endeavor to give utterance to its deep emotions in the Prophet's words, "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."

*Application.*—Let us now for a moment consider what motives the subject presents to the impenitent to turn from sin. We do not at the present time "reason with you of righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come;" we do not seek to move you by the love of Jesus Christ, or the grace of the Holy Spirit! we do not entreat you by the worth of your souls, or the joys of heaven; nor warn you to beware for there is wrath. All this has often been done; and alas with many it has been in vain!

We seek to-day an avenue to your hearts less trodden, and we hope, on that account, more sure of success. Perhaps your feelings have become jaded, by the frequency with which appeals have been made to them—Gospel-ridden and grace-hardened, you have ceased to feel the force of religious obligations. We tell you then to-day how much your Pastor loves you—how often he prays for you—what distress of mind your continued impenitence causes him. Do you love him? Are you sensible that he is your friend, and that he is seeking to do you good? Oh grieve no more his affectionate heart! Give him no more cause to cry unto God, "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night

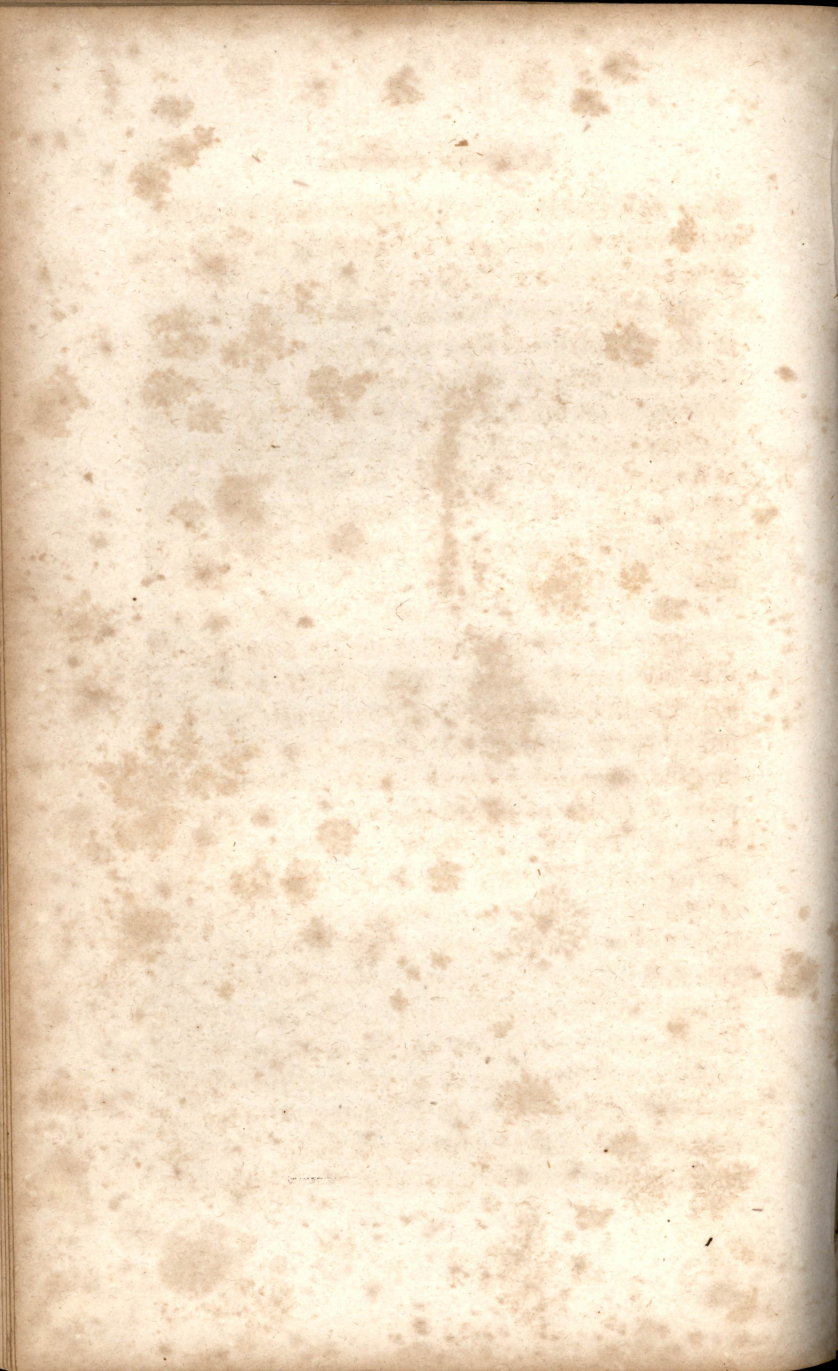
over the slain of the daughter of my people." He can have no rest while you live in sin. He can, as a minister of Christ, know no comfort but in seeing your joys abound and your hearts meeting for the beatitudes of heaven.

We come also to tell you how your christian friends and companions feel, when they see you rejecting the only Saviour, and madly following after ruin. How they regret that amid all the bliss of communion, and the pleasure arising from association of friend with friend in heaven, they cannot anticipate the joy of seeing you there. That their hearts now yearn over you, and ceaseless prayers ascend to heaven in your behalf: and to ask you, whether all this tenderness, solicitude and affection, is to be in vain? and shall it indeed be in vain?

We come to call up to your remembrance the tears and prayers of that parent, who is perhaps now in heaven, looking down from his serene abode and watching your course—those prayers and tears which your welfare prompted, and which your impenitence multiplied; and to ask you, whether they are to be in vain. To remind you of that parental instruction and example, under the influence of which your earliest years were blessed, and to ask you, whether you are going to forsake it finally and render it all abortive? We come to claim a place in your hearts to-day, for we are speaking in the name of those who have the best right to speak to you, and to ask you whether you have forgotten

their love, and mean to disappoint their hopes, disavow their counsels, and wound them in their tenderest affections?

Think how many hearts are burning to see you in the way of life. How many prayers have made you consecrate to God. How many affectionate, how many solemn motives, urge you to-day to make your choice. Five years of warning and solicitude, of prayer and privilege, is no small account to answer for to God. Shall they all prove vain? Eternity will answer the question, though you do not.



## SERMON II.

THE REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN THE CHURCH OF  
RARITAN.

Remember ye not the former things; neither consider the things of old.—ISAIAH XLVIII: 18.

THE inquiry of the Prophet implies astonishment that any men of consideration could be so reckless as to neglect the instruction of the past; and well might he be surprised. What is our experience but the memory of former things, and the judgment of reason in regard to them? What is our prudence but avoiding the evils of the present as we have learned them in former days? A course of life in which prudence and experience should both be neglected would be sure to end in disaster. It is wise therefore always to remember "the former things" and "consider the things of old." When it is possible for us to do so, it is also important to embody it in the form of a narrative, that its lessons, being faithfully and impressively presented, may the more deeply impress our minds and influence our hearts.

History therefore has by the general sense of mankind been considered as one of the most important sources of knowledge. All men seem to be aware how much "that which hath been" is "that which shall be," and how necessary it is for us to know it, in order to judge right and live to advantage. There is however a moderation to be observed in the reverence which we attach to "the things of old" and the use which we make of their teachings. The manner in which it is sometimes spoken of would almost lead us to infer, that it was regarded as having embodied all truth and righteousness; and that all wisdom and good conduct have since failed from the earth! Such extravagance is unwise and mischievous. It arises from that indiscriminate admiration, in which neither reflection nor judgment has been exercised. Lord Bacon seems to have stated exactly the use of antiquity. "It deserveth that reverence that men should make a stand thereupon, and discover what is the best way; but when the discovery is well taken, then to make progression." It is good as a Teacher, but not safe or proper as a resting place.

On the other hand to disregard entirely, as some are disposed to do, the experience of the past, and boldly launch out into the stormy sea of life without a chart to guide us, may display a venturous spirit, and be commended as such; but certainly it is not a mark of prudence or of wisdom. Says Burke, "when ancient opinions and rules of life are taken

away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us, nor can we know distinctly to what point we steer." This is true: and the wisest and best men have been those who were neither slavish in their reverence of the past and their subjection to it, nor heedless of the many lessons which it teaches; not unwisely trammelled by it, nor yet so self-confident as to rush forward without its guiding wisdom and instruction in the conduct of life. It deserves to be well considered, but not "rested in." Bacon's "progression" is the watchword of improvement, and by listening to it the world has arrived at her present stage of advanced perfection, in almost every branch of human wisdom—to have rested would have prevented all.

To-day seems to be a point from which it may be proper to take a retrospective view of the dealings of Divine Providence with us as a people. It is the anniversary of the tenth year of my ministry among you: and I purpose to erect an Ebenezer here and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. God's goodness has been great, and should be recognized; and the poet tells us

"'Tis greatly wise to talk of our past hours,  
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,  
And how they might have borne far welcomer news."

There is much in the past that will be of real advantage to us by way of encouragement in the future. In reviewing the history of this church only in one particular—the amount of spiritual

influence which God has deigned to bestow upon us, I have been so much delighted, as to induce me to arrange the facts in their order, and present them in the form of a succinct narrative. Adopting the recommendation of inspired wisdom to remember the former things and consider the things of old, I shall present the history of those spiritual communications with which God has been pleased to accompany the dispensation of the word and ordinances among the people of this congregation. I believe there are but few churches in the land that have records so full of the manifestations of divine goodness, or a history more rich in evidences of divine care.

During the first twenty years, after the organization of this church in 1699, it enjoyed only occasionally the means of grace. The records would seem to indicate that *twice*, or sometimes *thrice* in the course of the year, some preacher visited them, and then children were baptized and the Lord's Supper administered. From such a scanty seeding of the ground no adequate crop could be anticipated: and yet by the blessing of God the church did increase, at least in the number of those who attended on the means of grace and aided in supporting them, until in process of time it began to feel strong. About 1718, in connection with New Brunswick, Six-Mile-Run and North Branch, the church of Raritan ventured upon the effort to call, and agreed to provide for the support of a pastor.

The important document, after having been duly prepared, was despatched to Holland and the Classes of Amsterdam was expected to select the pastor and send him out by their authority and with their recommendation. It was an anxious time among those who loved Zion and prayed for her prosperity, and these prayers were happily answered. The call was accepted by Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, and he arrived in New York in January, 1720. As early as February he assumed the duties of his pastoral relation, embracing in the wide range of it, almost the entire county of Somerset, at that time sparsely settled and almost destitute of roads and bridges, and other facilities of intercommunication.

It is impossible to ascertain accurately what was the state of the churches at the time when Mr. Frelinghuysen assumed the pastoral charge of them. No record remains, if any ever existed, of those who had been admitted into its communion previous to his day. There occur however on the list of Baptisms the names of about seventy families belonging to the congregation. This indicates its numerical strength: and there had been three hundred and eighty children and two adults baptized, during the preceeding twenty-one years. There must therefore have been at least a general external regard to the ordinances of God's house by the first settlers of this section of our State, and some benefit resulting from the occasional services which they had enjoyed under all the disadvantages of their

circumstances, or these facts would not remain as the materials of history. The baptism of the adults proves that a church existed, preserving order and providing for the administration of sacraments; and that the preaching of the Gospel was blessed to the conversion of some.

But although the records of the church are so meagre, we are happily furnished with testimony from another source, which will not be disputed, to aid us in forming an estimate of the spiritual state of the church, though not immediately referring to it. This testimony will show that although there might be an external observance of the forms and the Sacraments of the Christian religion, yet, that an experience of their power was by no means a general accompaniment of such observance. There must have been a great want of practical and serious christianity. It was the fault of the age and the natural result of the destitution of the church. It was the common fault of all the churches at that time, and was true not only of Raritan but also of many other parts of the country.

Christianity as it is revealed in the Bible is always the same, beautiful, bright and pure—an emanation of divinity; but as it exists in practical life embodied in the faith and conduct of different nations, communities and ages, it exhibits almost an infinite variety of aspects and phases. Some of them are dark, amounting almost to a total extinction of its light and spirit, while others are bright and anima-

ting, displaying all its excellencies in prominent relief for the edification of mankind. It has always been so, and will continue to be so until the end of time.

The age succeeding the great Reformation, when the churches in this country were planted, may be characterized by a single word. It was a *transition state*. It retained some of that firm attachment to doctrine and purity of faith which had distinguished the period when martyrs shed their blood freely in attestation of the truth: but, by association with the spirit of the world, in days of prosperity and peace, it had learned to be content with a name to live, and rested in a faith without works. Its vital piety had almost ceased and the fruits of Godliness were stunted and scanty, though the forms and doctrines of a better time remained. Emigrating from the Fatherland, our ancestors left behind them not only their pleasant homes on the vine clad hills of France and the verdant meadows of the Low Countries, but also, for a season at least, all the ennobling influences of their early associations and their church privileges. In this wilderness they found no Sabbath—no “sound of church going bell,” and no minister of Christ to instruct, admonish and lead them to the cross. As a necessary consequence of such destitution their children grew up almost in a state of nature, without any of the influence of those teachings and associations in which their fathers had been nurtured. When there was no persecutor to

endear by his violence the very faith he sought to destroy, that faith was less esteemed and had less power. Their fathers' example and prayers, in the nature of things, would not be entirely lost upon them; but it was too much to expect that they would transmit to their descendants the spirit of their piety, or that the children would become what they would have been, if the sanctuary and the Sabbath had lent their aid to enforce parental precepts and example. Hence the natural effect of the position of the early settlers here would be, to impart to them a veneration for their fathers' faith, but to leave them without the savor of its divine influence. Now that this was a fact, and that we have given a true picture of their moral condition, is proved by competent witnesses, bearing testimony of others in the same circumstances. Says one—"the difference between the church and the world was vanishing away, church discipline was neglected and the growing laxness of morals was invading the church. The young were abandoning themselves to frivolities and amusements of dangerous tendency; and party spirit was producing its natural fruit among the old. The progress of Arminianism had become so manifest as to cause alarm." This is a picture of the Puritan Churches at this time, and there can be but little question that the features were general, and applied as well to the state of things in New Jersey as in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

We produce another. The Rev. Samuel Blair,

one of the fathers of the Presbyterian Church in America, employs the following language in reference to the state of the churches in Pennsylvania. "A very lamentable ignorance of the main essentials of true practical religion, and the doctrines nextly relating thereto, very generally prevailed. The nature and necessity of the *new birth* was but little known or thought of. The necessity of a conviction of sin and misery, by the Holy Spirit opening and applying the law to the conscience, in order to a saving closure with Christ was hardly known at all, to the most. There was scarcely any suspicion at all in general, of any danger of depending upon self-righteousness and not upon the righteousness of Christ alone for salvation."

