



The "Old Stone Building" in New York.

TWO CENTURIES  
IN THE  
HISTORY OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

JAMAICA, L. I.;

THE OLDEST EXISTING CHURCH, OF THE PRESBYTERIAN  
NAME, IN AMERICA.

BY JAMES M. MACDONALD, D. D.

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.”—*Sol. Ecc.* 1, 4.

“Nescire, quid anteaquam natus sis, acciderit, id est semper esse puerum.”—*Cic. in orat.* c. 34.

With an Appendix,

CONTAINING DISCOURSES DELIVERED, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE SERVICES  
HELD, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE FOUNDING OF SAID CHURCH, ON THE 7TH, 8TH  
AND 9TH DAYS OF JANUARY, 1862.

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On Thursday, at half-past nine A.M., the friends assembled in the Lecture Room to spend an hour in prayer and conference, having reference especially to the World's concert of prayer, which was that week being observed by the Evangelical churches. Here the Rev. Wilson Phraner, (another child of the church,) of Sing Sing, N. Y., made some appropriate and forcible remarks.

At half-past ten, a large assembly gathered in the church to listen to a Sermon from the Rev. William P. Breed, of Philadelphia.

#### SERMON.

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”—HEBREWS xii. 1, 2.

The more strictly doctrinal portion of this epistle terminates with the eighteenth verse of the tenth chapter, and the hortatory begins with the next verse.

In the first exhortation *faith* is thus mentioned. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” In the thirty-eighth verse, this faith is declared to be the principle of spiritual life. “The just shall *live* by faith.”

In the first verse of the following chapter, faith is defined. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.” The rest of this chapter consists of a list of illustrious examples of the power and achievements of this faith in the sphere of practical life, as in the experience of Abel, Noah, Enoch, and the rest. And our text is a rational and forcible exhortation, based upon what has gone before.

“Wherefore, seeing what faith is, and what it has done, let us, committing ourselves to its influence, run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

In a passage so opulent in treasures, the chief difficulty lies in making such a selection of points for a single discourse as to avoid, on the one hand, crowding and thus confusing the vision, and on the other, omitting those whose prominence and importance are essential to any other than a merely fragmentary view of the text.

A little attention however in this case obtrudes upon the view as the most prominent object, “The race set before us,” with a cloud of witnesses on the one hand, and Jesus, faith’s author and finisher, on the other, as stimuli to the racers. Each one of these three objects therefore, demands more or less of our attention.

#### FIRST, Look at THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

The rhetorical figure of a cloud as a type of multitude, could hardly fail of frequent recurrence in the literature of all nations. Accordingly, Homer writes of “a cloud of Infantry.” Livy says, “The King hurled a cloud of horse and foot upon the foe;” and Isaiah asks, “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

Nor is the figure less impressive than it is apt. Who has not gazed with rapt interest upon a cloud in a summer afternoon—black but comely! At first no bigger than a man’s hand, it rises and spreads its sable wings till at length they cover and darken half the hemisphere, and pile their cumulative masses up to the skies, the very type of majesty and multitude!

And now suppose every constituent atom of that vapory mass replaced by a glorified spirit, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samuel and the Prophets: You are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses! Now listen to the exhortation—"Ye candidates for eternal bliss, blood-bought, blood-washed, vow-laden, think that all those celestial eyes are fixed upon you, watching the banner of the cross committed to your hands to see whether it is waving in victory over a prostrate, or trailed in the dust beneath the feet of a triumphant foe; watching for the ark of God entrusted to your custody, to see if it be safe within its peaceful curtains at Shiloh, or whether it has fallen into the hands of heathenish Philistines!

Beyond all doubt such an exhortation were quite intelligible, and to every true child of faith, spirit-stirring. Still, we are persuaded that this view by no means exhausts the meaning of the sacred writer. Had it been his chief aim to impress it upon us, that we were the objects of constant celestial scrutiny, there was a truth to this effect nearer home and much more effective.

For indeed there is One that watches us day and night, at home and abroad, scanning our thoughts, sifting our motives, making record of our ends and aims, and this, not as a mere spectator, but as a gatherer of testimony for the judgment-seat of Christ! "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there! If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me!"

