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MEMOIR OF THE HON. WILLIAM PHILLIPS,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS.

BEFORE we proceed to give some account of the life and of the beneficent deeds of the late Lieutenant Governor PHILLIPS, we shall present details somewhat minute, in relation to some of his distinguished ancestors. The family of Phillips has been among the most honorable and useful in the annals of New England from its first settlement. In the amount of property which various members of this family have bestowed in charity, it doubtless takes the highest rank.

The first minister of Watertown, Ms., was the Rev. GEORGE PHILLIPS. He was born at Raymond, in the County of Norfolk, England. Having given early indications of deep piety, uncommon talents and love of learning, his parents sent him to the University of Cambridge, where he distinguished himself by remarkable progress in his studies, especially in theology, to which he manifested an early partiality. He was settled in the ministry in Boxsted, in the County of Suffolk, about 60 miles N. N. E. from London. His strong attachment to the principles of the Non-Conformists soon occasioned him trouble. As the storm of persecution grew more threatening, he resolved to take his lot with the Puritans, who were about to depart for New England. He joined the company who arrived in 1630. On board the vessel, as Gov. Winthrop testifies, he "gave very good content to all the company, as he did in all his exercises, so as they had much cause to bless God for him." Soon after his arrival, he was afflicted by the loss of his wife; who though an only daughter, had left her parents, to share cheerfully and affectionately the sufferings of her husband. She died at Salem, and was buried by the side of the lady Arbella Johnson, "who," as Cotton Mather says, "also took New England in her way to Heaven"* The greater part of the emigrants who came with Winthrop, lived at Charlestown; "many of them," says Capt. Roger Clap, "in tents and wigwams, their meeting place being abroad under a tree, where I have heard Mr. Wilson and Mr. Phillips preach many a good sermon." Mr. Phillips was minister at Watertown about fourteen years. He died July 1, 1644, "much desired and lamented by his church at Watertown, who testified their affection to their deceased pastor by a special care to promote

* Mr. Phillips arrived in this country June 2, 1630. The date of the death of his wife does not appear. His eldest child by his second wife was born April 5, 1632. "It is said that Lady Arbella Johnson was buried near where the present church of England now stands."—*Judge Lynde, quoted in Fell's Annals of Salem*, p. 522.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SERIOUSNESS TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

[By Rev. DANIEL DANA, D. D.]

THERE have been periods in the history of our country, in which the distance between the clergy and the community at large, was absolutely too great. Ministers occupied a position unnaturally elevated. They were treated with a reverence which could neither be wisely claimed, nor wisely bestowed. Even occasional familiarity with their people was regarded either as a descent from their dignity, or a degradation of their office, or an undue compromise of the claims of religion.

These mistakes naturally engendered others. Ministers themselves were tempted to adopt a stateliness and solemnity of demeanor, neither natural in itself, nor required by their office, nor compatible with their best influence on the community. But these days are past. Whatever may be the aberrations of the present time, an undue reverence for the clergy can scarcely be reckoned among the number. Nor is the extreme of gravity and seriousness of deportment, the prominent and prevailing mistake of the ministers of the gospel. Indeed, as human nature is ever prone to extremes, there seems, in the present case, a revulsion not a little alarming. In many a fashionable circle, it is thought the highest praise that can be bestowed on a minister, to say, that he has nothing of the minister about him. Nor is it probable that this left-handed and mortifying compliment would be so frequently repeated, were the clergy themselves quite irreproachable in the matter.

None can rationally wish to see a minister of the gospel either melancholy or morose. None can desire to transform him into a Pharisee, or an anchorite. Nor would it be either just or kind to debar him from the innocent and sober enjoyments of society. He is a man. He has the frailties, the wants, and the cravings of humanity. The very tension of mind required by the severity of his studies, and by the multiplicity of his arduous and responsible duties, creates a demand for occasional relaxation. In the case of a melancholy natural temperament, such relaxation is not only needful, but indispensable, if he would not make a premature sacrifice of his usefulness, and his life.

Nor will it be denied that there is a cheerfulness naturally inspired by religion; a cheerfulness which is in none more graceful, than in those most immediately consecrated to the service of God. If the devoted minister may not go to his daily labor with a serene countenance, and a bounding heart, who below the skies can lay claim to enjoyment?