But we have testimony which is still more applicable. We come into the bounds of Mr. Frelinghuysen's very charge itself: and we hear Gilbert Tennant saying of the state of the church in New Brunswick in 1744, a little before the time when Mr. Frelinghuysen's labors closed. "I examined many about the grounds of their hope of salvation, which I found in most to be nothing but as sand." He is speaking of his own people, and not of those who had been converted under Mr. Frelinghuysen's labors, as we shall show presently by another extract from the same account.

Now this was the aspect of the field which was to be cultivated; at least its moral condition could not have been more favorable than those of which we

have given testimony: and if we consider the fact that for more than thirty years most of the inhabitants of this section of the country had been living in a wilderness without the Gospel, we may think it necessary to regard it as being even less favorable than they indicate; and this would be nearer to the truth.

Now mark the effect. Mr. Frelinghuysen commenced by preaching pointedly and seriously the necessity of a new heart. He insisted on christian experience as a preparation for church membership and communion; and restored discipline to its legitimate place in the house of God. There was immediately clamor—resistance—reproach\*; but he was not a man to be turned away from a course which he considered it his duty to follow, by any such influences: and besides the Holy Spirit had already begun to testify to the truth and render it the power of God and the wisdom of God to the salvation of souls, how could he refrain from preaching it? As early as 1726, when there were probably not more than twenty members in communion in the whole congregation, and only six years from the time of his first settlement, during all of which opposition and defamation had been rife, there were admitted to the communion seven at one time on confession

\*See the complaint published by a part of his Consistory, in which it is attempted to be shown that his doctrine of regeneration is not the doctrine of the Church—and exceptions are taken to his whole course, especially his discipline.

of faith. It must have been a day of joy to his heart, and of triumph to the cause of truth. It was indeed a great day. Seven added to twenty is equal to an addition of forty in a church composed of one hundred members; and this would, even now, be regarded as an extraordinary work. But we must consider that this was the fruit of his work at *Raritan*. Now if the same state of things existed at North Branch, Six-Mile-Run and New Brunswick; and that it did all traditionary history asserts; and a corresponding number were introduced into the churches in each of these congregations it was indeed a great day for Zion. But it did not end here. There is evidence that it continued in subsequent years. There were also accessions to the church of more than ordinary numbers in 1729 and 1734.

But the greatest blessing seems to have been enjoyed in 1739, simultaneous with the Revival at Northampton under Jonathan Edwards; and between these two revivals in other respects there was a striking similarity. They both originated in pointed doctrinal discussions—brought on a conflict between formalism and practical Christianity, and stirred up some of the worst passions in the human heart: but while Edwards was ejected from his charge Mr. Frelinghuysen not only maintained his place and his influence, but perpetuated the work, until finally, in the days of his successor Dr. Hardenbergh, even the hearts of his enemies were conquered.

The effect of this state of things was to give an entire new aspect to the state of the congregation. Religion became an object of almost universal attention and concern; and increased the desire and necessity for pastoral labors so much that Mr. Frelinghuysen was constrained to adopt an expedient, which seems to have been original with him—indeed we have no knowledge of its having been adopted at any time any where else. He appointed from among the most gifted and experienced of his male members, certain individuals whom he called "*Helpers*"—whose office was to expound the scriptures in the meetings for prayer and conduct them with order—visit and converse with the anxious and enquiring—and to catechise the youth. This step was considered as a bold departure from long established usage in the Dutch Church by those who excepted to Mr. Frelinghuysen's course, and would even now be regarded as a "*new measure*" of very questionable propriety and usefulness. It may be that it was upon the whole neither wise nor safe: although, from the character of the individuals—their prudence, zeal and godliness,—its effects were seen in the most favorable light; but it is certain that his latter days were greatly embittered with strife, arising from the strong disapprobation expressed by some of the most influential members in his church, of the course which he thought proper to adopt. But whether it would have been possible with his views of truth, to avoid such a contest, may admit

of a doubt. It seems at least to be certain, that in some sections of the church, whatever the ostensible pretences may have been, the great contest of *Coetus* and *Conferentie*, was in fact a struggle of formalism against vital godliness—of the law of progress against the inertia gendered by an admiration of the past. It was the spirit of this age and of this land, fighting for liberty, when the attempt was made to bind it down by forms, customs and veneration for the Fatherland; and it conquered then, as it always will conquer in any future struggles.

The records of the church warrant us in estimating the fruit of this year, as having been the conversion of at least fifty souls within the bounds of Mr. Frelinghuysen's pastoral charge. Of this number ten are recorded as having united with the church at Raritan on confession. The accession is again equal to about one-third of the whole number in communion. The records of the other congregations have perished, or we have no doubt, our conjecture would have been confirmed, by their names actually appearing upon them.

In summing up then the results of the ministry of Mr. Frelinghuysen, we arrive at the following facts: There were thirty-eight added to his churches on confession in 1726—there were sixteen in each of the years 1729 and 1734—and there were fifty in 1739—the whole amount is one hundred and twenty. We do not say that these numbers are absolutely correct; but we do say that the data fur-

nished us by the records of the church of Raritan—the only records which have been preserved—fully sustain them, and even more than sustain them. And when we consider the work of grace in connection with the external circumstances of the age and the church in which it occurred, it magnifies itself in our estimation. There was great ignorance—much laxity of moral principle, a leaning to Arminianism, few preachers, and but little opportunity of hearing or meeting to encourage one another. That one man should wield such an influence, and be able to sustain himself and his principles in the very midst of the fire kindled to consume him and them, is surely an evidence of the divine favor, and of special spiritual communications from above. In fact the whole work is as clearly marked with power and sanctifying grace as any of those with which the churches in other places were blessed about this period; and stamps the ministry of Mr. Frelinghuysen as having been peculiarly favored and useful. The whole of its power we shall probably never know.

There is also one other circumstance worthy of notice. Several of the converts in this revival, lived until within the memory of some who are yet with us, and were uniformly distinguished for their deep experience and ardent piety. Fathers and mothers in Israel were they truly; always abounding in every good word and work. Gilbert Tennent of New Brunswick alludes to them, in his letter to

Mr. Prince of Boston in 1744. "The labors of Mr. Frelinghuysen were much blessed to the people of New Brunswick and places adjacent, about the time of his coming among them: which was about twenty-four years ago, (in 1720.) When I came there, which was about seven years after, divers of his hearers with whom I had opportunity of conversing, appeared to be converted persons, by their soundness in principle, christian experience, and pious practice; and these persons declared that the ministrations of the aforesaid gentleman was the means thereof." This is conclusive as to the spiritual character of the work.

Here we are disposed to award the honor which the zeal and piety of this good man seem to demand from us. We regard him as being the instrument in the hand of Providence, to plant first the seed of truth and righteousness upon this soil, where, in subsequent years, such abundant harvests have been gathered. He broke up the fallow ground and prepared it for the glorious crop. He met and conquered the spirit of worldliness, self-righteousness and carnal security, which had possession, at least of the popular mind, if not of the church itself. This whole region owes his memory a debt of gratitude which it can never repay. His labors were the means of introducing *early* into the churches here, a tone of piety, and a form of religious sentiment, which has been a blessing to them ever since. Their spirituality and peace are the fruits of it;

and we are yet enjoying the benefit of his labors in many ways.

In order to understand the effect of his ministry, we must remember that the doctrine of *the necessity of a new heart*, had almost entirely been lost sight of; and that formalism and self-righteousness almost universally prevailed. Christians were not ashamed to ridicule christian experience, and many had become very resolute in opposing it. "The common names (says Blair in reference to Pennsylvania) for soul concern, were *melancholy*, *trouble of mind*, or despair. The necessity of first being in Christ and in a justified state, before our religious services can be well pleasing and acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of; but the common notion seemed to be, that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, as they imagined, there was no reason to be much afraid." Upon this mass of corruption and worldliness, the Pastor's denunciations of the wrath of God were unceasingly poured out, warning, exhorting and entreating all men, with all long-suffering and gentleness. In his public discourses he laid open the depravity and selfishness of the human heart—shewed its entire alienation from God—and insisted upon the absolute necessity that it should be regenerated. His doctrine had no sympathy with that heartless Armenianism, which teaches the availability of sincere but imperfect obedience, but plainly inculcated the great truth, that "the law is spirit-

ual," and we are "carnal, sold under sin," and therefore must be made new creatures in Christ Jesus; and that we are justified freely through his grace, by the redemption of the Mediator. No wonder that the slumbering lion was aroused, and shook his mane in menace when his den was thus invaded; nor on the other hand that God owned his truth, and attested it by the quickening operations of his spirit. It is only what he has promised always to do.

We have spoken of "*Helpers*" who were appointed in the different congregations. Those for Raritan were Hendrick Fisher and Andrias Ver Meulen—for Six-Mile Run, Ruluf Nevius and Elbert Stothoff—and for North Branch, Peter Van Arsdalen and John Wyckoff.

The years 1750 and 1751 are marked on the records of the church, as having witnessed more than an ordinary blessing upon the ministrations of the second Pastor of this Church, the Rev. John Frelinghuysen. Twenty-seven were added to the communion of the church on confession of faith. This we record as the *second Revival* at Raritan; and it must have had the effect of again strengthening and encouraging the hopes of the pious. To understand its influence we must recollect that now the whole church was rent to atoms. Party spirit prevailed to an alarming extent, and embittered the common intercourse of life. In some places, even personal violence was done at the very doors of the

churches on the Sabbath morning; and Raritan was one of the centres from which this influence emanated, and where some of its bitterest spirit had been exhibited. The church had divided, and however wrongfully at least a respectable minority, protested against the course of the Pastor and Consistory. That in such a state of things godliness should have triumphed, and brought so many to confess a meek and lowly Saviour, can be accounted for only by the presence of the "Spirit of peace."

The ministry of Jacob Rutsen Hardenbergh who succeeded John Frelinghuysen about 1763 and continued to serve this church until 1781 a period of eighteen years, was not marked by any special revival of religion. There are however abundant evidences of his zeal and faithfulness in his master's work, his earnest efforts to build up the church, and his ability as a clear, sound and practical preacher, to attest his character. In fact if we remember that his ministry embraced the period of the Revolution, when all minds must have been so entirely absorbed in civil affairs—that the army of Washington was encamped for a time within the bounds of his congregation—and he himself was obliged to desert his own house to secure his personal safety—that there must have been a flood of iniquity spreading itself through the whole community as the effect of this state of things—no surprise can be experienced that it should be so—a revival could not be expected. And besides all this, the church edifice was burnt to the

ground, and never restored until after he had resigned his charge, so that the people were without a house of worship. In such a time of trial, to save the "foundations of truth and godliness from being removed," was honor enough; and this is the praise which his exertions and faithfulness demand from us. He was a great and a good man. His influence second to no minister of his time: and the church manifested her estimate of his excellence by appointing him, soon after his removal from Raritan, to the Presidency of Queen's College in New Brunswick; where he ended his days and was gathered to his fathers. He was a student of John Frelinghuysen and subsequently married his widow—a woman whose piety has left a sweet savour in the midst of us. Jufvrow Hardenbergh, among the aged, was a pattern of all that was good, and gentle, and sanctified; and they have taught even the youth to reverence her.

The period embraced between the years 1785 and 1789, immediately after the death of the Rev. Theodorus Frelinghuysen Romeyn, and the settlement of the Rev. John Duryea, appears to have been characterized by another outpouring of the spirit upon the word and ordinances. Eighty-two were added to the church on confession of faith during this time—and we record this as the *Third Revival in the Church of Raritan*. It extended through the first five years of Mr. Duryea's ministry, and materially increased the amount of vital godliness in the

church. Many circumstances seem to have conspired to produce a favorable influence just then. The war of the Revolution had closed, bringing peace and Independence to these United States; and many had seen and acknowledged God's hand in the result. The church now enjoyed almost the whole service of her Pastor, for Mr. Duryea only preached at Bedminster once in three weeks. The ministry of Romeyn had been unusually spiritual and fervent, and had closed most impressively in his sudden and early death. He was a gifted and extraordinary young man, and his brief career left a deep impression upon the hearts of many; and God made his successor who was far inferior to him in pulpit talent, the instrument of gathering the harvest which he had sown.

Again in 1802-3-and 4, there was a visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the labors of the Rev. John S. Vredenburgh, who had assumed the pastoral charge of the congregation in 1800—seventy-seven individuals were received on confession of their faith. This we record as the *Fourth Revival of Religion* which God in his mercy has granted to this church to edify and build her up. And again in 1812-13 and 14 there were added forty-six members to the communion, on confession of faith, in the space of three years. We shall not enumerate this as a distinct revival, but only refer to it as we pass on.

