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TWENTY YEARS

IN THE

Seventh Presbyterian Church,

NEW-YORK CITY:

TWO SERMONS, DELIVERED JULY 1ST, 1855,

EDWIN F. HATFIELD, D.D.

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TWENTY YEARS

OF

PASTORAL SERVICE.

CHAPTER I.

“THEN said they among the heathen, ‘The Lord hath done great things for them.’ The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”—Ps. 126 : 2, 3.

THE child of God has continual occasion to admire the wonders of divine grace. From the hour of his conversion to the moment of his emancipation from the body, the grace of God displays itself in all that befalls him. The riches of that grace he can never exhaust, its depths he can never explore. His deliverance from the thralldom of sin and death; his translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of

God's dear Son ; his adoption into the household of faith ; his introduction into the fellowship of the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ ; and the sweet consciousness of " the peace of God which passeth all understanding ;" all seem to him, as he awakes from the slumbers of iniquity to a sense of the wonderful grace of which he is made so happy a subject, more like a dream or a lovely vision than an actual experience. With the Hebrew exiles, when restored to the land of their fathers, the blest land of promise, he can say : " When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing : then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us ; whereof we are glad."

In the early spring of 1824, the youthful son of an humble tradesman, in an adjacent State, engaged in the service of a merchant in his native town, received, from a schoolmate in the city of New-York, an intimation of a similar situation there that could be secured by a timely application. He came to the city a poor and almost friendless

youth, the recipient of the inconsiderable sum of fifty dollars a year in addition to his board, for his services as a merchant's clerk. At the expiration of the third year of his residence in the city, having been mercifully and marvelously delivered from the ten thousand snares that are there set for the feet of the unwary youth, he was admitted into the fellowship of the Central Presbyterian Church of the City of New-York, and encouraged to seek an entrance into the ministry of the Gospel. Nearly five years more were passed in preparation; and, at the commencement of the ninth year of his separation from the home of his youth, he was solemnly set apart to the sacred office. Three years more were passed in a laborious ministry, mostly in the far West, greatly to his advantage in that most intricate and difficult science, the knowledge of man. An afflictive providence led him once more to visit the scenes of his early youth, when, unexpectedly, he was solicited to become the pastor of a large and flourishing church in the city of his former clerkship. Tremblingly alive to the responsibilities of the position, and shrinking with constitutional sensitiveness from

the public gaze, he yielded, in reliance upon the Divine arm, to the importunities of his brethren, and accepted their call.

Twenty years have now expired since he entered into those solemn relations, and preached his first sermon to the people, who had so cordially and unanimously chosen him to be their pastor. This day he commences the twenty-first year of continuous service in these same relations, a wonder to many, but most of all a wonder to himself. Looking back over the whole period of thirty-one years and more, to the day of his landing on this island a poor, obscure, and friendless boy, among the busy thousands that filled these streets, and contrasting with that deep sense of loneliness that then oppressed him the deeper sense of conspicuousness and notoriety by which he is now so frequently overpowered, he cannot but think and speak of the wonders of that grace which has brought him to this hour. Nothing could have been further from his thoughts, in that early day, than the position of responsibility that he is now called to occupy. The dealings of Divine Providence with him and his, so strange and so un-

looked for, seem more like a dream than a reality, "the grace appears so great." If the world are constrained to say of him and his people, "The Lord hath done great things for them," he and his people are fully prepared to respond, and, with hearts overflowing with gratitude, to exclaim: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

The occasion calls for a devout recognition of the hand of God, my brethren, in the eventful history of this congregation for the last twenty years. I propose, therefore, to "call to remembrance the former days," and to "stir up your pure minds," by a rehearsal of some of the great things which the Lord hath done for us during the period of my ministry among you. It will deepen, I trust, our sense of the fluctuating and transitory nature of these earthly things, to glance at the changes which have in the mean time come upon our city, our neighborhood, our congregation, our households, and ourselves; it will serve to humble us all in view of the little that we have done for God, in comparison with the much that he has done for us; and to quicken us to a renewed conse-

eration of all our powers to the service of our Saviour, in the exercise of a more lively gratitude, a more confiding trust, and a more diligent endeavor to glorify God in body and spirit.

Let me, then, brethren, bring before you, in the first place, a view of our condition at the commencement of this period. The early residents of this neighborhood have a very vivid recollection of the time, when this whole region was looked upon as but a suburb of the metropolis ; when the valleys had not yet been filled, nor the hills brought low. That period had just passed, and the community acquired a settled state, when the former revered and honored pastor of this congregation, under whose diligent and faithful labors it had emerged from a state of infancy and feebleness to a condition of self-support and prosperity, was called to serve the Church in another and a more conspicuous post of usefulness. A ministry, extending from the autumn of 1817 to the spring of 1835, amid great discouragements and embarrassments arising from the unsettled state of the community and their want of resources in the forming

period of their history, had resulted in the erection, successively, of three houses of worship—one in Sheriff street, near Broome, and two on the site where we are now assembled; in the gathering of a large congregation with three flourishing Sunday-schools; and in the establishment of a Christian Church on which it had pleased God repeatedly to pour the refreshing showers of grace. The seals of that ministry were many; the membership had embraced, at the time of my coming among you, a total of eight hundred and eighty-two names; of which three hundred and forty-one had been received on certificate from other churches, and five hundred and forty-one on profession of their faith; three hundred and thirty-one of whom had been removed by certificate or death, leaving a membership of five hundred and fifty-one. Seldom has a minister of Christ, laboring in circumstances so unpropitious, been so much honored of God and so rewarded in his labors. An annual average of fifty-two additions to the Church, of whom thirty-two were on profession, gave abundant evidence that the weapons of his warfare were “mighty through God to the pulling down of

strong-holds." Under the forming hand of that sainted servant of Christ, the Rev. ELIHU W. BALDWIN, D.D., this Church had thus been gradually prepared to take its place among the burning lights of the city, and to exert a wide and hallowed influence. It was no light thing for one so much his junior in years, and his inferior in acquirements, to occupy the post that he had so long and so ably filled.

At that period this Church might still be regarded as one of the outposts of the religious community in this city. The population had not yet spread far enough to the north to warrant the erection of many houses of worship beyond our own bounds. The Second-Avenue Church, near Second street; the Bleecker-Street Church, near Broadway, and the Eighth Church, in Christopher street, formed the northern line of Presbyterianism in this city. The migration of whole churches from the lower to the upper parts of the city, which has subsequently been prosecuted so extensively, had not yet commenced. The bulk of the population, as well as of the churches, was found below Grand street.

The floods of immigration had not yet begun to pour in upon us as in later days, especially from Central Europe. The census of the city, which had just been taken, showed a resident population of 270,089; while the city of Brooklyn, just then assuming importance, had increased to 24,529; and the village of Williamsburgh, just coming into notice, included within its bounds less than 4000 souls. The whole population of these three localities, now falling but little, if any, short of 900,000, then scarcely reached 300,000; having multiplied itself thrice within a score of years. We have seen the tide rising and spreading far away to the north and north-west on the one hand, and away to the east and south-east on the other; so that, from having occupied a frontier station at the commencement of this period, we are now brought almost into the centre of a circle that includes nearly a million of souls.