These things may be safely conceded. Still, it must be maintained, that habitual gravity and seriousness are among the most important requisites of the ministerial character. In illustrating this point, the difficulty is found, not in the want of materials, but in their variety and superabundance.

A minister, if he is not one of the most inconsistent and wretched of human beings, is a *Christian*. In other words, he is a professed follower, and a humble representative, of the Son of God. And how shall this sublime character be maintained and exhibited? Not surely by a levity of spirit, nor by a trifling demeanor. Nothing could be more palpably the reverse of his divine Exemplar. The Saviour's mind was invariably occupied with objects of infinite interest and moment; objects which, no doubt, diffused their own unearthly character over his countenance, his deportment, and every action of his life. Some portion of these characteristics will then be visible in all his real followers. A gay, volatile, trifling Christian is scarcely less a solecism, than a *profane* or *prayerless* Christian.

Every Christian was once a child of wrath; a borderer on the world of despair. And must not every recurrence of this thought bring with it a variety of humbling, heart-melting sensations. True, he is delivered from this condition; and well may this deliverance inspire a joy which no words can express.

But this joy is a mingled, and a chastened sensation. It is as far removed from gayety, as from despondence itself. Especially when the Christian recollects who was his Deliverer, and through what seas of blood and suffering his redemption was reached; his gratitude, and even his grief, is every thing but overwhelming. Nor should these tender thoughts be mere casual visitors. Is not the day, is not even the hour, from which they are wholly banished, a guilty day and hour?

A Christian is a servant of the living God. And he is more—a friend, a favorite, a son. He has daily and familiar access to the presence-chamber of the King of kings. By the advocates of royalty it has been contended, that in a *court*, the style of manners is altogether peculiar and superior; and that even in the aspect and mien of its frequenters, there is a dignity and grace which distinguish them from all others. This is a question which we need not discuss. But of this we are sure, that the frequenters of a *heavenly* court cannot fail to acquire something of its sublime spirit and air. It cannot but impart to their sentiments and demeanor, an exalting, hallowing influence—an influence placing them aloof from the vanities of the world, and destroying the relish for its follies and trifles.

In a word, the Christian is on earth, a pilgrim and a stranger. His heart, his hopes, and his favorite enjoyments, are in heaven. In some bright and privileged moments, he dares anticipate the perfect, unmingled blessedness of that world. There are seasons, too, in which a sense of unworthiness and guilt comes over him like a cloud, veiling every prospect, and almost extinguishing every hope. Here, then, let the question be asked, In which of these two widely different states, can he find time or heart for levity? Must not even a momentary uncertainty on the subject of his immortal destiny, burden his mind with solicitude inexpressibly painful? And must not every hope he entertains of the joys of heaven, fill him with emotions as solemn as delightful, and thus render the follies of the present scene insipid and disgusting?

It appears, then, plain to demonstration, that the spirit of levity and the spirit of religion are opposites; that their habitual predominance in the same subject is impossible; that the true Christian is a truly serious man; and that the comforts and distresses of his spiritual course are equally fitted to increase his seriousness of mind, and to put the opposite dispositions to flight.

But with what superior force do these considerations apply to the minister of the gospel. If a vain, trifling Christian is a contradiction, a vain, trifling minister is a most disgusting absurdity.

To the private Christian, are intrusted the concerns of a *single* soul. And when he reflects that his little moment of life will give complexion to his whole eternity; and that he is continually a borderer on unending joys or miseries; the thought must press upon his inmost spirit. But to the minister is committed the care of hundreds of souls. Indeed, thousands, and tens of thousands of immortal beings, either near or remote, either existing or unborn, may receive their stamp for eternity under his influence. What overwhelming considerations are these! How adapted to crush a tender spirit! Yet the minister from whose mind they are banished, has not learned the first lesson of his vocation; while he to whose mind they are familiar, cannot fail to find their resistless influence, putting to flight the spirit of worldliness and levity, and filling the heart with the deepest emotions and solitudes.