In 1821 Mr. Vredenburgh died suddenly after

having continued to exercise the Pastoral office for nearly twenty-one years; and as he descended to his rest the spirit came down to bless his labors and raise up the seed which he had sown with so much patience and prayer. This was a mighty shaking in the valley of dry bones. In a year and a half three hundred and sixty-eight were added to the communion of the church. This *Fifth Revival of Religion* will long remain as one of the most remarkable eras in our history as a church. It was indeed a Pentecostal season. The influence pervaded all ranks, embodied all conditions in life, moulding and blending them into one mass, upon which the fear and love of God was indelibly impressed. For months, religion seemed to occupy completely and almost exclusively the attention of the whole community, and neither business nor pleasure was suffered to interrupt its services. But to record all the interesting incidents connected with it would require a volume to be written. Its great distinction from many which have been more loudly proclaimed, was its noiseless progress, its power and purity. It was a work remarkably solemn, deep, powerful, spiritual; and its results were such as are anticipated from such traits—permanent and abiding. Only two or three cases of discipline have become necessary, in the whole multitude which came thronging to the table of the Lord. This is the more worthy of note because it is so rare, and so distinctly indicates the gracious

nature of the whole work, and how much of the spirit of God was in it. The effect I need not describe, since there are here so many who witnessed it, and to whom its recollection is almost as sacred as that of Pentecost was to the early christians. The cloven tongues of fire were not visible to the eye of sense, but they burned in every heart; and what the eye could not see the soul felt and enjoyed.

During the whole time that this work of grace was in progress the congregation was destitute of a Pastor, and continued so until the settlement of the Rev. R. D. Van Kleek in 1824. The public services were maintained by the generous assistance of the neighboring ministry; and a sermon of the Rev. Dr. Livingston on the Sabbath succeeding the death and burial of Mr. Vredenburgh was referred to by many of the converts as a time when their first convictions were felt. The Consistory also engaged for six months the services of the Rev. Truman Osborn, whose visits from house to house and various labors and exhortations had a most happy effect in carrying out and assisting the work. He seems to have been a man formed for exactly such a scene, and in the kind providence of God was sent to Raritan very opportunely for the accomplishment of the Lord's work. He is yet affectionately remembered by many of the converts of that Revival; and his very dust will be sacred in their eyes. He has entered into his rest, and his works will follow him.

You must now allow me to speak of things still more recent, and pardon the necessary personality. They belong to a complete view of the subject, and cannot be omitted with propriety. We have yet to record another which we shall denominate the *Sixth Revival of Religion* enjoyed by the Church of Raritan. In the years 1837 and 1838 there is recorded an addition of eighty members to the communion of the church; the larger portion were received on two occasions, and were the result of a very manifest blessing upon the word and ordinances. They compose at the present time, to some extent, the efficiency of the church; and we should be ungrateful if we did not record the mercy of our God, and speak forth our gratitude by building up an *Ebenezer* of praise for the fulfillment of his promise to own and bless his truth.

The whole number of communicants whose names are registered on the books of the church is one thousand and seventy-nine. Of them how large a portion are numbered with the dead, having been called to the service of the sanctuary on high. Of this number three hundred and thirty-seven are at present in actual communion, travelling to the same inheritance of immortal blessedness and joy.

The past ten years have been most eventful years. That little flock whose journey through the wilderness we have traced in the preceding memorials, and which we have seen increasing in number under the care and labor of faithful Pastors employed to

edify it, and the dews of divine influence sent from heaven upon it—has during these years been divided into two bands. When this event occurred it produced necessarily a disruption of many tender ties and hallowed associations—and was not effected without many tears. This was to be expected; but now we are prepared to acquiesce in it, and concede that it was right. The number in our communion has already been so increased, by the blessing of God, as to exceed what it was previous to the division; and the accession in families is nearly equal to the loss: so that the actual strength of the church is not materially impaired by what has occurred.

The edifice in which our fathers so long worshipped has also been replaced by one more commodious and better adapted to the wants of the congregation; and thus all those *vexed questions*, which arose out of the necessity of enlargement or reconstruction, and operated to the injury of our peace, are put at rest for a long time. Unanimity exists to as great an extent among all the members of the church, as it ever did at any preceding period. If we could only witness a deeper spirit of devotion in the house of God on the Sabbath day, and an enlarged measure of prayer animating the christian bosom, we should be encouraged to hope for much. As it is, there seems to be danger of a Laodacean temper springing up among us, saying “we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing:” while in spirituals we may become actually “poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.”

The oldest living member in the communion of this church, has now been connected with it fifty-five years. This individual sat with us at the table of the Lord on the last communion season. All those who were here when he united himself with the people of God have gone to rest; he alone remains, to link the past with the present—the only remnant of a former half century. During this long period, he has worshipped almost every Sabbath day around the same altar. He has welcomed with joy all those who came to confess Christ, and mourned at the graves of all the departed. Few, in this changing world, have been permitted to serve God so long in one place—very few to spend so many Sabbaths and communion seasons in one house of worship—and fewer still have had the privilege to welcome eight hundred and forty-four to the fellowship of the church. Honored servant, may his end be peace.

During the period we are commemorating there have been numerous changes in this community. Many called in providence to other places, have been cheerfully and honorably dismissed; and some have gone to form for themselves another place of worship and other associations. But this is not all—the destroyer has also been at work. The leaders of the host have fallen in great numbers and with frightful rapidity. Among those who welcomed me here and gave me their confidence, when with fear and trembling I consented to assume the pas-

toral charge of this numerous people, but are not here to-day and will not be here again, are Howell, Talmage, Veghte, Frelinghuysen, Van Doren, Vroom, Van Arsdalen, Van Dyke, Van Arsdalen; besides all the mothers in Israel whose ardent prayers were accustomed to rise like morning incense to heaven and bring down showers of blessings upon this heritage of the Lord. So busy has the destroyer been among the strong men and the aged, that now, when we look around there are only a few venerable heads remaining to counsel and encourage. The pillars of the sanctuary are falling around us—the men who bore the ark disappearing—and as they fall, we feel in each stroke as if we had one friend less.

Death! great proprietor of all! tis thine  
 To tread out empire and to quench the stars—  
 The sun himself by thy permission shines,  
 And one day thou shalt pluck him from his sphere!

The complete number of deaths in our communion I have not the means of ascertaining, but it has been large. The number added on confession during ten years is two hundred and thirty-two; the number of infants baptized two hundred and forty-five. Thus “one generation passeth away and another cometh”—the living are taking the places of the dead, and treading upon their steps. From the cradle to the tomb is only a span—but it is all we have to prepare for that vast eternity which ensues. It is like the vestibule to some magnificent temple, the glory of which swallows up all our im-

pressions of what went before, and proves those only to be wise who so live, as to secure an everlasting rest in heaven.

*Application.*—The practical lessons which we are taught from this view of the past, seem evidently to be, that God has recorded his name here, and in that record left the promise sure to be fulfilled, "I will come, and bless." It would seem to be sinful to doubt this, after what He has done; and to form any other expectation, than that which embraces the fulfillment of this promise, would be culpable unbelief. There will be seasons of dearth, and cold and chilling winters—the church must pass through these—but there will also come showers from heaven—and the spring tide will appear, with its profusion of springing blades and opening flowers, giving presage of the fertility of the summer, and the fruits of autumn, to reward the faith and the toil of those who seek the good of Zion. Glorious things are spoken of thee, Zion city of our God!

The effect of all the past is encouragement. If we abound in the work of the Lord, he will cause that our labors shall not be in vain in the Lord. When we wait upon him, he hears, and answers, and sends his spirit down. But if we turn from him, he will hide his face from us, send his judgments to afflict us, and bring all our designs to naught. Should not a people therefore seek unto the Lord their God? Seek him with all your heart, and he will be found.

It would not be just, if we did not also notice here the fact, that in the relation of pastor and people, we have enjoyed ten years of uninterrupted peace. I acknowledge the kindness with which I have been uniformly treated—the favor with which all my public services have been received—and the promptness with which every failure (and I am conscious of more than you seem to have noticed) has been passed over. I have been with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; but what I have attempted has been sincerely and with a good conscience. I have labored for your profit: and never furnished any but *beaten oil* for the light of the sanctuary. This has not been always regarded in the right point of view. There are some who would rather have a social visit from their pastor, than a good sermon: and there are some too, so unreasonable as to expect both; but I cannot consider them wise or just. There may be others who think that it costs nothing to preach well, but they know nothing. There are ministers who shake their sermons out of their sleeves: but are they worth “the shaking,” after they are out? The flock soon shows the kind of pasture upon which it has been subsisted. For myself I do not know a more heartless thing, or one more wicked, than for a minister to ascend the pulpit on the Sabbath, and when souls are hungry for the bread of life, talk nonsense in the name of the Lord! If I have never done it, it has not been for the want of temptation, nor from

a disinclination to social intercourse: but because I have been afraid. I could not so trifle with your souls and my own responsibilities. It is much *easier* and much more *agreeable* likewise, to spend an afternoon in a social circle, than in close and laborious thinking in a silent chamber. It has not been for want of inclination, that I have never been a great visitor, but because my conception of what a faithful pastor ought to be, embraced higher traits of character, than those which are gratified with admiration in a lady's parlor; and if you are wise—and seek the good of the church, you will allow me unmolested to pursue this course—so far it has been well.

One generation passeth away and another cometh! We are now the living, our children will be in a few years what we are to-day! We are passing away; they will take our places. This solemn thought intrudes itself, like those effigies of the dead with which the Egyptians adorned their feasts, into our most sacred, as it does also into our most joyful assemblies and associations. The hand of the destroyer is upon us all, and the gaping tomb waits to receive us. Oh if we could see to-day, what ravages another ten years will make, how deeply would we be affected? Who is to die? The pastor? Which of the flock? If we are wise we shall so live, as to make our calling sure: and if we can conceive adequately of our responsibilities to the church, the world, our own souls, work while the day lasts!

To the youth, the return of this anniversary Sabbath, makes a special appeal. You have seen, how the blessing of God has attended his word and ordinances, converting souls to God;—how the ark has been sustained and carried forward; how the Lord has been with his church here, blessing her and making her a blessing. The responsibilities which your fathers have so nobly borne in past years, are now coming upon you. Prove yourselves worthy of the trust reposed in you. These walls must be dear to you by many hallowed associations. They are not only consecrated to holy things, but baptized by the Holy Ghost and by prayer. Within this sacred enclosure the spirit has sealed your parents as the sons of God. If you desert them, or ever suffer them to remain desolate, you will be as guilty, as though you had suffered the sepulchres of your fathers to be profaned.

It has likewise another voice by which it speaks. You have enjoyed ten years of earnest appeal from the word and ordinances of God. Why has it not resulted in your salvation? Can you give any good account, why you are yet in your sins? Oh be persuaded to turn to God and live. Religion is designed for man. It is necessary to his happiness. He is never what he ought to be, nor does he ever enjoy what he is capable of enjoying, without it. It sweetens every joy—destroys the edge of grief, and helps to bear the cross. It is the cordial of life—a sun to gild our path through the world,

to light our steps when they are verging towards the dark valley, and to shine upon us in noonday effulgence in heaven. Make it yours. Where so much prayer has been answered, come and consecrate yourselves to the service of the covenant keeping God of your fathers, and make him your God and portion. To-day is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation. May God bless his truth—amen.

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## APPENDIX.

It may be interesting and curious to enter somewhat more minutely into the character and motives of the opposition which Mr. Frelinghuysen met with at Raritan. It is not only common for a Revival of religion to stir up enmity—and that too sometimes even among professing christians; but the character and motives of the opposition on this occasion, we think, will serve to give us an insight into the dispute into which it finally merged itself, in other parts of the church, and which is known as the contention between the *Coetus* and the *Conferentie* parties. Happily we have a document in

this instance as our guide, which no one will dispute—at least in the use to which we here apply it. It is a statement of their own case by Mr. Frelinghuysen's opponents, entitled "Klaage, &c."—a pamphlet of about one hundred and fifty pages, drawn up with great skill and talent by a person interested, or involved in it—the advocate Boel, a brother of one of the Collegiate Pastors in New York. We have recently examined it with care, and give the following as a fair summary of its arguments. It is put forth in the name of three Elders of the Churches belonging to Mr. Frelinghuysen's charge, viz: Simon Wyckoff, Peter Dumont and Hendrick Vroom. They accuse their Pastor of preaching false doctrine and departing from the usages and order of the church. In proof they specify—that he declined admitting to the Lord's table, when he first came among them, any except those who could give satisfactory evidence of christian experience, even though they had been regarded as members in communion before—that he insisted on the necessity of regeneration—that he said at the Lord's table at Six-Mile-Run that he knew there were individuals who had "eaten and drunk judgment to themselves"—that he allowed persons to be put into church office against whom there were unfavorable reports, and when told what these reports were, characterized them as "old wives fables." The individuals referred to were Hendrick Fisher and Schureman, against both of whom it is evident

there was a violent popular prejudice, probably in consequence of their being very firm friends of the Dominie. Schureman had come over with him from Holland for the purpose of acting as school-master in his pastoral charge, and they said would not teach the children the Lord's prayer. He also acted as Chorister and "Voorleeser." They also complain that the effect of his ministry was to introduce divisions and dissensions into private families, and produce a letter of Peter Wortman sent to his parents as an instance of the evil. This letter is a most unfortunate one for their whole cause. Reading it now, at the distance of one hundred and thirty years, it seems strange that so much could be made of it; or that it could be produced to prove the evil of Gospel ministrations. It is a fervent, affectionate, importunate appeal of a pious son to his father and mother, who gave no evidence of piety, to pause, consider, and listen to the voice of mercy. Just such a letter, as we have no question revivals of religion always produce, and cause to be sent. We think better of the young man's heart for having written it: and worse, of the cause not only, but of the sentiments of those who held him as a culprit for doing it.