Of the numerous churches that were scattered over the southern part of our island but few remain unchanged. Some have ceased; others have been removed; and others still have passed into strangers' hands. In our own connection, the

changes have been very marked and peculiar. The First Presbyterian Church, then worshipping in Wall street, near Broadway, has removed to Fifth avenue, near Twelfth street. The Cedar-Street Church, then building an elegant structure on the corner of Duane and Church streets, has become two bands, one of which worships on the corner of University Place and Tenth street, and the other on the corner of Fifth avenue and Nineteenth street. The Scotch Church, then occupying the venerable church-edifice in Cedar street, near Broadway, has since had two removals—first to the corner of Grand and Crosby streets, and since to Fourteenth street, between the Fifth and Sixth avenues. The house of the Murray-Street Church was removed, piece by piece, and rebuilt in 1842, on Eighth street, near the Fourth avenue, but has since come into the possession of a Roman Catholic congregation. The edifice of the Pearl-Street Church, near Broadway, was destroyed by fire in 1837, rebuilt in the following year, and recently demolished, the congregation having removed to Broome street, near Elm. The edifice of the Laight-Street Church has passed into the pos-

session of a Baptist congregation ; and that of the Rutgers-Street Church has been removed to give place to a more substantial edifice occupying the same site. The Eighth-Street Church, then worshipping in Christopher street, corner of Bleecker street, has since been disbanded and their house of worship sold to an Episcopal congregation. The Central Church, having parted with their pastor and a large number of influential families, who have located themselves on Madison square, has been united with the Pearl-Street Church, and retains its former position, their house having once been enlarged, and recently burnt down and rebuilt. The Spring-Street Church, having torn down their old edifice, have built a more substantial one on the same site. The Bleecker-Street Church, then worshipping near Broadway, have sold their house to a Banking Association, and have removed to the corner of Fourth avenue and Twenty-second street. The Union Church has been dissolved, and their house of worship, on the corner of Prince and Marion streets, has come into the possession of the First Colored Presbyterian Church, then worshipping in the old stone Church, since demol-

ished, on the corner of Frankfort and William streets. The First Free Church, worshipping at the corner of Dey and Washington streets, has been merged into another organization, and their church-edifice converted into stores. The Second Free Church, occupying the Chatham-Street Chapel, has been dissolved, and their place of worship converted to other uses. The Bowery Church has also been dissolved, and their church-edifice, after several transfers of ownership, has been destroyed by fire. The Second-Avenue Church has, in like manner, passed away, and their house of worship become the property of a Roman Catholic congregation. The Village Church has shared the same fate, and their house passed into the hands of another branch of the Presbyterian Church. The Eighth-Avenue Church, then worshipping on the Eighth avenue, have since built and subsequently sold a new house on Twentieth street, and are now, under another name, worshipping in their new and beautiful house on West Twenty-third street, near the Seventh avenue. The Fourth Free Church were then erecting a house of worship on the corner of Catharine and

Madison streets, which afterwards passed into the possession of a Methodist Episcopal Society, and has lately been purchased by the Port Society to take the place of the Roosevelt-Street Mariners' Church. The Brainerd Church were also erecting an edifice on Rivington street, near Orchard, now occupied by a German Presbyterian Church, while its former possessors, under a new organization, are worshipping in their new and costly house, on the corner of Second avenue and East Fourteenth street. The Brick Church, the Canal-Street Church, the Allen-Street Church, the Carmine-Street Church, and our own are the only ones, among the twenty-seven churches connected with the Synod of New-York at that period, which retain their position and external appearance; and, of these five, two at least have for some years been seeking a transfer to some other locality.

These numerous changes, affecting not our own denomination alone, but others also, have been brought about by the gradual and, of late, the rapid encroachments of trade; creating a demand for a constantly increasing number of warehouses in the lower part of the city, enhancing greatly

the value of real estate in that section, and thus driving the former residents into a region of the city that, twenty years ago, was so far out of town as scarcely to be thought of as a place of residence. The fluctuations thus occasioned, and the changes wrought in the aspect of our metropolis, as also in the habits of our people, have been almost without a parallel even in our own fluctuating America. In view of these facts, we may well say with the Hebrew apostle, "for here have we no continuing city;" and we might well be reconciled to it, if it could also be said by us all, "but we seek one to come."

Very few of the brethren who occupied the position of pastors to these churches, at the time of my coming among you, have continued in the same relations to the present time. The Rev. WILLIAM W. PHILLIPS, D.D., is still the pastor of the First Church; the Rev. GARDINER SPRING, D.D., of the Brick Church; the Rev. JOHN M. KREBS, D.D., of the Rutgers-Street Church; and the Rev. JOSEPH McELROY, D.D., of the old Scotch Church. These are the only Presbyterian pastors in the city whose term of service among

the same people, under the same organization, exceeds my own. Not one of the pastors in the Third and Fourth Presbyteries of New-York, and the Presbyteries of Brooklyn and Newark, is now ministering to the ecclesiastical charge of which he was the pastor twenty years since, save myself. The pastor of the Canal-Street Church, Rev. ROBERT McCARTEE, D.D., left in 1836, and has had at least three successors. The Cedar-Street Church and the Laight-Street church were both vacant. The Eighth Church had just called the Rev. EDWARD D. SMITH, D.D., to be their pastor ; and he left them in 1842. The Rev. HENRY WHITE, D.D., was the pastor of the Allen-Street Church, but resigned in 1837, and has had not less than five successors : Rev. WILLIAM BRADLEY, Rev. GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D.D., Rev. DAVID B. COE, Rev. GEORGE THACHER, and Rev. GEORGE C. LUCAS. The Rev. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D., was then pastor of the Central Church, and has since become the pastor of a new church, gathered from the Central, and worshipping on Madison Square. The Rev. HENRY G. LUDLOW was the pastor of the Spring-Street Church, but resigned in 1837, and has had two successors : Rev.

