

THE PASTOR  
OF THE  
OLD STONE CHURCH.

---

MR. HOTCHKIN'S MEMORIAL, JUDGE ELMER'S EULOGY,  
AND MR. BURT'S ADDRESS,

COMMEMORATIVE OF

REV. ETHAN OSBORN,

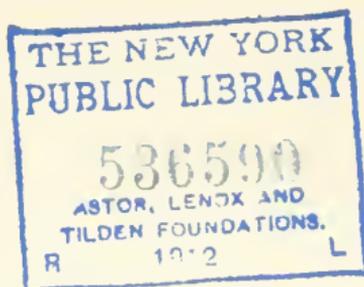
LATE PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FAIRFIELD, NEW JERSEY.

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
WILLIAM S. AND ALFRED MARTIEN,  
No. 608 CHESTNUT STREET.

1858.

Ch



---

HENRY B. ASHMEAD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,  
George Street above Eleventh.

---





THE PASTOR,

Taken at the age of ninety-seven.

Memorial

OF

REV. ETHAN OSBORN,

WHO DIED MAY 1, 1858,

IN THE ONE HUNDREDTH YEAR OF HIS AGE,

By Rev. B. B. HOTCHKIN.

Philadelphia Jan 21<sup>st</sup> 1894  
On this my Birth Day  
anniversary some 61 Years  
old with gratitude to  
Almighty God and with  
loving remembrance of my  
Sainted Grand Father I  
present this Volume which  
Commemorates his life  
to my <sup>son</sup> Thos Osborne  
and through <sup>him</sup> to his heirs  
and successors praying  
to Almighty God in His  
blessing **on** in Him and  
succeeding generations  
according to His promise  
Thos Osborne Son of



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

---

THE filial relation which I sustained toward the subject of the following sketch, as his eldest son in the pastorate of the Fairfield Church, was probably the reason why the duty of preaching a Funeral Discourse at his burial was assigned to myself. I was afterwards requested by members of his family and others to furnish a copy of the Sermon for publication. This I engaged to do, provided material could be obtained for improving the biographical notice which formed perhaps its only point of interest. Having had only the time of the evening before the funeral for preparation, I regarded its historical details as too imperfect to be placed into permanent form. The matter which I have since found, has enabled me to make such corrections and enlargement that I do not regard it proper to claim for the present production any identity with the Funeral Discourse. I have therefore dropped the form of a Sermon, and in its place I herewith present to my bereaved friends this "Memorial" of their venerated and glorified parent, an affectionate tribute to his memory, and a testimony to the grace that was in him.

B. B. H.

WALLACE, PA., 1858.



THE OLD STONE CHURCH.

# MEMORIAL OF REV. ETHAN OSBORN.

---

## PART I.

### FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS ORDINATION.

WHEN we laid the remains of the sainted father, of whom I write, in their last resting place, a Christian minister stretched his hand over the grave and said—“*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace!*” Around him stood an audience—in numbers almost an army—but it is believed there was not a heart among them all to withhold the responsive “AMEN.” Whether we consider the length of time during which such a character was borne, the uniformity with which it was sustained, the blending of energy and inoffensiveness in acting it out before the world, or the consistency of the various experiences and acts which make up the life, we are impressed with the propriety of applying the highest Scriptural terms for describing the good man, to the late Fairfield Pastor. We adopt them, not in their unqualified meaning, but in the comparative sense which alone justifies their application to beings this side of heaven.

A stranger, brought for the first time into the company of Father Osborn, would observe an air of general goodness and Christian simplicity in his speech and deportment; but he might wonder what were the striking traits—the strong salient points of character—which created his high reputation, and preserved it in growing strength through more than two human generations. Closer intimacy would reveal the secret of this wonder. The strength of his character did not lie in individual traits, and this memorial of his life will have little to say of salient points. In the *unity* of his excellences lay the hiding of their power. His life, as a whole, was a striking life. All its parts revealed the ever-present influence of Divine grace. In the intimacies of home or out among men, in sacred or secular duties, in seasons of festivity or in the chambers of the dying, in the church or in the world, his demeanor was uniformly marked by habitual communion with God. It is true, there were fine traits in his mental constitution; still we feel our chief indebtedness to the grace of God that was in him, for the precious fragrance of his memory.

---

REV. ETHAN OSBORN, the subject of this memorial, was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, August 21, 1758. I am indebted to one of his relatives residing in that place, for a few statistics respecting his family, which his near friends will be glad to see

preserved. The remarkable longevity which the record exhibits, will also engage the attention of the general reader.