It is a constantly recurring duty of the Christian minister, to converse with the sublimities of the gospel; to meditate its profound and unsearchable mysteries. These are the subjects which occupied from eternity the mind of the Infinite God. These are themes in which angelic minds are lost. Here are embraced at once, the glories of the Deity, and the everlasting destinies of millions on millions of created beings. And what is the spirit in which themes like these are to be approached? And what is the influence which their contemplation is fitted to exert on the mind? Reason and common sense give the answer. None but a mind deeply serious is prepared to enter this hallowed enclosure. Nor can any mind, not awfully insensible, retire from it without the profoundest awe and solemnity. The minister who converses much with the glories of the gospel, ascends to a superior region, and breathes in a purer

atmosphere. To him, the very gravest schemes and employments of earth must be like the play-things of children. What then must be its amusements and frivolities? To a spiritual mind, how tasteless and disgusting must be the company and conversation from which every thing serious is banished, or from which it meets nothing but indifference or contempt.

But in the sacred volume, other themes present. It portrays the guilt, the ruin and the wretchedness of man. It reveals the terrors of the Holy One, and the awful doom of the wicked. It uncovers the pit of despair. It imparts vivid views of the ever-enduring, ever-increasing woes of the rejecters of gospel mercy. And these are themes from which, however painful, the minister may not turn away. He must even be familiar with them; or how can he, with due solemnity and feeling, dispense the warnings of the gospel? Nor is it possible that, with a mind and heart occupied with these things, he should not be habitually and deeply serious. Feeling that those whom he tenderly loves, may be lost—may be lost through his own unfaithfulness or neglect; feeling that he must meet them hereafter before the Judge, and perhaps meet their upbraidings too—how can he trifle?

It is one of the first duties of the minister, to bring his people daily to the throne of God; to pour their sins, their sorrows, their wants, their dangers, into the ear of the ETERNAL. It is his duty to plead, to wrestle, to agonize, for their salvation. And what an employment is this—adapted to enlist the tenderest sympathies, and awaken the strongest solitudes; to exhaust the mind, and almost to waste the frame. Will not such duties, thus performed, leave an influence behind them? Must not the minister who daily bears his people to the throne of heaven, habitually bear them on his heart? Will not the great concern of their salvation, while it fills his mind with tender solitudes and fears, effectually exclude every species of levity? Is it possible that the faithful, compassionate, tender-hearted minister can be a habitual, or even a frequent trifler?

It is a fine remark of Thomson,

Ah, little think the gay, licentious crowd,
* * * * *
How many feel this very moment death,
And all the sad variety of pain.

The implication is, that habitual gayety is a species of moral delinquency; a wrong to suffering humanity. It is not fit that while one portion of the human family is plunged in the depths of distress, the other portion should be sporting in thoughtless merriment. And the sentiment is supported by more than poetical truth. Who then is more deeply dipped in this offence, than the light-minded minister? For who is more intimately conversant with the various and nameless sufferings to which our flesh is heir? Who is more frequently summoned to scenes of distress; and who can be more strongly bound to sympathize with the sufferers? And shall this sympathy be a mere thing of the moment? Shall the tears which he mingles with the tears of mourners, be "forgot as soon as shed?" Shall he hasten from the sick bed, or from the dying bed, to participate, perhaps to increase, the merriment of a convivial circle?

But the miseries of the present scene are short-lived and evanescent. The true minister looks beyond. He is surrounded with immortal beings, who forget their immortality; with dying creatures, who live only for this world; with sinners, who, unconscious of their depravity and guilt, neglect their souls and their Saviour. Willingly would he dispel their delusions, and rouse them from their guilty slumbers. But his efforts are vain. Truths, arguments, entreaties, warnings, prayers, the thunders of Sinai, and the agonies of Calvary, all seem equally lost on the slumberers. He visits the sick bed; and the same deplorable stupidity remains. Or perhaps it is succeeded by the horrors of a hopeless remorse; perhaps, by a hope soon to terminate in despair. He commits to the grave, numbers for whom he has watched, and wept, and prayed; and who, to the last, have resisted every call of heavenly mercy. Where is the minister who is quite a stranger to trials like these? Where is the minister who has not felt, at times, their depressing, and almost disheartening effect? And

surely they are adapted, if any thing can be, to sober the mind, to repress the spirit of levity, and to breathe a deep and habitual seriousness into his thoughts, his feelings, his conversation, and his whole conduct.