WILLIAM PATTON, D.D., and Rev. ALFRED E. CAMPBELL, D.D. The Rev. ERSKINE MASON, D.D., the pastor of the Bleecker-Street Church, departed this life in May, 1851, and his successor was the Rev. JOEL PARKER, D.D., who continues in that charge. The Rev. JOHN WOODBRIDGE, D.D., was the pastor of the Bowery Church, but resigned in the following winter, and was succeeded by the Rev. RICHARD W. DICKINSON, D.D., who retained the charge less than six months. The Rev. ELIJAH P. BARROWS, the pastor-elect of the Dey-Street Church, was dismissed in 1837, and followed in the pastoral office, for a short time, by the Rev. JACOB HELFFENSTEIN. The Rev. CHARLES G. FINNEY was the pastor of the Chatham-Street Chapel, but was transferred, in the following spring, to the Broadway Tabernacle Church. His colleague, the Rev. JOHN INGERSOLL, was dismissed about the same time; their only successor was the Rev. JOB H. MARTYN. The Rev. DIRCK C. LANSING, D.D., the pastor of the Houston-Street Church, was dismissed four weeks after I commenced my labors here, and has had five successors: Rev. NATHANIEL E. JOHNSON, Rev. SAMUEL D. BURCHARD, D.D.,

REV. SELDON HAINES, REV. R. S. STORRS DICKINSON, and REV. T. RALSTON SMITH. The REV. ISAAC N. SPRAGUE, the pastor of the Catharine-Street Church, was succeeded, in 1837, by the REV. JOEL MANN, and in 1838 by the REV. JAMES I. OSTROM, who continued but two years. The REV. HENRY A. ROWLAND, D.D., the pastor of the Pearl-Street Church, at the expiration of eight years, was followed by the REV. CHARLES H. READ, and he, in 1849, by the REV. A. AUGUSTUS WOOD. The REV. THOMAS MCAULEY, D.D., the pastor of the Murray-Street Church, resigned in 1845, and was followed, for a short time, by the REV. WILLIAM R. CHAPMAN. The REV. CHARLES S. PORTER continued the pastor of the Second-Avenue Church for five years and more, after which the REV. HORACE EATON became their pastor for a short period. The REV. DAVID R. DOWNER, the pastor of the Carmine-Street Church, died in 1841, and has had two successors: REV. EDWIN HOLT, and REV. THOMAS H. SKINNER, Jr. The REV. WILLIAM PAGE, the pastor of the Village Church, continued in the office only a few months, and had two successors: REV. DANIEL CLARK, Jr., and REV. DAN-

IEL BROWN. The Rev. HENRY A. RILEY resigned the charge of the Eighth-Avenue Church, of which he was the pastor, in 1839, and has had three successors: Rev. ROBERT C. BRISBIN, Rev. JAMES I. OSTROM, and Rev. FREDERICK G. CLARK. The Rev. ASA D. SMITH, D.D., resigned, in 1851, the charge of the Brainerd Church, to become the pastor of a new church, gathered principally from the Brainerd, and worshipping in Fourteenth street. And, to complete the list, the Rev. THEODORE S. WRIGHT, the pastor of the First Colored Church, died in 1847, and has since been succeeded by the Rev. JAMES W. C. PENNINGTON, D.D.

It will be observed that, of this whole number, three only were removed from their pastoral relations by death, and that all but eight are now in the land of the living. With all these brethren I have been more or less intimately acquainted; and with the most of them have repeatedly taken counsel for the advancement of the cause of Christ in this city, throughout the land, and over the wide world. It is to me a most affecting thought, that so many of them have passed from among us, and that I look around in vain for the associates of my

early ministry. What a picture does this review present us, not only of the fluctuating character of our city, but of the instability of the pastoral relation in these latter days ! The history of other denominations, it is thought, would still more fully confirm this impression. It should teach us a lesson both of humility and gratitude : humility on account of the inconstancy of man ; and gratitude that no similar dispensations of Providence have interrupted the happy union that has so long existed between the pastor and the people of this congregation.

But we need not go abroad for illustrations of the transitory nature of all human affairs. Our own neighborhood, and our own particular ecclesiastical community, have furnished us with abundant material for such reflections. While the house, in which we have so long worshiped with so much profit and delight, remains as it was, with but slight internal alterations, and while the general aspect of this portion of the city has been scarcely affected by the gradual march of improvement, the people themselves are not what they were when first I knew them. So many have been the re-

movals of individuals by death, and of families to other parts of the city, and to the surrounding country, particularly to the western district of Long-Island and the south-western part of Connecticut, that but few continue to occupy their former houses, and strangers are found in almost every dwelling-house. The ravages of death, too, among the members of these old families have kept pace with the well-known rapacity of the king of terrors, and left everywhere a painful void. The babes and prattlers, too, of 1835 have become young men and maidens; the boys and girls of our Sunday-schools are now, those of them that remain, the bone and the sinew of the community; on many a brow that showed no sign of age, the wrinkles of care and sorrow have made their appearance, and the raven locks have begun to be frosted over with the tokens of the early winter; while the men of might and experience, the elders and the leaders of the people, who received me with open hands and hearts, by the silvery hair that adorns their temples, and by the careful step, give indication of their near approach to the not-distant "bourne from which no traveler returns."

At the time of my entering upon the duties of the pastoral office among you, the whole number of church-members, so far as I could ascertain, was but five hundred and forty-eight. Of these, by the most diligent inquiry of myself and the elders of the church, it was found that some thirty had passed away, and left no trace behind. About twenty others, whose names still remain upon the register, have never been in attendance on my ministry. Of the remaining five hundred, only fifty-six remain connected with us, the others having been removed by certificate, discipline, or death; only fifty-six in stated or even occasional attendance—not more than about one in every ten; the nine have gone. Of these relicts of the past, two, **Mrs. BETSEY BENEDICT**, and **Mrs. MARGARET MATTHEWS**, have been connected with the church from the first year of its existence, more than thirty-six years; two others, **Mrs. ABIGAIL WITHERELL**, and **Mrs. PHEBE ROGERS**, more than thirty-three years; and one, **ELLEN WOODHOUSE**, thirty-one years; only five remaining of the two hundred and sixty-two who had been received into the communion of the church thirty years ago. Of the

four hundred and forty-three who had been received twenty-five years ago, only fifteen remain ; and of the eight hundred and seventy-nine whose names had been enrolled by my predecessor, twenty years since, only fifty-six remain among us.

While, then, it is true, in one sense, that I have been the pastor of the same people for twenty years, in another sense it is not true at all. You are not the same people that called and received me to this charge. Of the twelve names appended, by order of the congregation, to the call for my pastoral services, one only, CHARLES MERRILL, is now found on the register of the church and congregation ; five are the names of departed friends no longer found in the land of the living ; the remainder have passed away into other connections. The old church, the old people, with their households, have left me ; gone, as duty, Providence, or inclination called ; gone, to return, in most cases, no more for ever. A new church, a new people, gathered, with but few exceptions, under my own ministrations, now hear the word of God at my mouth, and receive the sacramental bread at my hands. Occasionally one of my old

flock comes in among us to renew the days of old, and sit in these heavenly places in Christ Jesus as aforetime ; but he looks around on a strange people, and finds but here and there a familiar face and a well-remembered voice. “ We are passing away ! we are passing away ! ! ” is the lesson that comes to us from these pews and this pulpit. The former occupant of the sacred desk, venerable and beloved, has been numbered with the elders round about the throne of God, and bearing his part in the praises of the upper sanctuary, for the space of nearly fifteen years, during the last five of which he has been joined by his former partner in the joys, the cares, and the sorrows of life. Not more than ten of the two hundred pews in this house have been occupied for twenty years by the same family ; and of the two hundred and fifty pew-holders, only thirty-five now retain that relation to the congregation. Of those whom I addressed on the occasion of my first pastoral service, it may be said of by far the greater part,—the place which they then occupied shall know them no more. The stranger has come into the possession of the sanctuary, and the builders of the house have departed.