Nay, my brethren, those bright hosts are summoned in clouds around us, as witnesses of another kind! They are witnesses *upon the stand*, giving testimony! And the point of their testimony is the validity of a scriptural, Christian faith, and its power to bear its subjects through all life's toils, trials, and temptations to the very end! Thus they declare, it did for them, thus we are to infer it will do for us.

Under its inspiration Noah, amidst the sneers and jeers of his cotemporaries, built a great ark, to shield him and his from an overflowing flood, beneath a sky undarkened by a threatening cloud, and upon a continent that since the world began had neither known nor feared aught of overflowing floods!

By faith Abraham set out with his family and flocks to go, he knew neither why nor whither, "on a fools errand" as his heathen deriders would say, and at the bidding of a groundless fancy.

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David also and Samuel, and the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

And now saith the Spirit, in the presence of this cloud of worthies, bearing such testimony to faith's exhaustless and invincible power, let us, with a faith like theirs in origin—like theirs in kind, and, if we will Be-

loved, like theirs in degree also,—let us run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus!

In the SECOND place consider, “THE RACE SET BEFORE US.”

1. These words may be considered as pointing to the RACE SET BEFORE THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Uttered centuries ago, the exhortation still rings in the ears of the church of Christ, urging her to apply herself with all diligence to the solution of the great problem assigned to her of discipling the nations! As Moses set up the brazen serpent where every bitten Israelite in the camp could see it, so the church is to bear the cross onward and upward, from height to height, “Excelsior!” her constant motto, until, with redoubled emphasis and significance, the cry may ring forth from its lips—“Look unto me and be ye saved all ye *ends* of the earth.”

How this problem has been understood and practically treated by the church is significantly hinted in certain statistics attributed to Sharon Turner. During the first century, he tells us the church gathered under discipleship half a million of souls. The second century made this half million, two millions. The third century increased the number to five millions; the fourth to ten; the fifth to fifteen; the sixth to twenty; the seventh to twenty-five; the eighth to thirty; the ninth to forty; the tenth to fifty; the eleventh to seventy; the twelfth to eighty; the thirteenth, the dark thirteenth reduced the number to seventy-five; the fourteenth, regained the lost ground, and restored the number to eighty; the fifteenth advanced it to one

hundred; the sixteenth to one hundred and twenty-five; the seventeenth to one hundred and fifty-five; the eighteenth to two hundred, and the nineteenth, thus far to three hundred millions!

Now, whatever may be said of the character of this nominal Christianity in the mass, and admitting that these figures can only be approximatively accurate, yet is there enough in this general view to encourage and exhilarate the soul, and assure us from the lips of history itself, that the day is drawing on when the millennial bells will announce that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!

And it by no means weakens this assurance to bear in mind that no other religious system in the world can lay claim to anything like such a population in any sense under its sway, excepting perhaps that of the Buddhists—that not one of all these false systems of religion is aggressive—that palsied with age, they all feel the discouraging premonitions of coming dissolution—further still, that every one of these great systems is assailed and penetrated at many a point, by our religion which, though so many centuries old, is yet in the dewy morning of its youth, and last, but not least, the grasp with which Christianity has seized the reins of power among the nations. Treaties between high contracting parties, legislation in Congresses and Parliaments, and the great thoughts that pervade our literature and rule the age are mainly what they are by reason of the religion of Jesus!

Away then with apologies for the tardy growth of Christianity! The mushroom may spring up in a



night, but yonder oak, that hardly bows its proud head to the tornado, has been gathering strength for a century! And assuredly the steady growth of a plant through more than eighteen hundred years, demonstrates a vitality that must strike its roots down, till they take the very planet in their embrace, that must lift its top into eternal sunshine, and spread its branches until all the nations find shelter beneath and food upon them!

2. In the solution of this general problem, there is also A RACE SET BEFORE EACH GENERATION OF CHRISTIANS.

And before us, as members of the generation living in the middle of the nineteenth century, there lies a large and important work of *Aggression* and *Defence*.