But the minister's solitudes and sympathies are not confined to a single congregation, nor to a single community. He is a citizen of a *world in ruins*; an individual of a depraved and dying race. If he has the spirit of his Master, the woes of that world, the sins and sufferings of that race, must press habitually upon his heart. Does he pray? The millions of perishing heathen have a prominent place in his supplications. Does he preach? He would almost wish for a voice loud enough to send the message of mercy to the extremities of the earth. His mind and heart are habitually occupied with desires, and with projects for the recovery and salvation of a lost world. These are sublime objects, and absorbing as sublime. The man who feels their power, is lifted above the follies, the vanities, the *littlenesses* of this earthly scene. He cannot be a trifler. He is in earnest. He is serious—unaffectedly serious—deeply serious—habitually serious.

In a word; the true minister lives less for the present, than the future. He has eternity in his eye. The celebrated remark of an ancient painter, "I paint for eternity," has more of the shadow, than the substance of the sublime; for it contemplated only "a fancied life in others' breath." But on the lips of a Christian minister, a similar sentiment has all the beauty and grace of simple truth. He lives and acts, he preaches and prays, for eternity. And millions of ages hence, his life and actions, his sermons and his prayers, may be remembered by millions of beings beside himself, with unutterable joy or grief. This is enough. The minister who forgets this, may be a trifler, and *will* be a trifler. He may trifle formally and gravely; but he will trifle still. The minister to whom this single vast idea is habitually present, and present as a *reality*, may trifle if he can. But it is impossible. He will be serious, engaged, devoted, absorbed—absorbed in the great object of meeting with joy his final Judge, and of meeting with joy the favored, happy beings, whom his fidelity has instrumentally saved.

Such are some of the considerations which show that the Christian minister, if worthy of the name, will be a man distinguished for seriousness. Let us now spend a few thoughts on the happy *influence* and *effect* of this spirit, both on himself, and on others.

It will exert a most salutary influence on his *studies*. One of the first and most important duties of a gospel minister, is the investigation of truth. If he fails here, he fails every where. And truth, gospel truth, is of a very peculiar character. It is not the result of cold and heartless speculation. It is not discovered by the mere power of intellect, or by mental discipline, or by laborious and learned investigation. It mocks the pride of the philosopher, and often eludes the grasp of the metaphysician. But to the meek, humble, subdued mind of the sincere Christian, it spontaneously unveils its charms, and imparts its treasures. In a word; to the discovery of gospel truth, the chief requisite, the grand desideratum, is *seriousness*. Hence it is, that under the preaching of the gospel, while men of acute minds, but without seriousness, often retire uninstructed, the devout Christian, however humble his intellect, is enlightened, and not only enlightened, but refreshed, fed and nourished. Indeed, the pious hearer never fails to understand the truths of the Bible better than the unconverted minister. Perhaps in the very sermons he hears, he finds a meaning and a force which the preacher himself never dreamed of.

A similar remark may be applied to commentators on the Scriptures. It would be easy to mention some of this class, especially of the present day, who have brought to the Bible acute minds, stores of learning, and plenty of reasoning skill. But humility and seriousness of mind being absent, it has been literally the fact, that their talents, their learning, and their reasoning powers, have carried them to a distance from Bible truth, which the most weak and ignorant of their predecessors never reached. While Scott, without any of their admired and seducing brilliancies, yet bringing to his task a *serious mind*, feeling the "force of truth," and bowing to its dictates, has rarely failed to bring out the genuine meaning of the Sacred Oracles. Such seriousness is of

infinite importance to all who would rightly understand the Scriptures, and the doctrines they contain. It is itself the surest, safest guide. And it has the promise of divine, infallible teaching. *The meek He will guide in judgment; and the meek He will teach his way. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them his covenant.*