Such a review is eminently fitted to humble us before God, as creatures of a day, and to lead us to confess, with the ancient patriarchs, that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." We, as well they whose places we now occupy, will soon give place to others, and go the way of all the earth. Let the thought of our own frailty and mortality sink deep into our hearts to-day, and there abide until we are called hence.

In no department of service connected with this particular religious community have the changes to which I have alluded been so marked and obvious as in our Sunday-schools. Of the fifty-nine male and ninety-six female teachers, then occupied as assistants of the pastor in the instruction of the young on the Sabbath, not more than four or five are still enrolled in the same register; and of the whole number, only fourteen remain in our connection. A noble band of brethren and sisters they were; and most cordially did they coöperate with their pastor in this delightful work, as well as in every other good word and work. But they, too, have gone—some to receive the reward of the "good and faithful servant," and the most of the

remainder to labor, and to good purpose, in some other portions of the vineyard. May they never want successors of a like spirit, and in sufficient numbers, to guide the lambs of the flock into the fold of the Good Shepherd. It is worthy of remark, in this connection, that we have need to make much of our opportunities of doing good. To these one hundred and fifty-five teachers were committed providentially the souls of nearly a thousand young candidates for eternity. Theirs was the privilege of giving form and coloring and life to the future history of these young immortals. They cheerfully embraced the opportunity, and diligently labored in their holy vocation. They have been called into other spheres of duty or of enjoyment. Their working-days in this field were soon ended. They have gone, but their work remains. Not a few—perhaps the greater part—of those beloved youth have since entered into the Church of Christ, and have themselves become the teachers of the young in things pertaining to God. We should prize such opportunities of usefulness, both because they are so limited in duration, and

because "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

In this picture of the state of this congregation twenty years ago, it is proper to exhibit the state also of the financial department of this religious enterprise. I need not say, brethren, that the people who then sought my services were rich, not so much in this world's goods, as in faith and good works. Not one of those who subscribed the call was placed above the necessity of close occupation in business to meet the daily expenses of his household. I know not that there was an individual among the people whose worldly estate could have been estimated at \$100,000; and certainly not half a dozen whose individual property could have been sold for the half of that sum. The greater part were dependent on their daily gains for a subsistence; some few were traders in a small way; almost none of them jobbers or wholesale dealers; the greater part were mechanics—young, industrious, and frugal—while not a few of them supported themselves honorably and comfortably by the needle. There never has been a time when it could not be said, in respect to many of this

people, "To the poor the Gospel is preached;" nor when the words of the Master had not their fulfillment here: "The poor always ye have with you." It was from among the poor that the congregation was gathered, just as it was with the first churches of our Lord. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

A little more than three and a half years had elapsed since they had succeeded in the completion of the edifice in which we are now assembled, on the site of a similar structure consumed by the flames in February, 1831. Unable fully to meet the expenditure, the congregation had assumed a debt of \$12,000, the annual interest of which constituted a weighty burden, and drew heavily upon their resources.

It was to a congregation thus constituted, and thus burdened, that my attention was directed in the latter part of June, 1835. More than three and a half years of my life had been occupied in the work of preaching the Gospel; of which all but one year had been passed in a border-State of

the West. A desolating providence, the most afflictive that can come upon a sensitive heart, had separated me from the people of my charge. Oppressed with grief, and suffering from disease, I was expecting to serve the Church in promoting the cause of Education for the ministry. On this errand I visited the city, and learned for the first time on Saturday, June 20th, 1835, that the people of this congregation desired me to become their pastor. The afternoon and evening of the day following brought me before them in the sacred desk. A few hours of pleasant intercourse with some of the people convinced me of the ardor of their desires for my services. At the commencement of the following week a unanimous call was put into my hands, and urged upon my acceptance. It was to me an unsought and an unlooked-for providence. I was constrained to regard it, in all the circumstances, as a call from God to devote myself once again to the pastoral work, and cultivate, as best I could, this portion of the Lord's vineyard.

In yielding myself to the wishes of the people so warmly expressed, I could not but tremble at

the responsibilities that I was about to assume. Conscious of many infirmities, and sensible that my mode of preparation for the pulpit, which at the first I had adopted from conviction, and afterwards had practised in accordance with the prevailing tastes and habits of a frontier people, was but little in accordance with the prevalent style of the pulpit in this section of the country, it is not strange that I felt considerable apprehension as to the results of my ministry among you. It would have been the height of vanity, to compare myself with the great and gifted men who occupied the pulpits of our denomination in this city, whose praise was in all the churches, with whom I was to be brought into something like rivalry for the suffrages of the populace, and by whose eminent qualifications my own were to be measured. Shrinking therefore from the very thought of such an unequal competition, and truly desirous to make full proof of my ministry during the period that God had allotted me to continue among you, under a deep sense, too, of the uncertainties of life, quickened by my recent painful experience, I cast myself upon the Divine guidance and your con-

siderate forbearance, determining to “seek not yours but you,” and entered, in the twenty-ninth year of my age, upon the work of winning souls to Christ in this community. On the first Sabbath in July, 1835, I preached my first sermon as your pastor; and now, at the expiration of the full period of twenty years, am spared to recount the wonders of the way in which the Lord has led me, and to join you in shouting to his praise, “The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”

CHAPTER II.

“THIS is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”
—Ps. 118 : 23.

IN proceeding now to place on record some of the great things that God has done for us as a church and congregation, during the past twenty years, allow me to disclaim, most sincerely and earnestly, every thing like vain-glory or boasting. It is with no desire or intention of depreciating the ministry of my brethren in the sacred office, or of claiming for you or myself any superior piety, or qualifications for the work in which we have been engaged, that I enter upon the details appropriate to the occasion. I trust that you, brethren, are prepared most heartily to join with your pastor in ascribing all our distinguished prosperity to the sovereign will and pleasure of the great Head of the Church, who, “out of the mouth of babes and

sucklings" hath "perfected praise." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." With our blessed Lord himself it becomes us, and we are prepared, I doubt not, most cordially to say: We "thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight."

It becomes us to refer, in the commencement of this enumeration of blessings, to the goodness of God in bestowing upon us a considerable amount of worldly prosperity. We are not, indeed, to look upon an increase of earthly substance as an unmingled good, or as more desirable than growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Far from it. You have been taught, and I trust not in vain, to believe, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," that riches are most frequently a snare to their possessor, and that "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful

lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." When, however, it pleases God to bless the labor of our hands, and, with an increase of worldly goods to endow us also with a holy purpose of benevolence, then riches become a matter of thanksgiving, and we are enabled to scatter blessings around us like rain.