Our generation is peculiarly one of Christian Aggression. Never before were all barriers so prostrated in the church's path. But a few years ago a potent director of the British East-India Company declared that he would more willingly send fifty devils to India than fifty missionaries. And now where is the power of that company? Once a Governor-General of India forbade the Christian missionary to set foot on Indian soil, and what became of him? Like Julian the Apostate, breathing out his life on Parthian plains, he too had reason to cry—"O, Galilean thou hast conquered!" One and the same vessel bore him in disgrace from Madras to Ceylon, and returning, carried from Ceylon to Madras the missionaries he had persecuted! And now what a vast, unforbidden chorus of Macedonian voices calls thence in our ears! A grand and im-

pressive truth is set to music in the immortal lines of Heber:

“From Greenland’s icy mountains,  
 From India’s coral strand ;  
 Where Afric’s sunny fountains  
 Roll down their golden sand ;  
 From many an ancient river,  
 From many a palmy plain,  
 They call us to deliver  
 Their land from error’s chain.”

And never were men so our brethren and neighbours as they are now. Who is my neighbour? He to whom I may send a message, and in half an hour receive reply! But he may live in New Orleans or Nova Scotia. If our fellow men, two hundred miles away are starving, are they sufficiently our neighbours to oblige us to send them bread? But Ireland is nearer to day than was such a community twenty years ago.

Beloved, the triumphs of the human intellect, under the blessing of God, have laid the heathen world on the doorstep of the Christian church!

But a work of *Defence* also lies before us. For we have a foe of immeasurable cunning and immeasurable malice, immeasurable resources, and terrible energy. “The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Ours is a day in which the current sets strongly in for the cold, cheerless shores of Unbelief. The grim divinities of Doubt and Denial, exhumed for the thousandth time, are again set upon their pedestals, and all

the world called on to fall down before them. "We seem to be slowly coming round through sublime by-ways of intellectual superiority and sentimental faith, to the old mean era of cavilling and criticism, the age that finds humbug in every thing—the puny, debased, narrow age of unbelief." The Church even has been menaced with invasion. The Christian world has recently been startled by the discovery of a conspiracy in the bosom of the venerable Church of England, to pour poison into the "pure water of life that flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Further, this is a day of unusual cultivation, pride and power of intellect; and marshalled on the side of the foe are found no little solid learning, profound research and keen logical acumen. Besides these are troops of sciolists, whose smattering of knowledge and overweening self-conceit render it harder to convince one of them than "seven men that can render a reason."

Whole universities, too, lend their power to the unhallowed work of undermining the faith once delivered to the saints. Never was the infidel library so well replenished. Volume after volume, the ever-recurring Quarterly instinct with Infidelity, and furtive scraps in the omnipresent magazine and newspaper, allure and ensnare the unwary, satisfy and fortify the sceptic, and form a barrier behind which the ribald wag their heads and affect to defy the armies of the living God. Even Science has been suborned to lie against the Holy Ghost, and the stars in their courses to fight on the side of Sisera. And that no stone might be left unturned, an imbecile necromancy has been evoked,

and, in its mutterings, Paul under the rapping table made to contradict Paul at the Areopagus.

Now the race set before the Christians of this generation is, in the midst of all this, and in spite of all this—the enemy coming in like a flood—not only to save the cross, but to give it the victory; not only to retain the ground already won but to add new kingdoms to its sway.

### 3. Then there is A RACE SET BEFORE US AS AMERICAN CHRISTIANS.

Ancient History furnishes us with examples of two classes of nations; those which, destitute of true religion, have assailed it in other nations, and those which, once having it in possession have become apostate.

The doom of the former was thus written by Moses. (Gen. xii. 3.) “I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee.” And Ezekiel (xxv. 12, 13) records particular applications of this law. “Thus saith the Lord God, because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah, by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will also stretch out my hand upon Edom, and I will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.”

And Babylon and Nineveh and Egypt, where are they?