Besides these main facts a great variety of circumstances are enumerated and introduced in the course of the argument—that at North Branch, the first communion, he partook of the elements first of all himself, and then winked or beckoned to certain

women to come forward and gave it to them—that at Six-Mile-Run he gave it to Schureman alone and made an address, and then afterwards to others whose names are mentioned—that he refused to baptize certain children because he said their parents belonged to Cláas Hayman's people—that in his family visitation he was very severe—and as they expressed it in their honest Dutch, “knocked down” the hopes and confidence of those who had long been in the communion of the church—that he expressed a want of confidence in the christianity of some, whose character stood fair—that he would not comfort the sick, but alarmed them by preaching the necessity of conversion to them, if they did not belong to his “*party.*” But the burden of all is “*valse leer*” and “*wederge-borte*”—and the fact that after waiting three years, and citing them at different times to appear before his Consistory, he had suspended the complainants from the communion of the church.

As the result then of the whole question as stated by themselves we come to this conclusion—that the opposition at Raritan arose from a disrelish of plain, pungent gospel truth on the part of formalists—was fostered by what they considered departures from the forms and order of the Dutch Church—embittered by conflicts of feeling resulting from these things—and continued, because on the one side there could be no compromise; principle and faith and christian experience all being involved; and on

the other there was no *abatement* of the first disrelish—but rather an *increase of it*, as the work of grace went on and the power of the truth became more and more manifest in a great number of conversions. If now, the state of things at Raritan and the opposing forces which were marshalled in conflict there, give any true indication of the sentiments and feelings of the two parties which divided the church, we should be obliged to say—that the *Coetus* men were the men of piety—the practical men—the men of progress, the men of prayer and holiness—and that *the others* were the men of forms—of the past—of the Fatherland; to whom an orthodox faith was enough, and who seemed to think more of attachment to the forms and order of the church than they did of practical godliness; Holland and the Classes of Amsterdam to them was “*magnus Apollo*,” and every thing else vanity. Hence it is not strange that the *Coetus* men went for independence in ecclesiastical affairs and for an educated ministry—that they effected our present church organizations—planted our College and kept religion alive in the churches; sometimes indeed like a lamp burning through a dark damp night, dimly and with a flickering flame, but still serving as a sufficient guide until the dawn of the morning. Thanks to them; they were noble men. *Their* contention is *our* peace. They fought long; fought well; fought till they conquered. The incubus upon them was a mighty load, but they threw it

off; and in their *strength* threw it *so far*, that it has never come back, except in isolated instances and persons! Occasionally *an old Conferentie man* seems to arise from the grave, and when he does we never fail to know him—for he has the word “Dutch” in almost every sentence he utters—he is *all* “Dutch,” and nothing but “Dutch” will suffice him in any thing.

From a recent perusal of the old pamphlet referred to, I have also obtained a few historical facts not generally known, which will be appended here. Frelinghuysen was a minister in East Friesland before emigrating to America, and a member of the Synod of Embderlandt. The call from Raritan was sent to Holland by Dom. Freeman of Flatbush, as the correspondent of the Consistory, and approved by the same Synod. He then brought from thence testimonials to the Classes of Amsterdam, and being received was amply recommended by them to the ministers and churches here. He must have arrived at the close of 1719, for he preached in New York for Dom. Boel, Jan. 17, 1720: on which occasion he omitted the Lord's prayer both in the opening and in the conclusion of divine service, which led to a conversation between him and Boel, the effect of which was a loss of confidence between them. They ascertained that they were utterly unlike; and Frelinghuysen was afterwards accustomed in speaking of Boel and those who felt and acted with him, to term them “Formalisten.” Schureman is re-

ported to have said that the church at New York was "een Heydense Kerk." In May, 1720, the widow Coevers testifies that Frelinghuysen had not then yet been *four months* at Raritan. These dates fix his arrival in the country at or about January 1st, 1720—and his settlement at Raritan in February the succeeding month. When he assumed the Pastoral charge the people were generous to him, and instead of the five acres of land promised in the call, provided fifty acres for him and built him *a large house*. On the 3d of March, 1720, a month after his settlement, he wrote from New Brunswick by Schureman to Dominie Boel and requested him to purchase for him a silver "Sak horologe." In the same letter there was a paragraph containing a warm practical exhortation to the consideration and practice of true piety, which is quoted against him as an evidence of a want of modesty in a young man, and a similar extract is also given from another letter written about the same time to Dominie Duboise to the same effect.

The *complaint*, besides Wyckoff, Dumont and Vroom, is signed by sixty-four heads of families—of which fourteen had been Elders or Deacons, five Church Masters, and two Justices of the Peace, These are from all the four congregations—viz: Three-Mile-Run, Six-Mile-Run, Raritan, and North Branch—now Readington.

The church officers acting with Dominie Frelinghuysen in March 28, 1723, were Joris Van Nest,

Johannes Sebryng, of the Consistory of Raritan—Barent De Witt, Derck Van Arsdalen, Six-Mile-Run—Roelef Neefius, Minnen Van Voorhees, Three-Mile-Run—Cornelis Bogaart, Andries Ten-Yck, North Branch—and Elbert Stoothoff Clerk.

On the 9th of May, the same year, another citation to the disaffected is signed by Joris Van Nest, Hendrick Bries, Barent De Witt, Jan Strycker, Thomas Boerman, Emanuel Van Netten, Andries Ten-Yck—Elbert Stoothoff, Clerk.

As early as 1721 the Messrs. Boel, the Dominie and the Advocate, had written a letter to the disaffected persons at Raritan, which led Frelinghuysen afterwards to stigmatize them as “advisers and mischief-makers;” and throughout the whole difficulty it is evident these two men were the confidants of his opposers, and by their influence and counsel greatly strengthened, if they did not also embitter their course. The pamphlet itself makes this abundantly evident. When a difficulty arose about the payment of salary on the part of the disaffected, these men were immediately consulted; but after Koers Froom had been prosecuted before the Justices Jacob Sebring and Hendrik Roseboom, there was no more difficulty on that subject, and no more going to New York for advice.

On the 11th December, 1721, a letter was obtained from Michiel Van Veghten, upon whose land the new church was built and which was now nearly completed, to the effect that Schureman should clear

himself from the scandal attached to him before the Consistory—and that peace should in this way be restored to the church, or that Frelinghuysen should not ascend the pulpit. Afterwards it was agreed that he might preach on condition that he should publish a meeting from the pulpit of the Consistories of the four united congregations—but it is said this never eventuated in any thing. The Consistory of Raritan at this time were Joris Van Neste, Jan Broekaert, Elders—Johannes Sebring and Teunis Van Middleswaert, Deacons.

As early as 1721, Frelinghuysen had published his sentiments in regard to Spiritual Christianity and Church Discipline; and in July, 1723, a refutation of what is called “the letter without a name, or a warning to all the lovers of the truth,” appeared. This pamphlet I am sorry to say I have never been able to obtain:—once I saw two leaves of it, but they contained nothing of historical importance and were not preserved. It is probably lost forever.

In 1722, about the time of Easter, Hendrik Fisher was appointed a Deacon in the church at Six-Mile-Run—and Johannes Folkertsz and Charles Fonteyn Elders—Fisher being at that time a young man. This was objected to by Simon Wyckoff, and created a great deal of dissatisfaction, reports being in circulation unfavorable to his character. Witnesses were examined in the presence of David Marrines—viz: Adrian Bennet, Willem Van Gelder and Paul Auten—but Frelinghuysen not being convinced

that there was any thing in these reports proceeded, and Fisher was ordained.

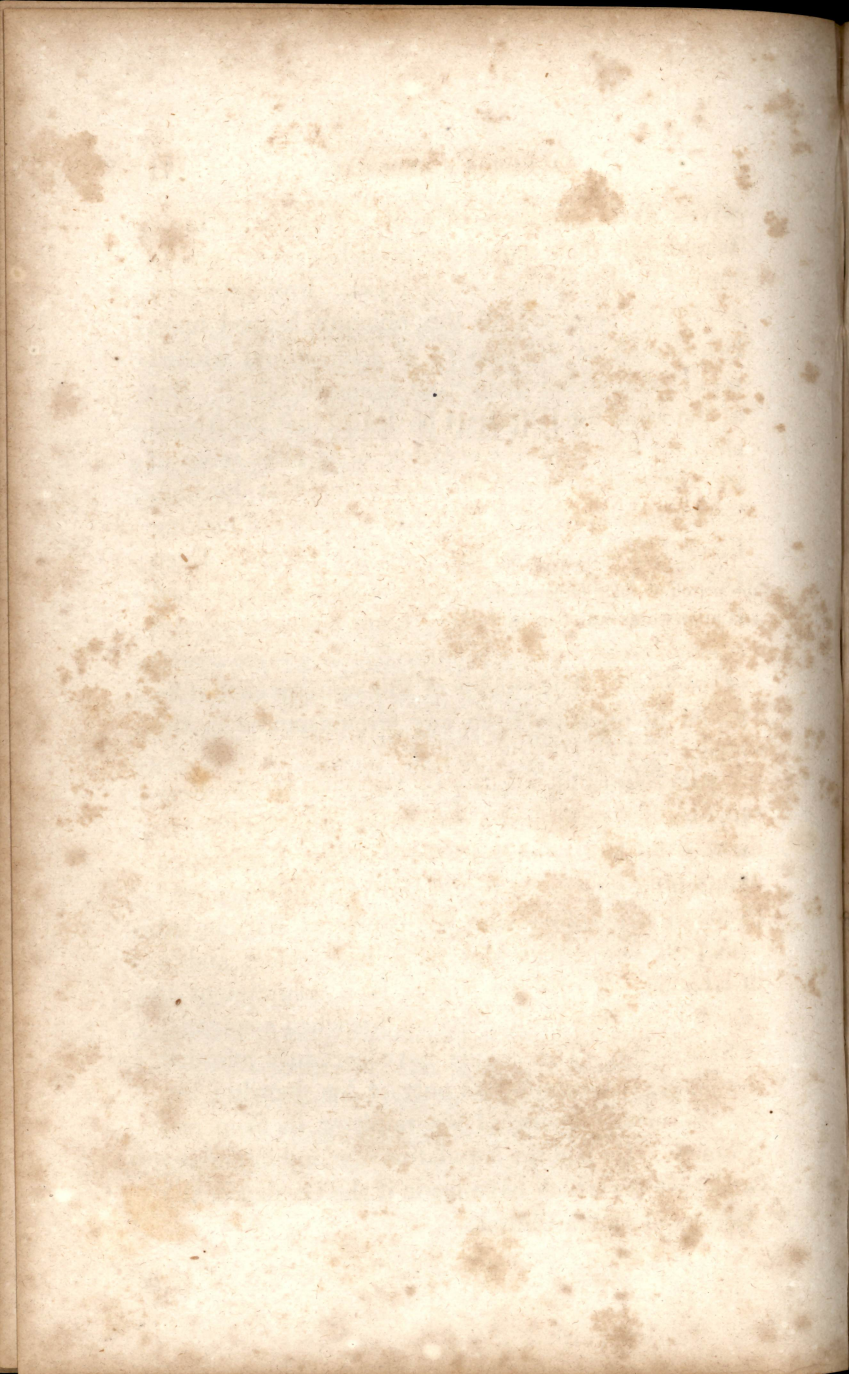
In the midst of all this contention the friends of truth seem to have remained firm in their attachment to their minister, and always to have fallen back upon their own consciousness of the power of his ministry, and the witness of the spirit in the midst of the people in his sanctifying grace; and results have shown abundantly that they were in the right.

In the beginning of his pastorate in 1720, previous to the building of the Parsonage, Frelinghuysen and Schureman both boarded at the house of Hendrik Reyniersz—but where he lived is not said; it was probably in the neighborhood of Three-Mile-Run; and then already had some persons begun to take exceptions to the character and conduct of Schureman, and his intimacy with Frelinghuysen had become an occasion of jealousy among the people.

It is strange that among all these reminiscences of his life and labors, no trace should be found of the christian name and character of the woman whom he selected to cheer his domestic fireside and be the companion of his joys and sorrows. It is only stated that Frelinghuysen and Schureman continued to reside together in the same house until they were obliged to separate in consequence of their marriage, and that then they became brothers-in-law, having married sisters: and tradition says their

wives were daughters of a Mr. Terhune of Long Island, but their names are probably irrecoverably buried in the rubbish of oblivion. Frelinghuysen evidently regarded all the obloquy heaped upon Schureman as the slander of jealous and wicked minds, and styled them "old women's tales." But at the same time it cannot be denied that his friendship for him was the occasion of at least some of the difficulties which he encountered at Raritan. Schureman appears to have had a faculty of making himself obnoxious to many of the people. Even Dominie Freeman is reported to have said,—"*had Frelinghuysen dat esel Schureman niet mede gebraght te soude nooyt so ver ge Komen Zyn, nog so een trouble of sporling.*" The candor of this opinion cannot be called in question from any circumstances in the case.

Previous to his coming to America, Mr. Frelinghuysen had published a catechism, in the preface to which he had complimented Jacobus Koelman, a Holland divine as "a bright star in the firmament." This in connection with his course at Raritan led Boel to stigmatize him as a Koelmanist and a Larbadist. To us the stigma is a compliment if these men, like Frelinghuysen, preached a spiritual Christianity. The results have certainly afforded an ample justification not only of his doctrine, but of the whole course of his ministry in Somerset County. He laid the foundation of many influences and customs which have made it the Garden of the Reformed Dutch Church.



## SERMON III.

## EXPERIENCE AND DEATH INSTRUCTING MEN.

Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers—shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?—Job VIII : 8—10.