Twenty years have made a marked change in the worldly circumstances of this congregation. Many among us have acquired an ample competency, and the most of you have been prospered in your worldly undertakings. If you have met with reverses, a kind Providence has enabled you to emerge from the sea of trouble, to regain your former position, and even, in many cases, to advance upon it. With all this has been poured upon us a spirit of benevolence. The annual contributions of this congregation to the various enterprises of Christian and philanthropic zeal, have, during the whole period, been largely—many-fold—in advance of what they ever were before. The resources of the congregation have in a still larger proportion been increased. Some few of the brethren and sisters that have been

numbered with us during the greater part of this period, have come into the possession of great wealth, and have used it freely in the building up of the cause of Christ. By means of their liberality and the generous coöperation of all classes in this congregation, the indebtedness, that pressed so heavily upon this enterprise at my coming among you, has been entirely removed, so that there remains at the present time only a floating debt of a few hundred dollars, which it is an easy matter to dispose of in a single day, if there be a ready mind. In the mean time the current annual expenses of the congregation have been increased about \$1500, and generally met by the current receipts, or an occasional contribution. All this has been effected without any burdensome increase of the rental of the pews in the sanctuary; scarcely another, if any, of the churches of our denomination in the city offering such accommodations at so low a price. It is believed that the current receipts of the congregation may, by a slight increase of the assessments on the pews, without the slightest rational ground for complaint, and with

but little difficulty, be made to cover the whole amount of our annual expenses.

In this connection it becomes me to mention, with gratitude to God, the grace given to one of our sisters in the church, who, during the greater part of my ministry here, and until a few weeks since, has been one of the highly-valued members of my flock, and upon whom God has of late bestowed abundant worldly substance. It has pleased God to put it into her heart to contribute the sum of \$25,000 to the endowment of the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History in the Union Theological Seminary in this city, to be called, in honor of her lamented brother and my bosom-friend, "The Washburn Professorship." It is matter of devout thankfulness to God, not only that such a friend was raised up for our beloved Seminary in its time of need, but that both the means of such liberality should have been acquired, and the spirit or disposition to exercise it should have been fostered, here among ourselves. May it please God not only to reward with the richest spiritual blessings the almoner of this bounty, but to raise up many

more from among us thus to adorn their profession of faith in a crucified Redeemer.

But these are not our greatest favors. It is of far richer bounties, and of blessings more widely diffused as well as vastly more enduring, that I have now to speak. While I am permitted to rejoice with you in the growing intelligence, the enlarged pecuniary resources, and the increasing liberality of this congregation, I can not but look on all these as the merest circumstances, in comparison with that far greater good with which it has pleased God to endow the people of my charge. You have been trained to look upon the redemption of the soul as infinitely precious; to ask with the Saviour, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" to seek, therefore, as the greatest boon that God could confer upon you and yours, the special converting influences of the Spirit of God. The same grace that led my feet into the paths of salvation, and brought me to prize the blood of Christ as precious beyond conception, also led me, when introduced into the privileges, responsibilities, and

trials of the sacred office, to seek, in every prayer, the unspeakable honor of bringing the souls of my people into the possession of the saving grace of the Gospel of Christ. "Give me souls for my hire, as seals of my ministry, and stars in my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord," has been my fervent aspiration from the first until now. I know no higher honor, and can think of no greater boon, that a minister of Christ can possibly ask.

In this respect, you and I, beloved, have abundant occasion to rejoice and give thanks. Deficient as have been my best services among you, and unworthy as my preaching has ever been of your acceptance and of the Divine favor, my labor among you has not been in vain in the Lord. We are not left to-day in despondency to hang our harps on the willows, and to lift up the voice of lamentation, exclaiming, in the language of inspiration, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Our thoughts are led to dwell, on the other hand, with a grateful recognition of their appropriateness to our own case, upon the words of the prophet to desponding Is-

rael: "Lift up thine eyes round about and behold; all these gather themselves together and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doeth. For thy waste and desolate places, and the land of thy destruction shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, 'The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell.' Then shalt thou say in thine heart, 'Who hath begotten me these?'"

The changes that have come over you, brethren, in the respects to which I have already referred, are as nothing in comparison with the changes that Divine grace has wrought within your hearts—in your past and present experience, and in your prospects for eternity. The most of you have, within these few years only, begun to live to some purpose. Your hopes of pardon and of eternal glory date not back, except in a few instances, beyond the period of our mutual acquaintance. When

first you heard this voice, you had never known what it was to be made partakers of the benefits of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. You were yet “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity,” “dead in trespasses and sins.” You can not have forgotten, “that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of the Lamb;”—“no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” A great and a mighty change has come over you. Ye are not at all what ye were. “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” You have learned by your own happy experience, that to be born again—to be begotten anew by the Spirit of God—to become new creatures at heart—to be renewed and sanctified by the grace and through the Gospel of the Son of God, are any thing but flights of fancy or the conceits of a disordered brain. “The heart of stone”

has been exchanged for "a heart of flesh." The light has broken in upon your darkness ; " the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." Yes, beloved, evangelical experimental religion is to you a blessed reality. With the delighted beneficiary of a Saviour's love, you can say, each with a grateful heart, " One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." God be praised for the sweet experience of his grace !

As it has been with you, so has it been with hundreds more, who in other days have shared the burdens and the privileges of this religious enterprise. They came, " and washed, and received sight." They came in some cases to scoff, and went away to pray. They came, destitute of all things, to the fountain of a Saviour's love, to the treasury of a Redeemer's grace, and went away

cleansed, and enriched with the "pearl of great price." They have gone from us to serve their Lord and Saviour in other relations, or to share in the rapture and glory of the ransomed in the paradise of God. But wherever they are, on earth or in heaven, they cease not to recall, with thanksgiving and praise, the time and the place of their espousals to Christ. This house of God will ever be associated, in their vivid recollections, with grateful thoughts of the honor and the bliss, that were here bestowed upon them in their deliverance "from the power of darkness," and in their translation "into the kingdom of" God's "dear Son." "And of Zion it shall be said, 'This and that man was born in her,' and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there."

The number of these cases of conversion can never be ascertained in the present imperfect state. "It is not all gold that glitters." "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

“Not every one that saith unto me, ‘Lord! Lord!!’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven,” are the admonitory words of the Saviour himself. We cannot persuade ourselves that, careful as the session of this church have ever been in the admission of individuals to its fellowship, they have never erred, have not frequently been deceived in relation to the experience of the applicant. They have never possessed, and certainly have never claimed, the gift of the “discerning of spirits.” Though none have ever, at least within the period of my own connection with the session, been admitted except by the unanimous voice of the brethren present at the examination of the candidate, yet they have had occasion afterwards to regret that, in some cases, they had not exercised more caution and discrimination.