But it fares worse with apostate nations! When the unclean spirit, once gone out of man, returns again, the last state of that man is worse than the first. “So,” said the Saviour, “shall it be unto this generation.”

And so it was with that generation—for under the whole heaven hath not been done as was done upon Jerusalem.

But our country must be ranked, if with either, with the apostate. It has never been the assailant of religion; on the contrary we have been from the first a Christian nation. The first act of Columbus, after leaping upon these western shores, was to set up a cross. The first sounds the wolves and Indians heard on our New England coast from the lips of the white man, were sounds of prayer and praise to the Triune God. The name of Jesus has been invoked in our Congresses and great political assemblies from the first to this hour. Appeal was made to Him on the battle field before the conflict and in thanksgiving for victories. Our legislation, so far as it has borne at all upon religion, has been Christian in its character. High authority has declared Christianity to be a part of the common law of the land. The Sabbath is distinctly recognized and annually days of devout thanksgiving to Almighty God are appointed in nearly all our commonwealths. In our land Gospel institutions have sprung up like willows by the water-courses. Revivals of religion, like that of Pentecost, have been enjoyed. Church edifices stud our territory from limit to limit. From our shores the most successful of Christian missionaries have gone to bless the heathen world. And this day we behold an army of five millions of communicants enrolled under the banner of evangelical religion; and as the Sabbath sun moves in majesty from the Atlantic to the Pacific, he sends down his beams upon more than four millions of children in

Sabbath-schools, grouped around more than four hundred thousand teachers! Our land furnishes a home for some thirty thousand or thirty-five thousand ministers of the Gospel, who preach, with more or less regularity, in some sixty thousand houses of worship, of various classes; sometimes a school-house, sometimes a court-house, and sometimes a church edifice, built for the purpose. Bible societies, tract societies, colporteur agencies, and other societies—Christian and benevolent, (supported by an annual voluntary contribution for all religious purposes of from twenty to twenty-five millions of dollars) make up a world of hallowed activities that set the broad seal of Christianity upon our national character, and make it impossible for us not to be either permanently Christian or basely apostate. The only alternative left us, is either, with hands at once impious and ungrateful, to tear up the deep-rooted cross and cast it into the sea, and thus hang the millstone of divine wrath about our nation's neck; or to go forward, ploughing and planting, until at the name of Jesus the whole aggregate Republic shall bow the knee in heartfelt devotion!

The race set before us then, as *American Christians* is, at whatever cost, to make our land a tabernacle of Immanuel. Infidelity and wickedness in every form must be met and thwarted. The emigration from other lands must be Christianized; the neglected youth must be gathered into Sabbath-schools, and in every valley, on every hill-side, and along all water-courses Gospel ordinances must be enjoyed.

While Alexander was thundering at the gates of Tyre, the terrified inhabitants, fearing lest their god

should desert them, assembled in the public square, and there had the statue of Apollo chained to his pedestal.

The folly of the heathens may teach us wisdom. We must secure the permanent residence of Immanuel in our midst, or we are lost. We must bind him fast, not with iron chains, but with the bands of a man—the ties of love for a Christian people.

4. AGAIN THERE IS A RACE SET BEFORE US AS PRESBYTERIAN CHRISTIANS—Christians holding as distinctive tenets the equality of the clergy, the coöperation of the Ruling Elder in the government of the church, and courts of review and control.

With our sister-denominations we have no quarrel. God forbid! We bid “God speed” to as many of any name as “sensible of their lost and helpless state by sin, depend upon the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance with God; such as desire to renounce their sins, and are determined to lead a holy and godly life.” There is room for all and work for all.

Still, will any chide us for entertaining the conviction that there lies a peculiar race before a church like ours in a land like ours; a church, between whose form of government and that of the nation analogies so striking exist—both enjoying in felicitous counterpoise the right and privilege of free thought and private judgment on the one hand, with the predominance of an ultimate, venerable and potent authority on the other; a church historically and notoriously not one whit more Republican in the form of its government than in its spirit and tendencies; always ready in her

clergy to bless and pray for, and in her membership to carry and fight under the banner of Republican liberty, and hence always looked on with cordial disfavour by high monarchists. "You are aiming at a Scot's Presbytery," snarled King James at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, "which agrees with monarchy as well as God and the devil. Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet and censure me and my council. Then Will shall stand up and say it must be thus; then Dick shall reply and say nay, marry but we will have it thus."