His father, Capt. John Osborn, died January 7, 1814, aged eighty-six years. His mother, (maiden name, Lois Peck,) died November 28, 1819, aged eighty-seven. They were the parents of nine children, five of whom died at ages ranging from seventy-nine to ninety-nine, viz: John, who died at the age of seventy-nine; Ethan, ninety-nine; Eliada, eighty-six; Rebecca, (Mrs. Samuel Seymoure,) eighty; and Elizabeth, (Mrs. Ebenezer Marsh,) seventy-nine. One daughter, Anna, (Mrs. James Riley,) died at the earlier age of forty-six. Two children died in youth—Heman, while a member of Dartmouth College, at the age of nineteen, and Lois, aged twenty-one. There is one survivor, Mrs. Thalia Kilbourn, Widow of Whitman Kilbourn, now eighty-one years of age, in good health, and a regular attendant at church in Litchfield, three miles from her home.

It may not be without interest to give, in this place, another table of longevity among the early friends of Mr. Osborn. It was communicated to me from the necrological records of Dartmouth College, through the kindness of Rev. John Richards, D. D., of Hanover, (N. H.,) the seat of the College. Of Mr. Osborn's class, seventeen in number, eleven are known to have died at the following ages respectively: Mr. Jacob Osborn, (cousin to Ethan,) sixty-two; Rev. Christopher Page, sixty-

four; Rev. Gilbert Tennent Williams, sixty-four; Rev. Solomon Aiken, seventy-five; Rev. William Montague, seventy-six; Rev. John Wilder, seventy-eight; Rev. Nathan Church, eighty-two; Rev. William F. Rowland, eighty-two; Rev. Thomas Gross, eighty-four; Rev. David Porter, D. D., eighty-nine; Rev. Ethan Osborn, ninety-nine. Almost contemporaneously with the death of Mr. Osborn, a college associate of a previous class, Rev. Zechariah Greene, of Hempstead, L. I., at the age of ninety-eight years, passed to the world of spirits.

The records of Mr. Osborn's early life are few. There are almost none living to tell us the incidents of his childhood and youth, or even his entrance upon public life. My chief resources for his personal history until the first third of the duration of his pastorate had expired, are two auto-biographical discourses, and his occasional reference to the events of that period in conversation with myself or others who have favored me with their recollections.

In the year 1822, having been the Pastor of the Fairfield congregation more than thirty years, he gave to the people an account of his life and labors up to that time, in the two discourses mentioned above, preached on consecutive Sabbaths, using for his text, Acts xx. 18—"Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons."\* These sermons will

---

\* For a copy of the first of these discourses—the most important, because reaching back beyond all other means of information—I am

contribute largely to the narrative which follows. He approached his subject through the following apology for bringing himself so prominently into the pulpit—an apology which the reader will not require, when it is remembered that he had even then filled out an ordinary day and generation of ministerial labor.

“Having lived and labored among you in the gospel ministry for more than thirty years, it seems reasonable that we should take a brief review of the ground we have traveled over, and of God’s dealings with us. It is hoped that such a review may afford us some lessons of useful instruction. The general design of these discourses is to lay before you some of the principal events which have occurred during my residence among you, and as I pass along, to express my thoughts and opinions respecting them. This I shall do with the utmost freedom, and shall perhaps disclose to you some of my secret thoughts which have never yet been made known. The time has arrived when I have nothing to fear from such a frank disclosure. My motives of action, my regard or disregard of your welfare, are known to God, and must ere long be known to yourselves, whether I speak them out or not. You have been eye and ear witnesses of the principal events of providence and grace which we shall review, and thanks to God! many of you have been heart witnesses by your own happy experience.”