The importance of the same seriousness of spirit may be eminently seen, as it regards *prayer*. Without it, neither will the necessity of this precious exercise be felt, nor its sweetness tasted, nor its advantages enjoyed. The minister who has feeble impressions of eternal things, and of the greatness of his charge, will find many temptations to estrange himself from the mercy-seat. And while he is there, his supplications will be comparatively formal and heartless. While to the serious minister, the duty of prayer will be full of attraction, of delight and profit. What a privilege to the mind burdened with pastoral cares, toils, and responsibilities, to cast the whole immense burden on the arm of Omnipotence! What a privilege, when darkness and mystery rest on the providence, and on the very word of God, to place the soul under the illuminations of HEAVENLY WISDOM AND LOVE! What a relief, amidst the consciousness of weakness, and of insufficiency for every duty, to repair to the throne of heaven, and find the inestimable promise fulfilled, *My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness!* And where is the Christian, and where the Christian minister, who has not found that much in *proportion* to the spirituality of his frame, has been his nearness to God in prayer, and the satisfying sense of a *real communion* with the Father of his spirit? In such a frame, he has found in his own experience a delightful comment on the animated description of the poet;—

Prayer ardent opens heaven; lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man in audience with the Deity.

It scarcely needs to be stated, that that style of *preaching* which is most strongly marked with seriousness, has a vast advantage over every other. If, in the pulpit, coldness and formality are apt to prove contagious, the case is the same with levity, and with every approach to it. Who expects an unimpressed preacher to make a deep impression on an audience? Who expects to find a seriousness in the pew, of which there is no example in the pulpit? It was said by Calamy of Baxter, that "he talked in the pulpit about another world, like one who had been there, and was come as a sort of express to make a report concerning it." It was remarked by James the Sixth of a certain minister, that he always preached before him *as if death stood at his elbow*. These are but samples of the very style in which every minister should aim to preach. If preaching of this stamp were more common, can it be doubted whether correspondent effects would attend it? It may be propounded as a general fact, to which there are few exceptions, that the success of ministers in converting and saving souls, has been far less in proportion to their genius, or learning, or eloquence, or reasoning powers, than to their seriousness and piety. Whitefield, it is true, was eloquent. But it was the warmth of his heart; it was his familiarity with the humbling, heart-breaking truths of the gospel; it was the combined simplicity, faithfulness and affection with which these truths were delivered, that did the execution. The same remarks are substantially true of President Davies. The fervid and almost seraphic piety of his heart, beamed forth from his countenance, and imparted a heavenly air to his demeanor. He addressed his hearers like one who felt that God was present, and eternity just at the door. The consequence was, that he never preached without awakening strong feeling in numbers of his hearers; and rarely, if ever, without leaving lasting and decisive impressions on some one individual, at least. We may find another instance in point, in the case of David Brainerd. Few missionaries, if any, have been equally successful in preaching to the aborigines of our country. His sermons seemed to force their way, through the strongest obstructions, to the inmost hearts of his untutored hearers. And who can doubt that they went from the inmost recesses of his own heart; that they were the outpourings of a

spirit penetrated and almost overwhelmed by the presence of God, the worth of undying souls, and the realities of the world to come?

Must we despair of our pulpits' being filled with preachers of this heavenly stamp; of this controlling influence over the hearts of men? Or may we hope, and shall we pray, that the God of glory would imbue the spirits of our clergy with an unusual portion of his own Spirit; would fill their minds to overflowing with heavenly truth, and their hearts with heavenly love? A consummation most devoutly to be wished! For then our religious state would be most auspiciously changed. Coldness and languor and spiritual death would vanish. Christians would awake. Sinners would awake. The heavens would pour down richly their sweet and healthful influences. The American church, to its remotest borders, would bud and blossom as the rose. It would reflect the holy splendors of heaven on the land and on the world.

Though the pulpit is eminently the scene of the minister's instructions, it is far from being the only scene. Wherever he goes, he should aim to spread light around him. Wherever he goes, he should be ready to speak, for the honor of his Master, and the spiritual instruction of men. In his private walks, he may do much, very much, by his conversation, to confirm, and to extend the influence of his public preaching. It is true, that the forms of society, and the reluctance of men to listen to religious admonition, may often oppose a barrier to his wishes. But is there not often, likewise, a reluctance in his own heart—a reluctance traceable, perhaps, to a low state of religion there? Were ministers themselves more spiritual; more awake to the immortal interests of those around them; they would not only find, but *make* occasions to address them on the things of religion and eternity. Then, "the full heart would become vocal, and utter the *word in season*." How can it be sufficiently regretted that so many precious opportunities should be lost; and that a guilty silence in the ministers of religion should so often be instrumental to confirm the irreligious in their neglect—perhaps their infidelity!