In this, this Scottish Solomon only followed Queen Elizabeth who "hated Presbytery because it held principles inconsistent with allegiance to her crown." And in this he was followed by Charles the First, who wrote: "Show me any precedent wherever any Presbyterial government and regal was together without perpetual rebellions." And Dryden has left his testimony in no very amiable lines:

" So Presbytery and its pestilential zeal,  
Can flourish only in a commonweal."\*

A church always taking high ground in favour of general education, under a government whose very life depends on general education as one of its essential conditions; a church embracing such a proportion of high character, talent, learning, zeal and piety—before this church we say there is a peculiar and honourable race set by her Master, and well will it be for her and for the world if, like true children of Issachar, they "have

\* Smythe's "Ecclesiastical Republicanism."



understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do.”

The race it has already run demonstrates that her race is only just begun. While Louis XIV. was filling France with profligacy, and emptying her of citizens and wealth; while the Marlboroughs and Peterboroughs of England were winning renown for her abroad, and at home, amidst bitter and endless wranglings of Whig and Tory factions, Swift, Pope, Addison, Steele, and others were filling her libraries with a brilliant and deathless literature; while the American colonies were harassed with controversies with their selfish old mother for their rights, and their borders tormented with the miseries of a savage warfare, God, in his quiet but resistless providence, was moving on, sowing the seeds of Presbyterianism on these western shores. Two hundred years ago signs of Presbyterian vegetation here and there appeared. At Jamaica, in Maryland, New York and Philadelphia, churches sprang into existence.

About 1695, weekly religious worship began to be held in a little stocking-store with a sign above the door, “C & N Jones,” on the northwest corner of Chestnut and Second Streets. Nine Baptists and perhaps as many Presbyterians (Presbyterians in reality if not yet in name) and a few Episcopalians, formed that seminal congregation.

Since that day of small things how many precious souls have gone from these churches with so humble an origin, to join in the song of Moses and the Lamb on high! And to-day Philadelphia rejoices in some two hundred and seventy Evangelical churches, num-

bering perhaps one hundred thousand communicants. Of these churches seventy are Presbyterian, thirty-three Old-School, eighteen New-School and nineteen of other names.

And you heard in the sermon two days ago, what an aggregate of Presbyteries, of ministers and of communing members are now arrayed under the two Assemblies in our land, equipped with a noble array of schools, colleges and theological seminaries, and with a powerful machinery for the propagation of the truth in fields domestic and foreign.

Before the Presbyterian Church, thus endowed, there is set a race which includes at least the duty of demonstrating to the world the superior efficacy of our ecclesiastical system in spreading the Gospel among men, in subduing sinners to King Emmanuel, in developing all the graces of piety, and training the branches of the messianic vine to the production and maturing of all the rich "fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

FINALLY. THERE IS A RACE SET BEFORE US AS INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS.

There is a race set before each believer peculiar to himself, which no one can run either for him or with him.

Of all the thousands of vessels that have left New York for Liverpool, no two ever pursued just the same path. And of all the Pilgrims that have made the voyage to heaven, no two ever followed in just the same track.

The experience of each one was marked with decided peculiarities.

God sets the race before us, and He never repeats himself in nature or in grace. He makes no two stars, no two flowers, no two dew-drops, no two grass-blades, no two human faces, no two courses of human experience alike.

The race of one lies among the allurements, temptations, and sometimes persecutions of wealth and high social position; that of another, through the toils, cares and hard trials of extreme poverty. Having supped upon his hard crust, hardly earned, the son of penury retires to his hard bed to sleep. The early dawn finds him again at his task, or in anxious pursuit of employment. And so his life wears on to the end. At length he dies, and the undertaker hides his poor body among the long grass in some obscure nook in the field, and soon no one of all earth's thousand millions knows or cares that such a human being ever lived and sinned and suffered and died!