He then introduced the review of his pastoral labors with some notices of his childhood and youth, including his early religious experience, and his

---

indebted to the care of J. Barron Potter, M. D., of Bridgeton, whose reverential regard for its author led him many years ago, to secure it from the oblivion which otherwise would probably have befallen it. The last I was fortunate enough to find among the manuscripts of Mr. Osborn.

entrance upon the great work of his life, the ministry of salvation. The account must have been highly welcome to his people of that day, but his giving it was especially providential for us, after this lapse of thirty-six more years. Beginning with his childhood in Litchfield, he proceeds—

“My condition and school education were like those of other children in my native place. I was favored, thanks to God! with religious parents and a religious education. My parents are gone to their long home, and I trust sleep in Jesus. They trained me in the habit of attending public worship, but for some years I went to meeting rather reluctantly, or against my inclination. Some alarming providences impressed my mind with serious thoughts of death and the judgment.\* This was perhaps before the age of nine or twelve years.† After my serious impressions began, I went to religious meetings without persuasion or driving. I then went, not to see and be seen, but to hear the word of God, and to learn how I must escape the wrath to come and obtain eternal life. The Sabbath became a most welcome day, which I tried to keep holy, and improve for my best spiritual interests, for this was my principal concern. Compared with my soul’s salvation, every affair of this life appeared low and trifling.

“About this time I began secret prayer, which I have continued more or less to this day, though I am conscious that I have often been too remiss in it. \* \* \* \* I felt conscious that the eyes of the Lord were upon me, and I fully resolved carefully to avoid whatever would incur his displeasure, and to do whatever my conscience and his word and Spirit should tell me was my duty. But, like David, I soon found that innumerable evils had compassed me about, and mine iniquities had taken hold upon me. I found that my own strength was weakness; temptations assaulted

---

\* The alarming providences here referred to were two shocking casualties, each resulting in the death of a family relative.

† Does he not mean *between* nine and twelve?

me and too often prevailed against me; yet like Job, I tried to hold fast mine integrity.

“When I was preparing for college, while studying the Greek Testament, I saw more clearly than ever the amiable excellency of our Saviour. My mind was enamored of his heavenly beauty, and my soul’s desire was to be like him and with him. Ever since, I have had a trust that I have received the Saviour by faith, and am interested in the special favor of God through his merits and mediation, though it often seems too exalted a favor and blessedness for such a sinner to expect. And scarcely, if ever, do I feel that assurance of salvation which I desire. May the Lord perfect in us all that which is lacking of grace, faith, and assurance!”

We cannot now tell how much distrust of his own acceptance with God, he intended the last two sentences should express. It is certain that in his later years, he was a living illustration of the peace which the full assurance of hope affords. In the last interview which the writer had with him, a few months previous to his death, to the question, “How do you do, Father Osborn?” he replied in his cheery tone, “I am very well, thanks to a merciful Providence! well in body, and in good spiritual health.” If any regard such a reply as presumptuous, let them consider the man, the spiritual experiences of a long, long life, and his consciousness of his then present position on the threshold of eternity, and then say what other testimony they would have him give respecting the work of God in his soul.

In the foregoing outline—for it is only an outline—of a long travel from carnal security to a full appreciation of Christ his Saviour, the discerning

reader must have noticed how distinctly the *progressiveness* of Divine influences on his heart, is brought out. We first find him under the alarms of a Providential warning, and with some rising convictions of sin and righteousness, striving to do what is right. Then through years of *legal* experience—perhaps in the twilight of grace—he *tries* to hold fast his integrity, *tries* to keep the Sabbath holy, and avoids what he thinks will incur the displeasure of God, because, as he says, “I felt conscious that the eyes of the Lord were upon me.” At length “*the amiable excellency of our Saviour*” unclouds itself before his soul, and Christ is to him the end of the law for righteousness. Where should such a gradually developing experience rest, short of that faith which, standing on the shore of time, sends back the testimony—“I know that my Redeemer liveth!”

The following sentence closes his account of his early religious experience:—

“While I was a student in Dartmouth College, I was admitted to full communion with the Presbyterian\* Church there. Never shall I forget the first time I partook of the Lord’s supper. My mind was solemnly and devoutly exercised, and with a good degree of consolation.”

The reader will regret the rapidity with which the foregoing account runs over the period included in it. I have no means of supplying its deficiency of incidents in his spiritual experience, except as I have heard him refer to the influences which he

---

\* Congregational ?

enjoyed under a work of grace among the students during his college course.\* He spoke of those influences as having wrought in his soul new and enlarged views of the blessedness of laboring for Christ, but whether they were the immediate cause of his selection of the gospel ministry for the work of his life, I am not informed. In estimating, at this distant period, the effects of that revival, there may be some significancy in the fact that thirteen of the seventeen graduates of 1784, (Mr. Osborn's class,) became ministers of the gospel.

The auto-biographical sermons pass in silence one important part of Mr. Osborn's life, previous to his entering college. Perhaps it was left without mention, under the impression that it did not properly belong to his religious experience. I refer to his connection with the army of the American Revolution.