In estimating the spiritual results of a ministry extending over a score of years, by the number of admissions on profession, it is also to be taken into the account, that not all the converts in a season of refreshing are gathered into a single church. Some

are attracted from other congregations to hear the word, and, having received the grace of reconciliation, become connected with the church in whose sanctuary they have been accustomed to worship, or with some other in the immediate vicinity of their residence. Others, again, through a constitutional timidity, or erroneous views as to the Lord's Supper, or mistaken apprehensions as to the kind or amount of evidence required, scarcely dare to hope in the mercy of God, or to offer themselves for membership in the church. On these accounts it may be assumed that the number of conversions falls not much, if any short of the number of admissions, even if it does not exceed it.

The *additions* to the communion of this church during the period under review have been, on *Examination*, one thousand five hundred and fifty-six; on *Certificate*, six hundred and sixty-two—in all, two thousand two hundred and eighteen, which, added to the number in communion when I took charge of the congregation, makes a total of two thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine souls who

have been members of this church under my pastoral watch and care ; of whom *one thousand one hundred and ninety-one* remain on the register of the church, showing the removal, by certificate, death, or discipline, of *one thousand five hundred and seventy-eight souls*.

Of the additions to the church by *Certificate*, the largest number were received in the earlier portion of my ministry. At that period, it was more customary than of late for American families and foreign Protestants to move into this neighborhood, and find a residence within our bounds. Latterly the tide has in a measure turned. An immense number of Israelites, of Irish Romanists, and of German immigrants have found a home on our borders and in this immediate vicinity. During the first ten years, four hundred and sixteen were received from other churches, and in the remaining period two hundred and forty-six. The whole number of persons received into the communion of this church on certificate from other churches has been one thousand and three, in a period of thirty-seven years, being a yearly

average of twenty-seven. The largest number, seventy-three, were received in the first year of my ministry; in the second year, sixty-four were received; and in the ninth, fifty-two.

Of the additions to the church by *Profession* the largest number were received in the first, the second, the twentieth, the eighth, and the third of the twenty years: in the first, extending from July 1st, 1835, to July 1st, 1836, two hundred and fifty-seven; in the second, two hundred and fifty-one; in the twentieth, the year that has just closed, one hundred and seventy; in the eighth, one hundred and forty; and in the third, one hundred and thirty-seven. The whole number received on profession in these five years was nine hundred and fifty-five, or a yearly average of one hundred and ninety-one; while for the remaining fifteen years, three quarters of the whole time, only six hundred and one were received, an annual average of forty. In the seventh year eighty-four were received; in the eleventh, eighty one; in the fifth, seventy-two; in the fourth, sixty-four; in the twelfth, fifty-one; and in the thirteenth, fifty.

These were our most prosperous years. The additions have fallen below the average during seven of the score. In the fourteenth year we received but twenty-eight; in the eighteenth, but twenty-two; in the fifteenth, but eighteen; in the sixteenth, but sixteen; in the seventeenth, but thirteen; in the tenth, but nine; and in the nineteenth, but seven. Generally, the period, embraced in the years from 1848 to 1854, has been the darkest in our whole history, so far as respects the number of conversions. It was, as you all will remember, "the Age of Gold," a season, for the most part, of great commercial prosperity. At the first announcement of the discovery of gold in our "new purchase" on the Pacific coast, a vast change was wrought in men's views and expectations. They became almost mad after the golden treasure. "The things which are seen" excluded from their thoughts "the things which are not seen." In vain we preached—they would not heed us; in vain we remonstrated—our words were but as the idle wind. The ease with which fortunes were made, and the facilities that were

offered to all to embark in these golden speculations made them turn a deaf ear to our entreaties, and close their hearts against the peaceful and gracious visitations of the Spirit of God. They would not believe.

But at length the tide was turned once more. Early in July last the bubble burst with the exposure of the Schuyler fraud. The work of revelation and of defalcation went on; failures multiplied and credit was gone. The pestilence and the dearth, with a foreign war, were added as the judgments of the Almighty. A winter of unexampled depression followed, and starvation stalked through our streets. Then it was that our people began to turn to the Lord. In our nineteenth year only seven, as I have said, were added to the church on profession, and I began to think that my work among you was done. In the twentieth year, by the good hand of our God upon us, we have received one hundred and seventy, more than in any previous year, except the first and the second. It is good for us to have been afflicted. The loss of worldly substance and the

darkness as to worldly prospects have proved a lasting gain to our immortal souls.

The results of each of the twenty years, in their chronological order, are as follows :

1st year,	73 on Certificate,	257 on Examination;	=	330.
2d	64	“ 251	“	= 315.
3d	38	“ 137	“	= 175.
4th	31	“ 64	“	= 95.
5th	28	“ 72	“	= 100.
6th	31	“ 41	“	= 72.
7th	39	“ 84	“	= 123.
8th	28	“ 140	“	= 168.
9th	52	“ 45	“	= 97.
10th	32	“ 9	“	= 41.
11th	35	“ 81	“	= 116.
12th	37	“ 51	“	= 88.
13th	34	“ 50	“	= 84.
14th	17	“ 28	“	= 45.
15th	26	“ 18	“	= 44.
16th	26	“ 16	“	= 42.
17th	19	“ 13	“	= 32.
18th	13	“ 22	“	= 35.
19th	18	“ 7	“	= 25.
20th	21	“ 170	“	= 191.
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	662	1556		2218.

The *whole number* of additions from the beginning, March, 1818, has been, on *Certificate*, *one thousand and three*, and on *Profession*, *two thousand and ninety-seven*; in all, *three thousand and one hundred*. Since July, 1835, the annual *average* of additions has been *one hundred and sixteen*; thirty-eight on certificate and seventy-eight on profession. For the whole thirty-seven years it has been a little more than *eighty-three*, one year with another; twenty-seven on certificate and more than fifty-six on profession.

Such are some of the results, dearly beloved, which constrain us, on this anniversary occasion, to exclaim, with adoring love and wonder, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." You and I have abundant reason to rejoice together as we review those seasons of grace which have resulted in the conversion of so many of you and yours.

" Have they not reason to rejoice
Whose sins have been forgiven,
Called by a gracious Father's voice
To be the heirs of heaven?"

Let us not prove unmindful of these benefits,

but bear in mind the solemn truth, that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." If we have been blessed above many, we should be grateful above many; laid under heavier obligations than most, it becomes us to consecrate ourselves more than they all to the service of our gracious Lord and Master.

In this enumeration it is proper to add, that I have, during these twenty years, addressed you with a message of Gospel truth in sermons, lectures, and at funerals, not less than *six thousand* times; I have attended not less than *a thousand* funerals; have baptized *five hundred and sixty-three* adults, and *one thousand two hundred and seventy* infants; and have performed the marriage ceremony in *one thousand one hundred and twenty-one* instances.