The race of one is very short, a few brief suns bringing it to the close; that of another runs on almost through the century. The race of one lies in the bustle and excitement of public life; of another through paths of almost unbroken bodily sickness. To one is appointed a race amidst scenes of general Christian defection, and he cries out with the prophet, "I, even I alone am left, and they seek my life to take it away;" while the career of another is like that of a Whitefield, a continued succession of revival scenes. One finds his way to bliss through the sorrows and glories of martyrdom, another through years of fearful bereavement and sorrow, and

another still passes to the cold river's verge, through the Dark Valley, through the grim horrors of Doubting Castle and the merciless beatings of Giant Despair. Each one, we repeat, has his own appointed race to run.

Run then, Beloved, the race set before you! Grieve not, envy not, repine not, wish it not otherwise than it is. Say with Rutherford, "If it were come to an exchange of crosses I would not exchange my cross with any."

Indeed, there is something both of selfishness and folly in the wish that our race were other than it is; folly, for we each have ills the balm for which lies only in the path marked out for us; selfishness, for some one must run this very course. The religion of Jesus must have this particular illustration of its power. Heaven's choir cannot lack the song that you are learning to sing. The tapestry of grace, weaving here below to be the wonder and admiration of the universe, cannot lack that particular figure and colour that your peculiar experience is adding. Some one must weep these tears, bear these burdens, do these works, and you are the only one just qualified for the task. Run then with patience and diligence the race that God hath set before you!

And now, beloved brethren, as we near the close of these refreshing exercises, let us all as members of the great Church of our Redeemer, as participants in the honours and duties of this passing generation, as Christian citizens of our beloved America, as Presbyterian Christians and as individual believers, each with his own salvation to work out with fear and trembling

—let us all, I say, set out anew in the race set before us, looking, as we run, on the one side at the witnesses, and on the other unto Jesus!

For our text seems to place us, as it were, in a parenthesis between the two. First we look at the witnesses, as the text commands, and as did the saints of old. “Our Fathers trusted in Thee. They trusted and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee and were delivered—they trusted in Thee and were not confounded.”—Ps. xxii. 4, 5.

But should any be disposed to add with the Psalmist, “Yes, but we are very different from our fathers;” “I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people.” “The Patriarchs trusted and were delivered, but we have not the faith of the Patriarchs.” Then look away to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, and He can increase its power till mountains shall flow down at its presence!

It is as if two separate divisions of Napoleon’s army were fighting under his eye, each with his own opposing force, the one nearer and the other more remote. The remoter one is victorious at the first onset, but the nearer one wavers. The officer in command, trembling lest disgrace befall his flag, cries to his men, “See how your comrades chase the foe!” “Ah,” they murmur in reply, “we are fewer and weaker than they.”

Seeing now that the case is desperate, as a last resort he cries, “Behold, your Emperor is looking at you!” Every face is turned, and catching fire from the glance of that eagle eye, like a tornado they sweep the enemy before them!

So let us on in the race set before us—looking at the

cloud of witnesses, now more numerous by hundreds of thousands than when this exhortation was penned—embracing in addition to the more ancient worthies, the blessed army of confessors and martyrs of early Christianity, and then the Luthers, Calvins and Knoxes; Baxters, Bunyans and Owens; Tennents and Davies; Brainards and Paysons; yes, and others too, whom we have known and loved in the flesh! We saw how they lived; we saw how they struggled with ill; with what preternatural patience they endured! Racked with pains we heard them cry, “Thy will be done!” Bruised and crushed they still exclaimed, “We glory in tribulations also!” The dark chamber of adversity they made to echo with the shout, “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation!” And we saw how they died! Some as the infant falls asleep on its mother’s bosom, and some as Elijah went to heaven in a chariot of fire!

Yes, blessed witnesses, we take your testimony, and here before the Triune God, and before the angels, and in view of all the toils, and sorrows and triumphs of believers in every age, we solemnly promise to heed this exhortation, and from this good hour to run more resolutely, more diligently, more patiently, the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Amen and amen!