In fine; the habitual and eminent seriousness of which we speak, is of infinite importance in point of example. A spiritual and holy life is a constant sermon. It is a sermon to the *eyes*; a much surer medium of conviction with most than the ears. Who needs be told that the eyes of the world are continually fastened on the ministers of religion? The pious look to them that they may be instructed and edified; the skeptical, that they may learn whether religion is true or false; the wicked, that they may be comforted and confirmed in their wickedness. How unspeakably important that these various demands be properly met. Most men, it is certain, see religion chiefly through the medium of its ministers, and form their judgment accordingly. True; they are apt to be blind to what is excellent. But their eyes are wide open to all that is inconsistent and defective. Let ministers then beware. Let them dread, as death, the thought of dishonoring religion, or of exhibiting it before their fellow men in a false aspect. Let them aim to convince the most skeptical, and to wrest from infidelity itself the weapons which it brandishes against religion. Nothing can effectually accomplish this, but an eminent spirituality of mind, and seriousness of demeanor.

We plead not for needless austerities, nor for affected singularities. We ask only that the ministers of Christ be true to their Master, and true to the religion they preach—a religion which bears inscribed on its front, *Be not conformed to this world*—a religion not more irreconcilably hostile to the world's vices, than to its thoughtlessness and gayety. What shall repress this thoughtlessness and gayety, if ministers themselves, instead of stemming the torrent, are carried away with it? They may be very solemn and serious in the pulpit. This, a multitude of their hearers will consider as a matter of course, and will be little impressed by it. They may even so faithfully address the consciences of men, as to inflict some wounds. And these wounds may be most unhappily *healed* by the levity and inconsistency of their private department.

This is an affair of immense consequence. There are thousands at the present day—and the number is rapidly increasing—who have settled it with themselves, that the religion of former times is a factitious and needless thing. They view it as superstition, or fanaticism, or gross hypocrisy; at best, as mere enthusiasm

and delusion. And they are confirmed in these pernicious views by what they see, or think they see, in the professors of religion, and even in its ministers. "These preachers," they are ready to say, "are very solemn and starched in the pulpit; but out of it, they are very free and easy. Their discourses are sometimes very alarming; but it is evident they are not greatly disquieted themselves. Why should we be much disturbed with that which gives them so little trouble, and which they appear scarcely to believe?"

Is it not matter of the deepest regret that such things should be said; and still more, that they should be said with any shadow of reason? And is it not time for ministers to ponder the serious, mortifying question, how far they themselves may have given occasion and countenance to the wide spread, and still extending infidelity of the day? It is an undeniable fact, that the lives of ministers preach even more loudly than their sermons, and that if their sermons find a contradiction in their lives, they lose all their force and efficiency. It was said of one of the ancient fathers, that he *thundered* in his preaching, and *lightened* in his life. Something like this should be the aim of every minister. And he may be assured that if the lightning be absent, the thunder will pass over the heads of his hearers, harmless and useless.

In every view, then, it appears important that ministers should be eminently serious, spiritual and holy. It is the just expectation of heaven and earth concerning them. An indiscreet, light-minded minister, is the opprobrium of religion, the grief of the pious, the scorn even of the ungodly, and the stumbling-block of thousands around him. While the devout, engaged minister is a *living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men*. His life at once explains, defends, enforces and adorns the religion of the gospel. He is a light to the church, and a light to the world. Ministers of this description have been, for a long series of years, the glory of our land; and in this respect, our country has been, from its earliest settlement, munificently blessed. If, in this grand point, we shall continue to be favored of Heaven, the brightest hopes may be indulged. Our churches will be purified and replenished. Religion will rise from the dust; will shed her countless blessings on the present age, and will be transmitted, a fair and unpolled inheritance, to distant posterity. Should there be, in this regard, a degeneracy; should the clergy of the present, and the coming age, lose that spirit of exalted and serious piety, which distinguished their predecessors, the prospect will be dark and mournful indeed. Infidelity and skepticism, now but too prevalent, will increase their ravages, and multiply their victims. Error, irreligion and false religion, will gather new strength, and advance to new triumphs. The church will languish and decay; and all the great interests of our country will suffer vital and irreparable injury.