He was eighteen years of age when the colonies were in the second year of their memorable struggle for independence. During that year, his native township furnished a company of volunteers for the service, and no one who knows the readiness for self-sacrifice and intrepidity for the right, which were elemental in his natural constitution, will be surprised that the list contained the name of Ethan

---

\* I find in the sketch of a sermon preached at the funeral of Rev. Zachariah Greene, in Hempstead, L. I., on the 20th of June, 1858, by Rev. N. C. Locke, furnished for the New York Observer, the following notice of this revival. "There was a very general awakening in the parish around and in the College. Some fifty converts were the fruits of it—all admitted to the church in Hanover, in the winter of 1782. The pastor of the church was Sylvanus Ripley, D. D."

Osborn. His connection with the army was brief, but it extended through one of the darkest periods of the war—the campaign of 1776. He was with the forces under the immediate command of Washington, in the retreat through New Jersey. From this field of personal observation, his memory gathered up many incidents illustrating the nobleness and virtue of the commander-in-chief; and during the later years of his own life, his eye was rekindled with the fire of those days, whenever his friends made a draft upon his personal recollections of the war.

He kept in his mind a catalogue of providential deliverances from imminent perils of death. One of these interpositions of heaven on his behalf, occurred during this service. While the division of the army to which he belonged occupied Fort Washington, above New York, he was compelled, by sickness, to accept a short furlough. During his absence, the fort was taken by the British, and the prisoners were removed to New York. Some were confined in the building known by the name of the Sugar House, and others were thrown into prison ships. Close confinement and a fare that was next to starvation, produced a mortality so great, that only four persons of the company to which Mr. Osborn belonged, survived. If in his then enfeebled health, he had been subjected to those exposures, there is little doubt but his personal history would from that time have belonged to another world. But there remained for him a more distinguished warfare in the army of the Cap-

tain of Salvation, and until this was accomplished, Divine providences were arranged to secure him alike from the arrow by day and the pestilence in darkness.

Mr. Osborn had become a member of Dartmouth College previous to his enlistment, probably when he was seventeen years of age; but his course there was interrupted by the temporary breaking up of the College in consequence of an invasion from Canada. This, with him, must have produced a delay of some years in his studies, as we find him a graduate of the class of 1784.

His conversational references to his college life, in after years, contained many affectionate allusions to the then presiding officer, Dr. John Wheelock. For him, he seems to have cherished a peculiar attachment, and once after his settlement in New Jersey, he paid him a visit of friendship and condolence under the trials which beclouded his declining years.

The scant outline of his auto-biographical sermons is all our clue to his spiritual history, from the time of his leaving College to his entrance upon his public ministry. He says—

“After I left College, I was disemployed\* for about three years. During that time, being often exposed to vain company, I insensibly and gradually became too much conformed to the spirit and

---

\* I give this word as I find it, presuming he does not mean to say that his time was not employed in some specific pursuit. It is certain that he was licensed to preach the gospel in 1786, and he elsewhere says that he received his licensure *after* he had studied Divinity.

fashion of the world. More than once my feet, like David's, were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. More than once I was almost drawn into the whirl of iniquity. But in mercy the Lord sternly rebuked me, stopped me in my presumptuous course, and once more turned my feet unto his testimonies. For ever blessed be his name!"

Mr. Osborn entered the ministry before the existence of Theological Seminaries in this country. He pursued his theological course of study in part, under the tuition of Rev. Andrew Storrs, of Plymouth, Connecticut, and for the remainder, with his cousin, Rev. Joseph Vaill, of Hadlyme, in the same state.

In 1786, he received his license to preach as a probationer for the holy ministry, and without any delay, he gave himself to the pursuit of his chosen work. A few weeks afterward, he was formally invited to become the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Spencertown, N. Y. He declined this call, chiefly because he wished to take a wider observation of the great field for ministerial labor, before settling himself in a pastoral charge. With this view he came on to Philadelphia, and from thence, under the advice of the late Rev. Dr. Sproat, made an excursion to the lower counties of New Jersey. Those who are accustomed only to the present rapid and easy modes of journeying, may smile at the mention of this tour as a formidable enterprise. But in that day, over the country as it then was, a journey from Connecticut to Lower New

Jersey, was an event in the history of a man. It was performed by Mr. Osborn on horseback.