History, it has been said, is “philosophy teaching by example.” “God, (says D’Aubigne,) is in history.” If this striking sentiment is true, then it must be important for us to be acquainted with the records of the past, because we shall be able to draw from them many practical lessons, enabling us not only to live more wisely in the present, but to secure every advantage from the future.

A poet has said of experience as it is taught us in history—

“’Tis very pregnant ;”

“The jewel that we find we stop and take it,”

“Because we see it : but what we do not see”

“We tread upon and never think of it ;”

Therefore be *in eye* of every exercise !”

Want of reflection, which is in fact inattention to the instruction of the past and a neglect of the

lessons which it teaches, is one of the most indubitable marks of a frivolous mind—a mind that will not become wise, however great its advantages or its acquaintance with life. In scripture such neglect is characterized as a sin, and is charged as one of the occasions of the punishment of the Jews—“Israel doth not know; my people do not consider.” “If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Inconsideration then constitutes the very centre and heart of that affectionate lamentation which our Saviour poured upon Jerusalem, as he looked upon it from the Mount of Olives, and foresaw how by rejecting and crucifying the Saviour, sent to redeem it from ruin, vengeance would be armed against its guilty people and fall upon them in utter desolation. Inconsiderateness was in the case of that doomed city the occasion of her destruction.

There is, therefore, not only an intrinsic but also a personal interest in the records of the past. It has those lessons to teach us, which we cannot well be wise and neglect—those instructions to give, which if we refuse, we shall be almost certain to regret. If God is in history, it must be important for all God's creatures, if they would understand the order of his providence, to acquaint themselves with it; for there they may observe the ways of God—how he blesses those that seek him, and destroys transgressors out of his sight;—proving

in his works what he has declared in his word, that "the willing and the obedient eat the fruit of the land, but those that refuse and rebel perish without remedy."

Barrow has expressed himself so justly and appropriately in regard to the use of History, that we adduce his language. "The perusal of history, how pleasant illumination of the mind, how useful direction of life, how sprightly incentives to virtue doth it afford! How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expense of others, informing us about the ways of action and the consequences thereof by examples, without our own danger or trouble! How may it instruct and encourage us in piety, while therein we trace the paths of God in men, or observe the methods of Divine Providence, how the Lord and Judge of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he crosseth, defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth iniquity and outrage; managing things with admirable temper of wisdom, to the good of mankind, and the advancement of his own glory." If there are such lessons to be taught us in history, and such benefits to be derived from it, we cannot well be wise, guide ourselves properly, or secure all the advantages of our position without making the study of it a part of the serious business of our life.

And what is history but an aggregation of individual life and experience?—a record of that special

care which is extended by our Heavenly Father to each of his little ones? It is in fact individuality in its social combinations. The men of a nation, each one gazing upon his *own portrait*, in the picture which it presents to view—the good and evil of each separate life seen in the common record of the whole. It is a summing up of innumerable items, to enable us to conceive more impressively the gross amount. And as God is the same yesterday to-day and forever, there must be a certain degree of uniformity in his providence and ways. What “has been is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun.” The future is foreshadowed in the past. If we are anxious to know what will be, we may read the record written in broad characters upon the scroll of time. Hence there is an important individual applicability in the recommendation of Bildad, the friend of Job, as it stands in our text—“Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?”

We intend on the present occasion to make a special, and to some extent, a personal application of these words, and shall not therefore spend any more time in illustrating their general import or in enforcing their importance. This is a Sabbath of peculiar interest—to me not only, but to you. It ought to have a voice and a power by which to speak to our hearts, so that they shall not need to

be spoken to again. The thoughts of the past which it recalls and the emotions of the past which it prompts are almost overwhelming. It completes fifteen years of labor and care as the Pastor of this Church; and when I think of it—all the weight of responsibility involved in all those years,—the idea so burdens my spirit that I exclaim “who is sufficient for these things?” and tremble to realize that it must all be brought into account at the judgment. May God be merciful to us for the sake of Jesus Christ! I can see no other hope, and have confidence in no other name. Grace affords the only possible refuge.

When Joshua had brought the *Tribes* over Jordan, and they actually stood within the precincts of their land of rest, he took twelve stones out the river and pitched them in Gilgal, the place where the Tribes first rested, as a pillar of memorial—“*a heap of witnesses*”—and spake unto the children of Israel saying, “when your children shall ask saying, what mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land; for the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, that all the people might know the hand of the Lord, that he is mighty, that ye might fear the Lord your God forever.”

Such a memorial of the past we mean to erect this morning, not in a pillar of stones—“*a heap of witnesses*”—but by recalling names and awaking

memories once fresh in your minds, and thus marking upon the tablets of your hearts as deeply as affection and sentiment will enable us to do, the track of years. They have been more or less eventful to every one of us, and their passage has left traces upon our feelings, which all the *friction* of the future, however *wearing* it may be, will not obliterate. They have brought to us many lessons which are destined to become "*fixed things*" in eternity, constituting the matter of our joy and sorrow, our weal and wo, throughout the interminable revolution of *all its ages*. Fifteen years, according to Political Economists, is half a generation; and we may therefore consider ourselves to-day as standing amid the graves of *half of those* who commenced this period of time with us, and whom we have seen passing away under our own eyes. Here is indeed a great "heap of witnesses" of what the Lord has been doing by the instrumentality of "the king of terrors." In our cemetery there are more than "twelve stones," the witnesses of "death's doings"—the frail memorials of crushed hearts—efforts made by affection to make the dead live in the memories of the living. We must speak of some of them, and recall their image to your thoughts. Their names have indeed (some of them at least) long since ceased to be heard in our streets; but we may repeat them in this sanctuary, and we shall do it, but not without reverence. Many of them were "*Fathers and Mothers in Israel,*" and the memory of

their holy life and the testimony of their faith, belongs to the church for her encouragement and edification. They were "pillars in the house of God"—let piety and affection crown them with flowers and perfume them with incense, an offering of gratitude appropriated to them where they stood, and where they still stand, "distinct in memory's eye," as prominent helpers and benefactors of the church. The first Sabbath of these fifteen years is renewed to-day to my consciousness; and I see it all, almost as distinctly as I saw it then. Two days before I had stood beside my mother's open grave, and saw it shroud her venerated form forever from mortal eyes; and when its morning dawned, instead of the cheerful vibration of the church-going bell, there was a sound of death. We met for the first time, not in the courts of Zion, but in a house of mourning; and my first exhortation to you was, "Prepare to meet your God." Death had thus met me on the threshold with his sable pall, and he strode on before me like a giant, dealing his fatal blows in rapid succession, until Veghte, Frelinghuysen, Van Doren, Talmage and Howell—all men of consecrated hearts, eminent for piety and influence, were no more—all gone before two years had elapsed. I stood appalled amid their graves, and anxiously inquired "what hath not the Lord done?" Hath he indeed forgotten to be gracious? Will he draw out his anger to all generations? I remembered that it has been said, that just before the Bab-

ylonish captivity the pious, and especially the aged in Israel, died in rapid succession. It is mentioned as a well known historical fact in illustration of the language of Isaiah, "the righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away; none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." To the mind of the Prophet the circumstance seemed so notorious, and the effect of the loss of their example and influence so disastrous to religion, that he says—"run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth." It seemed as if the godly had all ceased, as if all the merciful men were taken away, and that the nation was ready for the execution of delaying vengeance. "Go ye up and down her walls and destroy; take away her battlements, for they are the Lord's," was the commission to the avengers, and the effect of it which followed—"abroad the sword devoureth; at home there is death."

So in our circumstances, such a succession of bereavements excited many fears that heaven had in store for us some approaching judgment. There was more than one mind sympathising with these feelings, and waiting with anxious solicitude for the leadings of Providence. It seemed indeed as if some sore calamity was certainly impending over us. But in the result all our fears were disappoint-

ed; the clouds in due time passed away, and mercy was revealed instead of judgment.

When I recall that first Sabbath, and look around me for those who sat here in the house of God, I am reminded of the absence of many besides those already named—Vroom and Davis and Tunison; Van Arsdalen, the Bryants, Van Arsdalen; Taylor, Dumont, Hardcastle, Van Neste, Quick, Black and Herriot are all gone—they have ceased from their labors, and been promoted from a seat in these courts below, to a place among the company of the redeemed who serve God in their white robes in the temple of glory. So faith judges, so hope whispers, and so imagination paints them to our view; while affection stands weeping beside their graves, and rears up her frail monuments inscribing upon them "*these all died in faith.*" How privileged!—how honored in their resting place, reposing as they all do on that magnificent couch—

“ With patriarchs of the ancient world, with kings,  
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,  
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre ! The hills  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun ; the vales,  
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;  
The venerable woods ; rivers that move  
In majesty ; and the complaining brooks,  
That make the meadows green :  
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man ! The golden sun,  
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven

Are shining on the sad abodes of death  
 Through the still lapse of ages!—All that tread  
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
 That slumber in its bosom!”—

And what is more comforting for us to know, for it may teach us how to die like them, they all “*had hope in their death!*” They passed through “the swellings of Jordan”

“Sustained and soothed”

“By an unflinching trust! They neared the grave”

“Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch”

“About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

Nor must we omit to call to mind among that congregation, “those mothers in Israel” whose piety consecrated the memories of the domestic fireside and hallowed all its associations, by breathing from thence towards heaven a perpetual stream of incense, which warmed the fervor of christian love and drew down blessings upon the Church. Many of them were largely her benefactors, and we should be not only delinquent in duty but, ungrateful, did we not cherish the recollection of their piety and engrave their names upon her records. I see before me, in imagination, the Mrs. Talmage, Veghte, Whitenack, Wortman, Stryker, Davis, Porter, Brokaw, Vroom, Van Derveer, Gaston, Van Arsdalen, Veghte, Taylor, Rockafeller, Miller, Tunison, Polhemus, Staats, Van Neste, Beekman, Van Derveer, Black, Jobs, Cooper, Castner, Durling, Dumont, Brokaw, Quick, Tunison, Hedges! “*And these too all died in faith:*” and their precious dust

was in succession gathered to its mother, in whose faithful embrace every particle of it will be preserved as seed, from which will spring up in the morning of the resurrection so many glorified spiritual bodies to inhabit Paradise. They walked with God, serving him in their day and generation, and they are not, for God took them, and their end was peace. They spent their last Sabbath of privilege here in the worship of the sanctuary—sat with us the last time at the Supper of the Lord, attesting their hope in Christ as a Redeemer—and then, as if weary of sin and panting for that heaven, which they kept so near in view and longed so much to reach, broke away from all the ties which bound them to earth, and soared up on high to join the company of the white-robed saints in glory. There the eye of faith has often contemplated them singing in the choir of the church above, and longed to be with them, exclaiming,—

“ happy songsters !”

“ When shall I your chorus join.”

Besides these, there were others who were not in the communion of the church, who gave their bodies to the dust, and entered the eternal state, as Campbell, Gore, Sergeant, Tunison, Torbert, Quick, Van Middlesworth, Beekman, Dolliver, and the Mrs. Tunison, Vroom and Fisher—and others still, sojourning with us for a season as Perrine and son, Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Rockafeller. The whole number of deaths among the members of the church

has been sixty-six. Sad memorial of the power of the destroyer! But we have not yet called to mind all the trophies of the king of terrors, nor recorded the names of all who were once here, but are now in eternity. The young have died likewise—William and Martha Bryan, John and Edward Griffith, Elizabeth and Daniel Polhemus, Harriet Toms, and Elizabeth Rockefeller, young Voorhees and Gaston. I have laid my hand upon their fair white brows when they were as cold as marble, and seen them dressed out clean and beautiful, as if for a bridal, to be wedded in their early youth to the dust. All the fond love—all the passionate grief of parents and friends—all the bright hopes of future good—all the strength of their young life, could not restrain the inexorable archer, or shield them from his arrow! His bow was bent, and the fatal shaft, true to its aim, sped, and they lay prostrate in the dust. All that was left for friendship and sympathy, was, to shed its tears over their clay, and carry them to their rest among the cold sleepers of the cemetery. Monuments have perpetuated their names, but their voices are silent. Pale flowers have been planted around their graves, and watered with many tears, but the *flowers* will fade as they did, and drop their withered petals on their graves. We have often mused over these signs of affection, and felt the eloquence with which they spoke, when the leaves of summer touched by an early frost lay scattered thickly in the forest. The poet was interpreter to our thoughts,

“Thou lovely earth! Since kindred steps  
From thy green paths have fled,  
A dimness and a hush have fallen  
O'er all thy beauties spread!  
The silence of the absent soul  
Is on me and around!  
My heart hath echos but for thee  
Thou still small warning sound!  
The sky-lark sings not as he sang  
When they were by my side;  
And mournful tones are in the wind  
Unheard before they died!”