Grateful mention also should be made of the kindness of that Providence, which has given me strength to undergo these labors. At the commencement of my second year among you, the feeble and alarming state of my health made it expedient to occupy some eight weeks in a visit to the West; during which, however, I was enabled

to preach every Sabbath, generally twice, and in the last week but one almost daily,—returning with renewed vigor and confirmed health. At the close of my thirteenth year I was wholly laid aside for four or five weeks by a severe affection of inflammatory rheumatism, for the third time in my experience, and the last until now. At the close of my sixteenth year, in consequence of a cold, superinduced upon a physical system exhausted by severe labor during a winter of close application to study and preaching, I was visited with an affection of the throat, which, for a long time, assumed an obstinate and alarming character, and constrained me to forego the public exercise of my ministry for nearly six months, extending from May to November, 1851. My place in the pulpit was supplied, at the expense of my people, by the Rev. HENRY T. CHEEVER and the Rev. BENJAMIN J. MARTIN. From the period of my gradual recovery, in November and December of that year, I have been enabled to continue, with no return of that troublesome affection, and with but slight interruptions from colds, in the exercise of my pulpit duties to the present

time. Though a score of years has been added to my age, it is not in my power to say, that I have grown *gray* in your service; nor, though sensible of the increasing burden that age is laying upon me, and often weighed down by the multiplicity of public cares that my station in society and a numerous family necessarily bring upon me, do I feel less able, as the experience of the present year has shown, to renew the labors of the first years of my ministry among you. For all this favor I desire to render, on this occasion, my devout thanksgivings to Almighty God.

These results, moreover, have been gained without the customary journeying and rustication in the season of the annual summer vacation. I have deemed it exceedingly undesirable that, at a time when disease and death are reaping their greatest harvests, the city should be left, to so great an extent, without the benefit of clergy—that at least the pastors of our churches should so generally be absent from their posts. My remaining at home, at such times, has subjected me to the necessity of answering the calls of the dying and the bereaved in other congregations beside my

own, and made the month a season of increased service. I speak not by way of rebuking others, but in thankfulness that I have been enabled to perform these labors without any apparent diminution of health and strength.

In casting up the results of my labors among you, and the blessed fruits which, through divine grace, it has been permitted me to reap, it is proper to refer, not merely to the work of regeneration carried forward so extensively in connection with this church and its ministry, but also to the work of edification and sanctification, in the case of all these converts, from the day of their introduction into the household of faith, and of the brethren and sisters who came to us from other churches. It is no small work to form the habits and principles of a child of God ; to train him, from the start, to think right, to believe right, to feel right, to act right ; to restrain him from the ways of the ungodly ; to make him fully aware of his dangers, his duties, and his responsibilities ; to restore him from his wanderings ; to rouse him from his spiritual slumbers ; to awaken him to penitence, and renewed faith and hope and love ;

to stir up his dormant sensibilities, and call his latent energies into healthful and vigorous action ; to give form and character to his whole Christian life, and educate him for the highest seat in glory. No small part of every faithful minister's thoughts and labors is to be given to this work. You yourselves, brethren, know to what an extent your pastor has sought to present you all faultless before the throne of God. I trust that I have not labored in vain, not only to bring you into the kingdom of Christ, but to make you active, intelligent, and useful subjects of that kingdom. You and I will never know, in this life, how powerful an influence the sermons and exhortations, that have so often been addressed to you from these lips in this sanctuary, have exerted over your characters for time and eternity. It will be soon enough for us to arrive at the full knowledge of the power over us of these and other instrumentalities, when we reach our home in the skies. Of one thing we may rest assured : you are not now what you would have been had you and I never met ; or had we parted to meet no more, as soon as you were converted to Christ.

It would gratify me, if time would admit, to pay more than a passing tribute to the noble bands of Sunday-School Teachers and Tract Visitors, by whose faithful endeavors so much of this wide field of labor has been cultivated, so many dear youth instructed in the knowledge of salvation, and so many families persuaded to hear words whereby they have been saved. Several thousand children have, first and last, been brought into these schools, and trained for usefulness and glory by several hundred faithful teachers. May they who are now occupying these departments of religious service never grow weary of their work, nor fail of their reward. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

During the first year of our connection, three Sunday-Schools, Nos. 20, 38, and 69, were attached to this congregation, and conducted by its members, under the Superintendency of Messrs. JOHN A. ACKLEY, RICHARD C. OVERTON, and ROBERT T. SHANNON. The second of these served as the nucleus around which was gathered the Madison-Street Church, to which it was thenceforward at-

tached. The other two have ever since been conducted by this congregation: the first, under the Superintendency, successively, of Messrs. STEPHEN HAFF, WILLARD M. HOYT, CHARLES PARKER, JAMES GREACEN, GEORGE ELDER, ALEXANDER MILNE, PHILANDER W. STEBBENS, JAMES LEWIS BENEDICT, and again of STEPHEN HAFF; the other, No. 69, under the Superintendency of Messrs. BENJAMIN C. MITCHELL, JAMES STRUTHERS, WILLIAM F. NASH, JOHN H. BULEN, JAMES D. LAWRENCE, MARVIN BRIGGS, and HIRAM B. LITTELL.

It becomes me also, on this occasion, to make honorable mention of those brethren who have gratuitously devoted themselves, at the call of the congregation, to the oversight of its financial affairs. Great credit is due the TRUSTEES for their self-denying services, particularly in seasons of commercial stagnation and pecuniary reverses. It is mainly owing to their persevering endeavors, and large-hearted liberality, that we have been enabled to clear the property of the congregation from all incumbrances, and to place it, as it is at this day, above the hazard of a fatal foreclosure.

At the coming of your pastor among you, the

congregation was served, in this capacity, by MESSRS. LEWIS CHICHESTER, JAMES STRUTHERS, OLIVER EDWARDS, JAMES DUFF, E. D. COMSTOCK, GEORGE ELDER, CHARLES MERRILL, JOHN JEWELL, and JOHN GAUDU. . One only of these brethren, CHARLES MERRILL, continues with us. The others have passed away—two of them, OLIVER EDWARDS and JOHN GAUDU, to the eternal world. The office of Trustee has since been filled, at successive elections, by MESSRS. WILLIAM ROBINSON, JOHN PALMER, GEORGE S. BRIGGS, SAMUEL PHILIPS, LEWIS S. BOUTON, HERVEY LOSEE, WILLIAM ALLEN, MICHAEL MCGRATH, JAMES HALSEY, H. NELSON VAIL, THOMAS J. FISHER, PHILANDER W. STEBBENS, SHADRACH SMITH, JOHN L. SHARP, FRANCIS A. CASALIER, EDWARD FRANKLIN, ANDREW B. BRINCKERHOFF, T. VAN ZANDT MUMFORD, STEPHEN R. HALSEY, JAMES D. LAWRENCE, CHARLES H. ROGERS, GURDON S. MUMFORD, JOHN R. MARSH, JOSEPH BRADLEY, ELKANAH S. HAWKINS, JAMES H. WHITE, JACOB D. M. ARMOUR, WILLIAM R. SINEY, JAMES EGBERT, WILLIAM ROBINS, WILLIAM REYNOLDS, VILROY WILCOX, NELSON LANE, N. LATTING BENNET, JOHN D. PRIME,

EDGAR C. PATTERSON, WILLIAM H. SANFORD, WILLIAM ANDERSON, MANNING MERRILL, EDMUND B. HORTON, ELBERT LATHAM, and HARRISON HALL. The whole number of Trustees for the twenty years is *fifty-one*; of whom, Messrs. S. R. HALSEY, WHITE, EGBERT, WILCOX, BENNET, PATTERSON, ANDERSON, LATHAM, and HALL are now in office. Of those elected since 1835, five, Messrs. BRIGGS, ALLEN, JAMES HALSEY, VAIL, and FISHER, have departed this life; and seventeen others have removed from our connection; so that of the whole number only twenty-one remain.