On his way down, he preached and remained a few days in Pittsgrove, Salem county. From thence he came to Deerfield, where he spent his first night in Cumberland county, (the night of the thirtieth anniversary of his birth,) in the house of Ephraim Foster, Esq., to whose family he allied himself, some thirty years afterwards, by marriage. He then came on to Fairfield, where, after laboring with acceptance through what was then the usual time of trial, he entered upon that pastoral settlement which was destined to be so enduring, and so fruitful of blessed results. On the 3d of December, 1789, the Presbytery of Philadelphia inducted him into this charge, under the ordination formula of his church. The sermon was preached by the Rev. George Duffield, D. D., Pastor of the Pine Street Church, Philadelphia, whose descendant of the third generation was Mr. Osborn's co-presbyter at the time of his death.

## PART II.

### FROM HIS ORDINATION TO HIS DISMISSION.

WE have reached the point where the ministerial life of Mr. Osborn becomes so interwoven with his church, that some anterior notice of the last becomes almost an essential introduction to a history of the pastorate now to be reviewed.

When in 1789 the Presbyterian Church in Fairfield welcomed its young Pastor, it was already venerable among the churches of this country. We have no means of ascertaining its exact age. Its records previous to 1759, were destroyed in a fire which consumed the house of one of its pastors, and there is neither documentary history, nor any preserved tradition of the date of its organization. The remotest known document bearing incidentally on the point, is a provincial law of 1697, which enacts "that the tract of land on Cohansey, purchased by several people lately inhabitants from Fairfield, in New England, from and after the date hereof, be erected into a township, and be called Fairfield."\* These "several people" were a colony of Puritans, whose descendants remain, to the present day, the principal occupants of the township, with little intermixture by foreign marriages, a still less

---

\* Contributed by Hon. L. Q. C. Elmer, to Dr. Hodge's Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church.

alloy by immigration. It would be difficult, even in New England, to find a community where the truths, order, and moralities of religion, as taught by Brewster, Hooker, and Davenport, have suffered less corruption, than in these isolated congregations which have grown out of the former parish of Mr. Osborn. Doubtless his long administration of its spiritual affairs—being himself of Puritan stock, and a connecting link between the old and new times—contributed not a little to this result.

The custom of the times suggests the probability that a church was organized in the colony before it entered the Delaware Bay. At least it would violate all our notions of Puritanical order, to suppose the settlement existed any length of time without such an organization. We are, therefore, safe in carrying its date back to 1697. Probably the truth, if it could be known, would remove it a little farther into the past distance, as the colonists may have occupied their new home a short time before obtaining a township incorporation. Doctor Hodge, in his History, makes this one of the three oldest Presbyterian Churches in New Jersey, without determining to which of the three seniority belongs. The others, he says, are Freehold, instituted in 1692, and Woodbridge, which appears on the Presbyterial records in 1708. The first mention of Fairfield on the same records, is in the same year. It must be remembered that there was then but one Presbytery in the country—that of Philadelphia. It was not organized until 1705, and the churches then in

being, did not all drop in at once, so that nothing regarding their exact age can be settled by their first mention in the Presbyterian minutes.

Mr. Osborn preserved a few traditionary points in the early history of the church, which he informed me were handed down to him by Ephraim Harris, Esq., a member of the session at the time of his settlement. These were written out by him in 1846, and published in the *Christian Observer*, Philadelphia. But all which relates to the time previous to the destruction of the church records, is comprised in less than a quarter of a column. I find that the Presbyterian records, and some other reliable authorities, modify this tradition in a few particulars, and where I depart from the account in the *Observer*, it may be understood that I do it in obedience to recorded evidence.

Mr. Osborn supposes, with much probability, that the colony brought a minister with them from New England, and gives the name of Rev. John Bradnor as the first settled minister. Some doubt, however, rests upon the tradition which has placed this name at the head of the list of Fairfield pastors. A man of the same name, said in the record to be from Scotland, was licensed by the Presbytery in 1715, but there is no account of his having preached in Fairfield; neither could the first pastor be identified in him, without an anachronism.

Coming down to 1702, we have a notice of Rev. Thomas Bridge, as preaching to this congregation in that and the following year, but I find no account of his installation.

The first known settled pastor was Rev. Joseph Smith, from Connecticut. He came as a licentiate, and was here ordained to the ministry and installed in this charge, May 10, 1709. His pastorate must have been very brief, as in 1711, the church is again found vacant. So it appears to have remained until October 15, 1714, with the exception of the incidental mention of the name of a Mr. Exell, as preaching here in 1711, but not as pastor.