And yet there are more claiming a record in this sad memorial. Those “blossoms of being born and gone,” which the universal mother of all the living hath gathered back to her cold bosom—“the early lost” as nature regards them, but “the early saved” as the visions of our scripture faith teach us to esteem them, when in her holy records she points us to the Saviour's words, “Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, *for of such is the Kingdom of God.*” There are many, very many short graves in yonder cemetery, and I never look upon them but I think how loving and faithful the Saviour is to his people, in taking so many of their “little ones” to himself, and garnering them in heaven before sin could have power to pollute them, or the world ensnare their feet in its slippery paths. We ought to thank Him for every one which he claims and takes home. There are so many things to be dreaded, that the very tears which affection sheds when she enshrouds

them, ought to be accompanied with a consenting heart, and our loudest grief should be taught to say, "He hath done all things well." Our loss is their gain. There are so many shipwrecks on the ocean of human life, that it ought to be regarded more as a matter of congratulation than of regret, to see one of these frail vessels launched upon its surging waves, reaching early and safely the haven of eternal rest. "God has made every thing beautiful in its season." How is it that we *fail so much* to discern the "*beauty*" of his providence and love in gathering the buds and opening flowers of humanity into his own garner, before they have here had time to wither and the blight to touch them? It cannot be faith; it is only nature that impels these gushing tears. We must teach nature to chasten her strong yearnings by the power of faith's revealings, and become willing to thank God if we have children in heaven. We must learn to gaze upward and "stretch our sight," until we see them in their white robes among "the shining ones" in glory; and then, coming back to our cares and toils, think how much happier they are in having escaped them all. We must make our love to them a living power to elevate us above the influence of our nature and our sin, and strengthen us until we are victors in the conflict, and have permission to come away and join them where we shall part no more. It is a divine hope, indeed, to think of meeting our loved ones in glory. It seems to make heaven nearer and dearer

to us. We realize its existence as we could not do but from the fact that it is the home and resting place of those we love. They have not ceased to be, because God has taken them;—they are only veiled from our sight—death reached but the mortal part and brought the material form to the dust—the soul is with God. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk in the spring of its beauty, has been transplanted there in a place of endurance, and will expand in perfection and diffuse its fragrance eternally, to gladden and refresh that spirit which now weeps out an affection that has been sorely bruised. Oh that our faith could see this when we mourn the loss of departed ones! It would assist us to say

“ There, like a dew drop shrined  
 Within a chrystal stone,  
 Thou art safe in heaven, my dove!  
 Safe with the source of love,  
     The everlasting one.  
 And when the hour arrives  
 From flesh to set me free,  
 Thy spirit will await  
 The first at heaven's gate,  
     To meet and welcome me.”

II. There have also been many changes besides those resulting from death. Since the small beginnings of 1699, through a period of one hundred and forty-eight years, this church has not only experienced a variety of fortune and favor, but as the effect of all, by the blessing of God, it has waxed strong and become numerous. In thinking of those

days in comparison with the present, we may appropriate the words of Jacob, "with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." It was natural that the propriety of a division should, at the time it was made, be strongly doubted even by the wisest. The end of it could not be foreseen—its effect upon time-honored associations was feared: and perhaps we lacked faith in the promise of God, which is as true of the church as it is of an individual—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The parting hour was therefore an hour of sorrow. We felt that we had reason to be sad. But at the present time doubt is at an end, and even fear is removed. There is no one who does not consider it a blessing, and is not prepared heartily to pray "send now, O Lord, prosperity, I beseech thee." The interests of religion generally, and of our own denomination especially, have been materially strengthened in this community as the effect of it. Our neighbors have been blessed abundantly, and from a mere handful grown up to be a respectable church; while at the same time our own numbers have gone on increasing in a progressive ratio, equal at least to what it was before, perhaps greater. So confident do both these "bands" now feel in their strength, that they have recently united in the erection of a commodious and beautiful house of worship, which they intend to make the nucleus of a "Third Church:" and our prospects will need to be very suddenly beclouded, if

such an organization is not actually effected before another year elapses. Fifteen years since, when my ministry commenced here, the communion of the church consisted of three hundred and forty-seven members: at the present time there are the names of four hundred and seven recorded on our books. During this time there have been received in all three hundred and fifty-one. If there had been no deaths or removals, our communion would at the present time have been six hundred and ninety-eight; but on account of them, the actual increase has only been sixty. What a change this fact makes necessary! It is almost equal to an entire renewal of the whole congregation, in the space of fifteen years. The difference, however, is not in fact so much; for on looking around me I recognize here to-day many familiar faces—familiar during the whole time that I have ministered where I now do. They have been here constantly when the Tribes went up even the Tribes of the Lord to worship in his sanctuary. Many of those who came to us have remained but a little while; but the great body of the church has been permanent, and the larger number of changes has been confined to the *fluctuating* and the *transient*. Except where death has come in to perform his work, few have left us.

Fifteen years of Sabbaths! Seven hundred and eighty days in which we have sat together in God's holy house and heard his Gospel! It is a long time. It embraces a vast amount of privilege. You have

probably heard in that time fifteen hundred and sixty sermons. It has brought you acquainted with a vast amount of instruction, and it involves deep responsibilities. So much opportunity of learning Christ ought to have enriched your minds with a wide range of Gospel truth and a rich experience of its power and sanctification. Paul speaks of Andronicus and Junia as being of note among the Christians at Rome, because "they were in Christ before him;" as if their age and experience gave them a special claim to attention and consideration. And ought it not to do so? Is it not a special privilege to have been in Christ early? to have been long in his school? Yes, indeed—age is a blessing. A long life is a privilege, especially when its years have been spent in the acquisition of knowledge and in the service of God. It has a richness in experience, a maturity of understanding, a sobriety of judgment, a settled conviction of truth, and a wisdom in discerning what is real from what is mere semblance—the effect of transient feelings and not of spiritual influence and grace, which renders it always safe to walk by its counsels when difficulties oppose or dangers are imminent. It may not display the fervor of youth nor manifest the ardor of its untried affections—it may sometimes be even too cautious and sluggish—but then it will have the advantage of having fewer mistakes to correct and less frequent occasion to repent and turn back. That however which constitutes its highest good is the opportunity

which it affords of doing so much for religion—bearing so much fruit for Christ and promoting the interests of righteousness so long—“laying up,” in the words of the Saviour, “a treasure in heaven with the mammon of unrighteousness.” With such an end in view a christian may well rejoice in a long life.

But when avarice, the vice of old age, is allowed to grow and canker in the heart, and the veteran of years lives only to hoard his treasures—when no heavenly light shines upon its declining course and no religious topics sanctify the end of its days, the sight of it saddens and distresses us. We cannot hide from ourselves the conviction that the rust of that unemployed gold, accumulating year by year, will be a terrible witness against those white locks as an unprofitable steward, and we confess it would have been a blessing not to have lived so long.

Among us there are but a few of the old disciples remaining, and this makes that small number who have been our friends from the beginning more endeared. We cannot therefore refrain from uttering one specific petition for them—may they live long to adorn the religion they profess, and then when all their work is done sleep peacefully in the bosom of that Saviour whom they have loved and served. Our sentiment for them to-day is—a long life of piety and a sweet rest in glory—may they enjoy both!

In noticing the changes of fifteen years what is

most admonitory and impressive—is that death has been more busy among the aged than the young. This is not ordinary. The spoiler generally delights in “a shining mark.” His most numerous victims are the beautiful and the young. His mansions are filled with lovely forms, and his favorite work is to destroy bright hopes. But such has not been his course among us; the hoary head, and the form bending under a weight of years have more frequently been taken to rest, than “the strong staff has been broken and the beautiful rod.” So great has the mortality among the aged been, that only a few of the old Patriarchs, once the strength of the church, remain. This has subjected us to a sore trial. We feel their loss deeply—their influence touched the cause of truth and righteousness in this community in many important points: and what is still more to be lamented is, that in some instances they have left no representatives on whom their mantle could fall. The promise leads us to hope that “in the place of the fathers there shall be their children,” but in these cases the promise yet seems to fail. May God work it out in his own time and way, for he is able to do it, even though it should be necessary out of “the stones to raise up children unto Abraham!”

In this way the wealth which once was ours, now seeks other channels, and the influence which aided us is neutralized or turned against us. We however do not mean this as a complaint. With all our

losses we are strong—increasing in strength in many ways. What we need most is a higher tone, a wider range of piety—and a greater abounding of our liberality. Deadness to the world and an earnest anxiety to do something for the glory of God would be a perfect remedy for all that we regret. With a mind to work we should find it easy to meet every requisition which the church imposes. The want of it has made us groan, when we ought to have been singing songs of thanksgiving and joy.

III. But all has not been change. Amid all that we have mourned as we have seen it passing away, there is one thing over the permanency of which we could drop a tear—a bitter tear. It is the fixed, the unchanging, the unyielding impenitence of some of our people. We cannot conceal it from ourselves that there are some yet out of Christ, who were here fifteen years ago, and were then impenitent. They were halting between two opinions then, and they are yet in the same position—they were almost christians then, and they are only almost christians now. Then they were waiting for better evidence, and now they are waiting for better evidence—and how much longer will they wait? Fifteen years of Sabbaths, and strivings of the spirit, and admonitions of Providence—is it not enough? How wonderful that heaven should be so patient! Where is there another friend that would consent to stand so long and solicit a place in our hearts? What love, other than the everlasting and the un-

speakable love of Jesus Christ, is so enduring—so inexhaustible, long-suffering and unabating! The best friend would have forsaken us, and in despair for so much hardness, given us over to ruin; but the faithful, loving spirit comes again and again; the tender, compassionate Redeemer renews his solicitations year after year,—unwilling that any sinner, even though he be an hundred years old, should perish while he stands on “mercy’s ground,” and death and a fixed eternity have not made his state irreversible! It is wonderful to think of it! It gives us a most solemn view of the obstinate infatuation of impenitence—a living picture of the Apostle’s words, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” It is a mournful proof of the Prophet’s words, “The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it.” What must the moral state of such individuals be? To what can we compare their hearts? Are they not akin to those eternal icebergs which surround the “pole”—congealed at the beginning of creation when God first spake the earth into being, and never giving forth a drop since; but remaining always sharp and hard and fixed in their forbidding impenetrability; and destined to remain so, until the coming eternity shall have passed? Or like those seas of ice on the Alpine heights, glittering in the beams of the sun and

in perfect defiance of their power, sending back his rays from their adamantine surface, ever since the day when the power of Omnipotence upheaved them from the solid crust of the earth and fixed them on their everlasting foundations—emblems of hardened impenitence? It is a sad state to be in—the thought of it is enough to move any mind to tears! Fifteen years of impenetrable obduracy to all the invitations of the Gospel, all the solicitations of God's most gracious spirit, all the warnings of Providence, and all the admonitions of the dying! Oh it is too much to think of! Has heaven done so much for us in vain? Have we lived so long and only lived to heap up wrath and indignation against the revelation of God's righteous judgment? Lived so long only to make our death-bed more cheerless, and our eternity a more intolerable depth of wo!

To return again to our text—is there nothing in the former age—in the experience of the fathers, that may teach you? Is their experience of no advantage to guide you? Is your own without instruction? What profit have you had from all the worldly things which you have pursued? Have they compensated you for that neglect of your souls which they have induced? Is a life of irreligion in fact an advantage? We are willing to leave the question with your own judgment and conscience. Does it bring you an increase of happiness? Does it enable you to drink from the cup of

life a sweeter draught? Does it make your social joys more exhilarating and your sorrows less oppressive? What is your answer? If you are silent and ashamed to speak: or if you have not marked any definite results of experience, we can answer for you. It has done none of these things; and you ought to have known before you adopted such a course that it could not do any of these things. But should you unfortunately doubt and be disposed to try it farther: or should you be in search of information, we commend to you the recommendation in our text, "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?" "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? While it is yet in its greenness and not cut down it withereth before any other herb; so are the paths of all that forget God! And the hypocrite's hope shall perish! His hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a spider's web; and the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to naught! Have ye not asked them which go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath: and the sinner even though he be an hundred years old shall be accursed."

Is this the testimony of experience? Does the voice of the past age and of the fathers speak in this

wise? Then you are condemned as one that is living unwisely and running in the face of evil. It is in fact one of the most singular phenomena of human reason that impenitent men should read these denunciations in the Bible, acknowledge them to be from God and to be expressions of his determinations in regard to sin, and yet live on in their rebellion. It amounts to this—that reasonable beings are capable of acting very unreasonably, even where the most important interests are at stake; and if any thing can do so—proves most conclusively that the difficulty with the impenitent man is not in his reason but in his heart: and if you mean to change him it is to be done, not by argument, but moral influence. It is not because there is any want of evidence in religion but because they are opposed to it, and therefore unwilling to be convinced by evidence or to listen to the voice of reason, that most men continue in sin. This is the testimony of scripture, “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” and will not of itself come to God. This is the best explanation ever given of impenitence—the only one that reaches all the facts of the case. But do you not perceive that this only makes your condition more hopeless? Such a heart cannot be happy without God, and it is unfitted for enjoyment with him. It is therefore morally disqualified for heaven. Holy enjoyments in its sensual state are a contradiction—the supposition that it can feel them is an

absurdity;—it must be changed—conversion or destruction is the only alternative. And so we conclude fifteen years of expostulation with you, and begin another. When will your hearts be able to realize its privileges or turn cordially to its duties?

*Application.*—It would seem as if one end at least of the various changes of human life, was to instruct men. Attention to them will teach us wisdom. They are a mirror in which we may see the image of the future; and if we arrive at a proper understanding of their character, it will tend to prepare us to meet what is to come, if it does not enable us to avoid all the evils it brings with it. Surprisals find us unguarded. An unexperienced evil is greater on that account. Even death becomes familiar by seeing it often. How much instruction as to the transitory nature of all earthly things the changes of the past bring! We have loved, but where are the loved ones now? We have toiled for treasures and built garners for our hopes, but they have all faded like a frost-bitten flower. Some of you stand alone who once had companions to assist you in bearing your burdens and share with you the sufferings of your mortal state;—others have carried their children to the narrow house appointed for all the living;—all feel that the passage of years has wasted many things which they regarded as jewels of the heart! Learn then not to set your affections on things upon the earth, but to lay your treasure up with God. “They build too

low, who build on aught beneath the skies." Heaven alone is pure, unchanging and never fades away!

It would seem as if the past was intended to encourage us. In the midst of all the changes, losses and disappointments which it brings, there are things that remain unchanged and cannot be lost. God is our father still. In Christ we have an undiminished portion of peace, enjoyment and hope. Heaven yet invites us and waits with wide expanded doors to receive us into its mansions of rest. With God, and Christ, and heaven, have we not enough? Let us thank God then and take courage.