We look, with deep solicitude, to our Theological Seminaries. There are the future ministers of our churches. There are the minds which are preparing to form other minds, and whose influence will soon be felt, for good or evil, from the centre to the extremities of our country. Our hearts bless the piety, the wisdom and munificence, which have projected and endowed these schools of sacred science. For years, the churches of our land, and the heathen in far distant climes, have been gladdened by their auspicious influence. And thousands of prayers are daily ascending to heaven, for the continuance and increase of their purity and efficiency. But nothing on earth is perfect. The best institutions which human wisdom, and even human piety can devise, are liable to deterioration and perversion. The seminaries which we have named, confessedly afford to young men superior advantages for enlarging their minds, and strengthening their intellectual powers. Yet it is at least possible that, during this process, their piety may sustain a loss. The spirit of emulation, the spirit of ambition and of display, (and these intruders will sometimes make their appearance,) must cause sensible ravages on the simplicity and purity of the youthful mind. Nor is it less obvious that the familiar perusal of writers whose views of the inspiration and the doctrines of the Scriptures are undefined and wavering, whose learning and philosophy are frequently pressed into the support of error—is fitted to leave a noxious influence behind it. Yet such undeniably are the characteristics of no small portion of the theological literature and biblical criticism of the day. On this subject, informed and reflecting minds

already feel no small degree of alarm. And in proportion as love to the truth, and dread of undermining, corrupting error shall prevail in the religious community, this alarm will increase. It would be sad indeed, if, by a course of reading which is designed to prepare our young men for the service of the sanctuary, their minds should be imbued with essential errors, or even shaken in their adherence to the simplicity of gospel truth. Should an ardent attachment to the pure, sanctifying, humbling doctrines of the gospel, forsake them, it will not depart alone. The spirit of serious piety will depart with it. Indeed, it is a fact, that many a young man of fine mind, of sound orthodoxy, and hopeful piety, who has become enamored with the studies in question, has been shaken in his principles, has been gradually decoyed into the grossest errors, and ultimately brought to the very verge, and sometimes plunged in the depths, of skepticism and infidelity. Let the guardians and teachers of our Theological Seminaries devise, if possible, the means by which these tremendous evils may be averted. And let our young men, the hope of the churches, and their future guides, bind to their hearts the inspired admonitions: *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.—Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

[Prepared by the Pastor, the Rev. ALBERT BARNES.]

THE first Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia has been usually supposed to have been the first one organized in the United States. A few years since, however, Irving Spence, Esq. of Snow Hill in Maryland, supposed that he had discovered evidence of an older church in Rehoboth, on the eastern shore of Maryland. The probability is, that the churches were organized not far from the same time; but which had the priority it is now perhaps impossible to determine.

Very little is known of the early history of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. The precise time when it was organized is not indeed known; nor are there now any records in the church of its early history. It is stated in Dr. Mease's "Picture of Philadelphia," that "in the autumn of 1698, the Rev. J. A. [Jedediah Andrews, the first pastor,] came from New England to Philadelphia—and officiated as an independent minister. The Independents (who were also denominated Presbyterians) had by this time increased in numbers," &c. The congregation at that time was principally composed of emigrants from England, Scotland, and Ireland. Mr. Andrews, in a letter written in 1730, says: "Such a multitude of people coming in from Ireland of late years, our congregations are multiplied in this province to the number of 15 or 16, which are all but two or three furnished with ministers—all Scotch or Irish but 3 or 4;" and it is known that the first settlers of Pennsylvania did not adopt the Presbyterian mode of worship, nor would the emigrants from New England have adopted that mode. How long *before* the year 1698 they had been associated for public worship, or whether they were then organized as a congregation or a church, cannot now be determined. It is probable, however, that the Scotch and Irish, and the Independents from England in the city, would seek an early organization for the purposes of public worship, and it is not improbable that they may have been formed into a society for that purpose for several years before Mr. Andrews came among them. Nor is it impossible that they may have had a minister among them before Mr. Andrews.

The congregation at first worshipped in a house on "the Barbadoes lot," a store belonging to the Barbadoes Company, at the north-west corner of Second and Chestnut Streets. It is stated in Dr. Mease's "Picture of Philadelphia"