It has already been observed, that this church was gathered originally from among the poor, and has always had the poor with them. Of these there have been, ever since my connection with the church, some who have needed the benefactions of their brethren to keep them from want. To serve this class among us, the first DEACONS were elected in March, 1836; and *eighteen* of our number have served in this office: Messrs. STEPHEN HAFF, JAMES REMSEN, MELANCTHON FREEMAN, ISAAC STELLE, CLEMENT JONES, ROBERT M. MITCHELL, GILBERT K. LOSEE, ELIAS STEBBINS, JOHN W. HILL,

RICHARD W. MOORE, JOHN HUTCHINGS, LUTHER T. STOWELL, AMOS BAILEY, ELKANAH S. HAWKINS, HIRAM B. LITTELL, JOHN W. CONOVER, SILVANUS EDWARDS, and JACOB D. M. ARMOUR ; of whom, MESSRS. HUTCHINGS, HAWKINS, and CONOVER continue in office ; ten have removed from us, and two, MESSRS. MITCHELL and E. STEBBINS, have died ; leaving but six of the whole number now in our connection.

The church was served in the office of RULING ELDER, twenty years since, by MESSRS. EZRA H. FERRY, JOSEPH F. SLIPPER, JOHN A. ACKLEY, and JAMES D. HAFF. To these have since been added, MESSRS. JOHN CONGER, JARED B. PECK, JOHN H. BULEN, ALEXANDER MILNE, JAMES STRUTHERS, JAMES REMSEN, STEPHEN HAFF, RUFUS MEAD, CHARLES MERRILL, GEORGE ELDER, WILLIAM J. McMASTER, HIRAM WARNER, SAMUEL WEBSTER, JAMES HALSEY, RICHARD W. MOORE, CHARLES B. HATCH, PHILANDER W. STEBBENS, WILLIAM D. WEBB, JAMES GREACEN, WILLIAM H. MILLER, AMOS BAILEY, FRANCIS DUNCAN, JAMES H. WHITE, JAMES D. LAWRENCE, HIRAM B. LITTELL, and CHARLES P. BALDWIN ; *thirty* in all. Of these,

six, Messrs. SLIPPER, ACKLEY, McMASTER, WEBSTER, JAMES HALSEY, and BALDWIN, have entered upon their heavenly inheritance; eighteen others have removed from our connection; and six, Messrs. FERRY, STEPHEN HAFF, MERRILL, BAILEY, WHITE, and LITTELL, remain in office. Five other brethren, Messrs. JAMES W. BISHOP, VILROY WILCOX, JAMES EGBERT, DANIEL LITTLEFIELD, and EDGAR C. PATTERSON, were chosen, last Thursday evening, to serve the church in this department, and are to be ordained and installed on the morning of the next Lord's Day. To those who have already filled this responsible office, with whom I have been so intimately and pleasantly associated, and by whose harmonious counsels and efficient aid I have been so greatly assisted in my work among you, we all owe a debt of gratitude. May those who yet survive be abundantly blest in their life, and at death receive, as their brethren, who have preceded them to the eternal world, have already received, the blissful welcome—"Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Thus cursorily have I glanced at the great things the Lord has done for us during the score of years

just closed. I have not spoken of the influence that this church has exerted over this region of the city, throughout the metropolis, and in other portions of the land. That influence we cannot measure; but we trust it has not been small nor valueless. Nearly a hundred of our members went from us to build up the Madison-Street Church; and almost as many we have contributed to the Eleventh Church. We have contributed, in like manner, to the Gowanus and Central Churches in Brooklyn, the First Church in Williamsburgh, the Sixth-Street Church in this city, the Harlem Church, and the First Presbyterian Church in Stamford, Ct. Our brethren are found in almost all the churches of our connection in the city and its vicinity, and in numerous churches throughout the country, both East and West. Everywhere, in whatever connection they are found, they are, for the most part, I believe, adorning their profession, and serving their Lord and Master. Many of them have become office-bearers in the churches, and some of them preachers of the word. Throughout the land, and especially in the churches of our own denomination, what God has done for us has been

spoken of, to the praise of his grace, and to the encouragement of those who are praying and toiling for the extension of Christ's kingdom; "for your obedience is come abroad unto all men," "and your zeal hath provoked very many." The tidings of those gracious outpourings of the Spirit, with which we have been so repeatedly and marvelously favored, have stirred up very many of God's people to seek for similar blessings, and not in vain. We have been as "a city set on a hill," "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men."

While we have great occasion this day to be glad and rejoice in what the Lord has done for us and by us, have we not also still greater occasion to be humbled in view of our unfaithfulness, our coldness, our worldliness, our wanderings, and our unbelief? Have we not too often been disposed to murmur at our lot, to contrast unfavorably our location with that of others in the newer portions of the city, and to aspire to greater elegance in the sanctuary and its adornments? Let us be humbled, brethren, and ashamed before God this day, that we have not more fully appreciated the distin-

guished favors that God has conferred upon us. Let us seek henceforth so to live as not to provoke the Lord to withdraw from us — so to live and labor, that we may continue to enjoy as heretofore the smiles of a gracious God.

These twenty years have passed rapidly away, and with them, as we have seen, the greater part of our associates in this enterprise. The changes of the next twenty years will, in all probability, be not less, but more. Every year is separating from us friends and neighbors, and dispersing us abroad over the face of the earth. Death creeps in, and our loved ones are buried out of our sight. We all shall soon be gone. Our race will soon be run. The account of our stewardship must soon be given to the Great King. Are you ready, brethren? Are you living “with eternity in view?” Are you doing with your might what your hands find to do? “In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” Happy he that can say: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus?”

To some among you, I fear, this grace has come in vain. Ye are yet in your sins. How great the grace that you have resisted! These

many years we have come to you, seeking fruit, and have found none. We have been to you "a savor of death unto death." You have slighted our oft-repeated calls, entreaties, and warnings. We "have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God." If you perish, your blood must be upon your own head. Must it be? Why will you die? Turn, sinner, turn.

God grant, beloved! that you and I may all of us so improve our day of grace, as eternally to sing in glory: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."