It would seem as if the past also admonished us. Is it gone? Has it been wasted? Does the thought of it bring regrets? Let the time past of our lives suffice us to have wrought the will of the flesh; henceforth let us live soberly, and righteously, and godly. Unprofitableness ought to induce repentance, and repentance wisdom, zeal and diligence. The time is short—the work is great—we have no more days that we can afford to lose. Another may be the last; and to lose it may be to incur the loss of all things. May God make us wise and grace successful in working out our salvation while it is called to-day.



## SERMON IV.

## AN IMPROVEMENT OF THE PAST.

I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.  
—PSALMS LXXVII: 10.

THE Psalmist is recording a struggle which he had in his mind with unbelief. He sought the Lord in his trouble; his sore ran in the night and ceased not; his soul refused to be comforted. All around him was gloom and discouragement; but when he communed with his own heart he found strength and hope. He advanced in his inquiries—he made diligent search and said, “will the Lord cast off forever? Will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?” No, this is “an infirmity;” to believe so is sin. It is in fact a denial of all God’s care and kindness as they are shown in his Providence; because the obvious and necessary inference from the past is, that he is “long suffering and abundant in mercy;

forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." It is, therefore, instructive and important to "remember the years of the right hand of the most High."

God's "right hand" is the emblem of his power—"the years of his right hand" are therefore those years in which any event of Providence displaying God's power has occurred; and "remembering" them, is not only impressing their recollection on the mind, but making a memorial of them for the purpose of instruction and encouragement; and our text is a scriptural warrant and example for us to do so. Perhaps we ought to do it more frequently than we have been accustomed.

To-day it is twenty years since I assumed the responsible charge of the Pastorate in this congregation, and it has seemed to me to be necessary to make a memorial of it—to erect an ebenezer here, and remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

The text suggests our method. We shall group together some of the occurrences of this period with a view to our encouragement and improvement in faith and piety.

Twenty years is almost one-third of the period allotted to man. It is a "score," and he has but "three score and ten." When they are numbered his strength is gone, his sight dimmed, his head bowed and blanched, and his tottering steps admonish him of the grave. One-third of a life is no small thing to give to any cause or any object. To

have given it, supposes an obligation as the effect of its devotion of no small magnitude. I came here in comparative youth and inexperience. I had indeed but little, besides an honest purpose to be useful, and some fortitude and courage in following the opening path, to bring here and devote to you, as a return for the confidence which you expressed in calling me. I came however "as soon as I was sent for," and at the close of a score of years, can only adopt the language of an apostle and say, "I have been with you in weakness and fear, and much trembling, and my speech and my preaching has not been with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." If any thing has been effected, the glory is the Lord's. His spirit has given strength to weakness, made the foolish wise, and pulled down the strong-holds of the enemy in the heart. Without feigning humility we own his hand in all, and render praise to his name. His goodness has been far greater than our deserts, and his mercies have exceeded in number the most sanguine expectations we have ever felt it right to cherish.

Twenty years! Will you go back with me in memory to that Sabbath morning—some of you can do it; and let us first mark the things as they were, and then the changes that have been induced. You remember the old walls and seats—they were narrower than they are now—they were plainer—they were less comfortable—they were not worthy

of you as a people—they did not indicate either your respect for God, or your zeal in his service; and they were soon made to give place to others. You remember how we praised them for the good they had done, and then bade them farewell with tears, as we would have done "old friends." They had been witnesses of many solemn hours, and were copiously baptized with the Holy Spirit. God has never wrought for himself and for your souls in this house, as he did in that. Three-hundred and sixty-eight as the fruit of one outpouring of the spirit! It was like Pentecost. And some of you are yet here who enjoyed it, to weep over it, rejoice in it, and pray to have it repeated. May God in his mercy hear those prayers.

Ah! the recollection of that morning comes up in my memory as fresh as if it were only yesterday. I can recall distinctly many faces whom I shall see no more—the warm pressure of many hands, and some tears—(were they of joy?) which fell there. I recollect the text and the sermon; and I remember a pledge which I gave you. I have sometimes *almost* thought the time would come for me to redeem it, but not quite. It was something like this, "If the time ever comes that I shall cease to have the prayers and co-operation of christians here, that day will be the last to see me in this pulpit." I hold it good yet to-day; and will be as ready to redeem it at any future time, as I have been always in the past. I will not for a slight cause break the

ties which bind us; but I would not remain a day, if I thought that I had lost your regard and your prayers; if there was even a respectable minority cherishing such feelings.

But when I bring that first Sabbath in connection with to-day, and mark the changes, it almost appals me. Among the dead since, I reckon some of the best, the kindest, the truest friends I have ever had, or ever expect to have in this world. Some of them were great men in their day, and they stood in this sanctuary like pillars with wreathed capitals for ornament and for strength. They were "good men and full of the Holy Ghost;" or they were "mothers in Israel" like Jael, Deborah and Abigail. Women who knew how to pray, and who knew how to act. They had hearts and hands both. We might recite their names, but they do not need any eulogium. Their memorial is in heaven, and there they are reaping their reward. Happy if we can make sure of the same rest, by imitating their patience and their faith. Let us strive as they did to enter in at the strait gate.

On that morning there was but one place in which to worship God in this village, and even within miles of it. Then the whole strength of christian influence and example centered in one point; and from this pulpit went forth the only warning to a sin-enthralled world. How they have multiplied! How various too the denominations, where all were one! In the midst of the present variety, it is at

least to be hoped that all may be pleased and profited. May it appear in the end that in the diversity of gifts there is one spirit. May that spirit be Christ's; and may the work of Christ's grace be promoted.

There is but one "church redeemed with blood," and but one "company of the saints around the throne;" but some do not seem to think so—and seem to hope in a change of forms and creeds to find an easier way to heaven. What chance of success they have it is easy to determine.

The whole number of professing christians in this church at the time of my settlement (and it was the whole number in the community) was about three hundred and fifty. It is now about nine hundred. This one fact is sufficient to show what an extension of *visible* christianity at least, there has been as the effect of the means of grace; and proves conclusively the necessity of *more churches*, if not of so many *denominational divisions*. The strength of no one man could have proved adequate to the labor connected with their instruction and edification; and every christian will rejoice that they have found in other communions what they could not have enjoyed so fully in ours, and will pray that they may be "built up in faith and good works," and "sanctified for heaven."

To the original number of three hundred and fifty, there has been added since, four hundred and thirty-five—of which two hundred and fifty-three

have made a confession of faith, and one hundred and eighty-two have been received on certificate. The largest number added at any one communion is forty-one—in the autumn of 1837—and during the whole period there has been but one communion season when none were received on confession—and on that occasion two were added by certificate. There has been only a single communion season when but one came forward to testify of the grace of God in its regenerating power. The highest number received in a single year is sixty-three, and the smallest is *four*; which occurred in 1834 when the congregation was divided by the organization of the second church; and during which year, in consequence of being without a convenient place of worship, confined to the old lecture room, there was but one communion season observed by the church.

Of the three hundred and fifty in the communion of the church at the time of my settlement, there are now only about fifty remaining in actual attendance on the spiritual ordinances. All the others have either departed this life, or removed to other places. Such has been the effect of the lapse of time, and so rapid the changes which it has produced. Can you wonder that I feel this morning almost as if I were standing in the midst of another generation and ministering to another people? The circumstance originates mingled emotions in my bosom. It brings to my heart the memory of past

joys, sweet and pleasant to the soul. With many who are gone I had formed pleasant associations, and often walked with them to the house of God. With others friendships were only commenced, destined to endure but for a little while and then pass away like those gleams of sunshine which break from a clouded sky. The recollection of the pleasure is saddened by regret for the lost. I see in it a picture of human life, with its transitory joys, its fading hopes, its failing promises. It is at best but a journey in which we become acquainted with various passengers, and then at its different stages part with them again, each one to pursue his own course and seek after his own interests. It is a troubled sea, navigated with a frail vessel, from which one and another is continually falling, to disappear forever beneath the foaming waves. We inquire for them, but the answer is, they are gone. Gone! Ah where? Gone many of them to a long eternity. They shall not return to us, but we must go to them. Oh! if we can only meet them on the happy shores of immortality. *There*, there will be no partings nor farewells, but associations such as spirits form with spirits, and enjoyments such as flow from that higher life the full glory [of which they taste!

But all is not *sadness*, that this memory of the past, as it mingles itself with the present, produces. In place of the *Fathers* here are the children. Individuals and families have happily perpetuated

themselves, in many instances, in the communion and support of the church; and the *sad* remembrance of the departed mingles itself with the *joyful* recognition of those who remain. Ties in many instances have been severed with the one, only to be re-formed more pleasantly and hopefully with the others. It has in this way been our privilege to see the covenant of God faithfully perpetuated and its blessings descending from father to sons, and from mothers to daughters, to become a witness to the truth of the promise, "to you, and to your children, and to them that are afar off—even as many as the Lord our God shall call;" and many a dying patriarch has been comforted concerning the church and the altars of his God, by the reflection that the place which he left vacant in his holy house would be filled after his departure by one brought up upon his knees, and his falling mantle, like Elijah's, come upon the shoulders of some Elisha to carry on and complete the work which he commenced. Nor is the fact without its interest in this point of view—that notwithstanding all the changes, there are so many of the *fast* and *tried* friends of the church who have perpetuated themselves in its communion in their children. It ought to be so. The place where our fathers worshipped is rendered more sacred to us by that association. Is it not pleasant to think, and does it not add to the impressiveness of our worship, that these very walls which witnessed their joy and heard their prayers, witness

ours? Does it not make the scene more holy to us to reflect that at this very communion table they also, who are now in heaven, sat down and were fed with living bread? Can we ever consent to wander from these sacred ways where they found so much peace, and were so effectually sanctified for the enjoyment of everlasting bliss?

The whole number reported as having been dismissed in good standing, and at their own request to become connected with other churches, is one hundred and sixty-two. Of this number fifty-six went into the second church, either at the time of its organization or immediately afterwards; and at least thirty more have been separated from us for the purpose of effecting the organization of the different churches built up around us. The whole number is not large; and the interest in these statistics is in the fact, that they so clearly demonstrate a warm feeling of attachment on the part of our members to their own communion. It is not a small thing that detaches from us any one who has once thrown in his lot here. The members of this church have not been given to change. The majority of them at least, certainly, have never been troubled with itching ears. The force of circumstances alone has taken those from us who have come to ask for dismissions. There is hardly an instance where dissatisfaction with the church or the pastor has been the moving cause of a separation. May it always be so. Such bonds ought not

to be easily or rudely sundered. Passion certainly should never furnish the motive; and it is no commendation to any christian to have been given to change, or to have belonged to many churches. He is seldom benefitted by it; and more seldom still better satisfied after the changes have been made.

In twenty years only sixty-three communicants are reported as having died. This number is unquestionably lower than the reality, but there are no means of correcting it, and we are therefore obliged to take it. It is to be accounted for in two ways. The deaths have not always been all reported, and some have died elsewhere but not called for their dismissal previously, so that we have had no means of ascertaining it until it was forgotten. In this way it becomes necessary every few years to correct the lists of communicants in order to preserve accuracy in numbers.

The number however is sufficient to originate many solemn reflections. In some instances whole families are gone—in others there are one or two left—while in others still, the “strong staff was broken and the beautiful rod”—and yet in others, “the desire of eyes” has been “taken away with a stroke.” The place of the dead has had to be enlarged, from the multitudes crowding into it. In all these scenes, so mournful and moving, I have shared a part. Into these habitations, filled with lamentation and wo, carried the consolations of Christ's blessed Gospel, the balm of wounded hearts.

Some of the scenes can never be effaced from my memory. They will live in vivid impressions among its records of the past, as long as consciousness remains. I count them jewels of the heart, and hope to derive from them a chastening power and a sanctifying influence ever while I live. I would not forget them if I could. I should regard the wish to do so as traitorous to myself, and a dereliction of a most sacred duty. But notwithstanding all our losses and all the changes going on around us, we have been able to preserve and gradually to increase our strength—at least in numbers. The communion has at times exceeded four hundred; but this year it falls a little short of it. One thing ought to be remarked as an encouragement; no more church organizations seem to be called for; and the increase of population will therefore in a very short time, even with an ordinary blessing, restore all our wastes and close up all our breaches. Only the Fathers who are gone cannot return to us; and yet God who has power to raise up children unto Abraham out of the stones, may give us those who will be mightier in prayer and faith and good works than they were, to fill their places. It is a pleasing hope that it will be so; let us indulge it.

From this view of the changes we pass naturally to the labors of the past twenty years. In speaking of them I feel it necessary to estimate them as Paul did his at Corinth, as being performed "in weak-

ness and in much fear;" and to avow that I am sensible of very many imperfections—probably more than any of you have ever observed. In preaching I have not studied to please men, but to speak "in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." No one can form a lower estimate of the quality of my services than I do; and a review of them gives occasion at least for *humiliation* if not for self-reproach. All I can say is this—I have done what I could—I have not sought yours but you—I have endeavored more to edify and instruct than to secure applause—I have not kept back the counsel of God, but by alarming the sinner and attracting the self-righteous, sought to draw them to Christ and humble them at the foot of the cross. If some have occasionally felt that I was too earnest, and searching, and exclusive in preaching a salvation *only through grace* and not by works, my answer is, that it is "so that I have learned Christ." I know of no other trust or foundation to rest upon "than Christ in you the hope of glory;" and knowing of no other, I cannot preach any other to the lost and ruined. For me to do so, would be to invent another Gospel: and this I would not do to gain the undivided applause of the whole world. I have yet to learn how the cross can be preached and the offense of it avoided. I do not wonder therefore that some have been found who could not endure such a course, and have

sought relief either by absence, or by adopting other denominational distinctions and another theology; or else forming other connections in the hope of being better pleased. For their satisfaction I now say, that it was always my aim to push them to such extremities, as to force them to become christians or to do something else. I know of no condition more pregnant with evil, than the state of a self-satisfied ungodly man, and I have therefore labored to make all such men entirely dissatisfied with themselves. My study has been to knock from under them in succession every prop they were leaning upon. I know of no gospel which will make an unrenewed man satisfied with himself, and I have never preached with such an aim—those who do are welcome to their success. I might have daubed with untempered mortar, and been lauded to the skies. I could not purchase their smiles or their support at the price demanded for them, and experience therefore no disappointment in the result. May they be happier and holier where they are. In a very few instances we might say, “I marvel that ye are so *soon* removed from him that called you in the Gospel.”

In twenty years I have preached not far from two thousand sermons to my people; one-half of which have been written every word with this right hand. I say nothing of the toil and thought which have been required to perform such an amount of labor, because it has been a pleasure to me. I have loved

this kind of employment, and been cheerful and happy under it. My estimate of what is the duty of a minister of Christ's word has been such as to make this course necessary. I could have preached with far less study—perhaps with equal, if not greater acceptance, by preaching without the labor of composing; but I have never dared to utter crude thoughts and "words without knowledge," or to bring husks to those who were hungering for the bread of life. At the conclusion of such a protracted course, I am ready to avow my convictions of its being the best; and therefore if it was again to be undertaken, I would not change my practice, at least in this respect.

Besides sermons, I have preached some five hundred weekly lectures. In these I have studied freedom from logical order and restraint—endeavoring to bring in as wide a range of subjects and remark as was consistent with attention to the mind of Christ. The substance of many of these has been repeated more than once; but the words, rising to my mind as the occasion and circumstances prompted, could never be recalled. In this way, even though the text were the same, it has often happened that almost an entirely new discourse has been called forth. Indeed in all cases the natural variation prevented sameness.

I have kept no account of the number of funeral sermons and catechetical lectures, and therefore cannot estimate them except in general terms.

They must however have amounted to five hundred or more. So that during the course of my ministry among you, I have at least on three thousand different occasions, commended the Lord Jesus Christ to your regard and urged you to accept of his mercy.

There have been in all this time five hundred and sixty four children admitted to the ordinance of baptism—and thirty-three adults on confession of their faith—making in all five hundred and ninety-seven baptisms. There have also been two hundred and twelve marriages, at which we have been present and officiated in confirming the sacred union. In these various services joy and sorrow have often been brought in close proximity; and I have been called even from the grave of my father, to the festive circle to mingle in the joy of the marriage supper. Human life is in many respects a strange scene, verging rapidly from one extreme to another; but how much stranger is the life of a minister of the Gospel! He is often called from the house of mourning to the house of feasting. He sees life in all its various phases, from high to low—from the grave and solemn and serene, to the extremes of joy and sorrow. He is present with all as a friend, a counsellor, a helper; and seems to be equally necessary to each one. To enable him to meet all the calls thus made upon him, he needs an iron frame and untiring perseverance;—nerves capable of enduring the pressure of the most various cir-

cumstances—the purity and love of an angel mingled with the prudence of the most perfect wisdom—and yet all these high qualities and gifts would not suffice to save him from becoming the occasion of offense to some, falling under the reproach of others, and doing acts of kindness to many, from whom he receives no acknowledgment or gratitude. It is not a soft pillow upon which a minister lays his head, and if he makes his calculations of finding ease and pleasure, there is *no one man* more certain of being disappointed.

Nor have the vicissitudes, of which we have been speaking, all been witnessed in your habitations. In my own too, joy and sorrow have been interchanging guests. Sickness once laid its sore hand upon me; and twice has death come knocking at my door! My beautiful, my angel child, sleeps where so many of your parents and children sleep; but I mourn not as those who have no hope. “God hath done all things well.” I often see her among those who wear white robes in heaven, one of those “little ones” of which the Saviour has said “of such is the kingdom of God;” and when faith is clear, rejoice that I have one child in Paradise enjoying the beatitudes of immortality.

The twenty years which I have spent in the service of this church, constitute the best portion of my life. I have gathered, it is true, a larger experience than I brought here; and have accumulated stores of knowledge while pursuing the duties of

my calling. The advantage of these you may expect to enjoy; but I cannot promise any greater activity, any increase of ardor, any higher vigor. Like many of those who now constitute "the bone and sinew" of this church, after a few more years, my life will pass into the sear and yellow leaf, and the autumn of its days come on. We have lived in harmony so long, that I cherish no apprehensions but that we shall be able to continue it to the end. Where I have buried my dead it may be that my ashes will also rest; and when my work is done, that I shall leave only the memorial of a grave by which to hold a place in the thoughts of the living. If it should be so, may I meet you all in heaven to spend a happy eternity in the enjoyment of the rest of God. What blessedness to have all my friends with me in glory!

When I look back to-day over the past years, many pleasing memories likewise rise up to view. I have to acknowledge almost universal kindness, respect and attention, on the part of all the members of this congregation. When I look over the face of this whole audience I see a friend in every one. In many of you such firm, fast, tried, lasting friends, as few ministers, even in our happy connection, have been permitted to claim. There are *even* some of the *Fathers* here who selected me as their Pastor and sent for me; to doubt them would be to doubt mankind, and disavow all faith in truth and honor. Here too are others who have cast in

their lot with us, and already proved that they are not a whit behind the foremost and the best, in devotion to the church and willingness to maintain her interests; and a noble band of youth, strong in their love of the truth, earnest in their piety, and ardent in their desire not to prove themselves unworthy of the just expectations formed of their character as men and as christians; besides many godly women whose hearts have always been warm and whose hands have ever been ready, where any affection was to be shown and any work to be done;—they are all here and will be here, until God has need of them in his higher work, and translates them to his own house in heaven!

There is however one thought which comes in like a dark cloud, to obscure the sunshine which illumines this happy day. It is the knowledge that there are some here in the same condition, in which they were here twenty years ago. They were strangers to renewing grace then, and they are strangers to renewing grace now. They have been warned of their danger, reasoned with, expostulated with and entreated, but all in vain. Twenty years of Sabbaths and gospel privileges is no small item in the account of eternity. How will they meet it? What can I do for them? I know of no arguments to prevail with them which have not been employed, no depths in the love of Christ which have not been displayed, no heights in his mercy which have not been shown, no attractions

in his cross which have not been unfolded, no joys flowing from communion with God which have not been painted, no power in heavenly things which has not been urged again and again! I cannot preach stronger, clearer, more earnestly, or more affectionately than I have preached. I cannot tell you any more of Jesus than I have told you; nor can I paint the value of your souls in stronger colors than I have painted it. What then can be done for you? Must I leave you? Leave you! where? In sin—enemies to God and his government—unregenerated and unmatured for heaven! To leave you where you are, is to leave you to perish, with all your sins upon your souls. I cannot leave you thus. You must hear me to-day, if you have never been willing to hear me before. You must not leave me to witness against you at the bar of God, when I come to give an account of my stewardship as your Pastor! You must come to Christ! Above all others you are bound to repent and believe on the Saviour. So much grace has been expended upon you, so much long-suffering has waited on you, so much compassion has entreated you, that you must not throw it all away, and like a mariner perishing in sight of land, die on the borders of heaven. There is an obligation upon you which rests not upon others. You have had your cup of mercies running over. You are Chorazin and Bethsaida in the days of Christ, “exalted to heaven, and if you are recreant to all at last, you will like

them be thrust down to hell—the lowest, darkest, most despairing portion in the “horrible pit.” Oh! how much the misery of the lost will be increased by their mercies and Sabbaths on earth. What sorrowful reflections will be inspired by these solemn assemblies where God comes to woo and to win us to himself! My dear friends, you must not leave your Saviour. You must not let the world ensnare you and cheat you out of your souls. They are too valuable to be trifled with. The estimation of them in the sight of God is too high, for you to barter them for a promise which will prove to be but an empty shadow. Hear us then, when we plead with you to-day, though you may have refused to hear for twenty years, and as you hear turn to God and live.

Nor would we forget another and an opposite class of our hearers to-day—the rising youth. To them my heart turns with infinite yearnings. Many of them I have consecrated to God by sprinkling upon them the water of baptism; and all their life long, I have prayed that God would add his blessing, and sprinkle upon them *clean water*, that they may be clean—communicating the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit to make them new creatures, the children of God. Many of them I have instructed carefully in the excellent formulas of our faith, and made them acquainted with the way of life. Should I not rejoice to see them entering upon it? My young friends, when I think

how soon you are to be in the place of your fathers and mothers, the responsibilities of the church and the world resting upon you, I feel the deepest solicitude that you should prove yourselves worthy of your privileges, your instruction and your opportunities. More is anticipated from you than from them, because you have grown up under a better train of influences, and have enjoyed what was denied to them. You must be better christians than they have ever been. Your benevolence must be larger, your zeal warmer, your piety more active. This age of the church calls you to many duties from which, in providence, they were exempt. There are things for you to do, which they had not the privilege of doing. All our missionary operations and our Sabbath schools are lights of this generation; and they open to you wider departments of labor, and furnish pleasing opportunities of displaying a christianity of a purer type, than that which performed the duties and met the responsibilities of the past generation. Let the examples of the scriptures encourage you. Samuel, the chief among the Prophets under the Old Testament, ministered to God in his childhood—his mother "lent him to the Lord," and he grew up, as it were, in the very temple of God. Josiah, one of the very best of the kings, had a heart that was *tender* towards God in his *tender years*. When Christ was on earth, and the Priests and the Sanhedrim rejected and insulted him, the children went

out to meet him in the way, and sang joyful Hosannas in his praise. Timothy, one of the most interesting characters in the New Testament, and one of the most successful among the early missionaries of Christ's Gospel, was from a child acquainted with the scriptures, "which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." Nay, there is a point of higher interest still to be remarked in the piety of this young apostle. He was a child of the covenant—"the faith that was in him had dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice." Like some of you he was born of prayers and baptized early with the dews of divine influences. The house in which he grew up had been a Bethel, where God was present often, even when unknown. Oh! if Timothy, the son of such parents and privileges, had proved recreant to his holy obligations, what a wretch he must have been. And yet there are such in this world of sin;—sons who renounce their baptism, shame the piety of their parents, and deliberately turn away, even from that heaven where those parents are living and waiting to receive them, for the sake of the baubles and the lies of this deceitful world. My young friends, let me warn you against this—let me entreat you to avoid so unnatural a sin. Devote your early years to wisdom, and give your young affections to Christ and heaven. God claimed in ancient times the "first fruits" for himself. Carry your "green ears" to the sanctuary and lay them

upon the altar as an offering and an emblem of the consecration of yourself, soul and body, to be the Lord's. Give the pleasures of sin to those who know of no better portion. They are at best but vain delights. Their honey-comb has always a sting in it: and it is like the little book of John, sweet in your mouth, but wormwood and gall when you have eaten it. Religion offers you in their place, "*spiritual delights*, sweet and pleasant to the soul." It will bring you to a "banqueting house," and spread over you such a "banner of love," that you will be made to rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

In regard to the future—I neither have any new plans of usefulness to announce, nor any methods or measures of doing good to recommend, with which you are not already acquainted. I have not in fact even any new promises to make. I do not expect to labor more than I have done, to preach in a different way, or indeed to try any experiments whatever: but as long as I remain the Pastor of this church, I shall preach what I think to be the truth—truth as I learn it in the Bible; and I shall not preach it any the less because it is unwelcome to some, but *the more*; because in the *unwelcomeness* I shall find both the need of it and the motive to enforce it. I shall expect the co-operation, sympathy, support, countenance and prayers of all the pious among my people. I must have them. The claim is not put forth as a favor, it is demanded as

a right—and if you withhold these things from me you will do yourselves more harm than you will do me. I may in such an issue seek another place, and secure from others what you deny, but you cannot avoid the consequences of delinquency in a duty so important. I shall expect that these prayers will be something more than a form: for the form and the words are nothing without the heart, without faith. "Right believing," says one, "is powerful praying." The knees, eyes and tongue bear the least share in prayer. The whole of the work lies upon the soul, and particularly upon faith in the soul, which is the life and power of prayer. Faith can pray without words, but the most eloquent words, even the "tongues of angels," are not worthy to be called prayer without faith. This is not only a solemn truth, but an important reality.

And now, in conclusion, let me remind you that one volume of our mutual accountability, as Pastor and people, is closed; and another commences to-day. In the past, alas, there is too much written against us! Records of neglect and an imperfect spirit testify to the want of zeal and love in the service of our God—records which we shall not be able to meet at the judgment seat of Christ, unless the pardoning blood of the Saviour shall be imputed to us to wash their guilt away. Let us first seek for grace, to enable us to secure to ourselves the efficacious virtue of that blood, and then let us arm our souls with faith, and so warm them

with love—love to God as the effect of communion with him around the mercy seat—that in all the future we shall be enabled to abound so much in works of righteousness, as to “prove our title clear to mansions in the skies.” We are standing, many of us, on the borders of Immanuel’s land. We can almost look across the dark vale, and see the shining hills on the immortal shores: we can almost hear the music that is swelling there, as they sing and are joyful in God. Let the thought of this home cheer our spirits amid the toils of the way, and strengthen us to run patiently the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Oh! it will be sweet indeed for the weary to come and rest “on Canaan’s calm and peaceful shore:” and before another twenty years have run their course, many who are here now, will be there. Oh! that we might all be sure of coming there at last. Let us all strive so to live as to consummate this *highest good*.

And now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good word and work, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever, amen.