Under date of 1714, we have the record of the installation of Rev. Howell Powell over this congregation. He is said in Mr. Osborn's account to have been from Wales—a supposition which is corroborated by the circumstance that his name was sometimes written Howell Ap Powell. His work was soon done, and it is said, well done. The Synodical record of 1717, records his name among the deceased brethren.

In 1722, Rev. Henry Hook, from Ireland, is found ministering to this church, but without any pastoral connection with it. His name soon after appears as a minister in the State of Delaware.

Following this, in each of the years 1724 and 1726, we find notices of Rev. Noyes Paris in a similar relation, and then we are brought to the record of a more memorable installation.

In 1727, Rev. Daniel Elmer, from Connecticut, under the sanction of the Presbytery, took his position as the appointed watchman on these heights of Zion. His connection with the church continued until 1755, twenty-eight years. This was the first

long continued pastorate which the church, now more than half a century old, had enjoyed.

Up to the period of Mr. Elmer's settlement, all history of its spiritual condition is lost. What effusions of the Spirit of converting grace were enjoyed, how its members walked in the light of the Lord, what jealousy was exercised over the cardinal truths of the Christian system, how ministers preached and people prayed, with what unction the means of grace were sustained—all these things are without any written record, and beyond the memory of men. The lips from which we might have learned, have long been mute in death. It is, however, a very suggestive fact, that our earliest reading of the reliable history of the church, brings us into the presence of a praying people.

The pastorate of Mr. Elmer was cotemporaneous with the great religious revivals in connection with the preaching of Whitefield and the Tennents, and there is no reason to doubt the tradition preserved by Mr. Osborn, that this place shared largely in the prevalent influences. In 1740, Mr. Whitefield personally aided in the work in Greenwich, on the opposite shore of the Cohansey, and the influence of his presence there could hardly fail to be felt in Fairfield. Indeed, it is not an improbable supposition that his own labors were extended across the narrow channel which divides the two parishes.\*

---

\* I find in the American Tract Society's edition of the Life of Whitefield, an account of Mr. Whitefield's preaching at Cohansey. This was the original name of the Fairfield church, on the book of

Throughout the country these seasons of refreshing were seldom free from some real or supposed innovations upon Christian order, which led some good men to withhold their sympathies from the popular religious movement, and in not a few instances, to assume the attitude of bitter hostility toward them. Serious alienations followed, both in individual churches, and in the Synod, which then embraced all the Presbyteries which had been formed in this country. The rupture of the Presbyterian Synod, dividing it into what was then termed the Old and New Light sides, occurred in 1741, and continued until 1758, when our Zion again returned to the blessed unity which should distinguish the kingdom of Christ. The last fourteen years of Mr. Elmer's pastorate were included in this period, and while this church enjoyed a good share of the prevalent gracious effusion, it did not escape the opposite excitement of party spirit. It, however, preserved its connection with the Presbytery of

---

the Presbytery, but at this time it was applied to the country on both sides of the creek. It cannot, as used in Mr. Whitefield's journal, refer to Greenwich, because that place appears under its own name, a few lines above. It is claimed for a locality near what is now Shepherd's Mill, on the same side of the creek, once the site of a Baptist church. There was also, at that time, a Baptist church in Cedarville, on the Fairfield side, which was then in the temporary possession of a party from Mr. Elmer's church, prominent among whom—strange to say—was Daniel Elmer, jr., a son of the pastor. Mrs. Ruth Davis, now a lady of great age, and very reliable memory, says that her mother spoke of Mr. Whitefield's preaching in this last church, as a well known fact.

Philadelphia, which remained in the Old Light Synod. It speaks much for the pastoral qualifications of Mr. Elmer, that under the numerous embarrassments to which this state of things must have subjected him, he was able so long to maintain his position.

Mr. Elmer's mortal remains lie among those of his flock, in an ancient burying-ground on the bank of the Cohansey. It has long been unused, and is now grown into a pleasant forest. A little human care, added to its present rural adornments, would make this one of the most beautiful sanctuaries of the dead in lower New Jersey. The descendants of Mr. Elmer are numerous in Cumberland county, and many of them in distinguished positions, and by intellectual and moral worth, have imparted an abiding fragrance to the name of their common parent.

Rev. William Ramsey, who succeeded Mr. Elmer, was ordained as pastor in 1756. His ministry appears to have been one of signal prosperity and usefulness. Harmony was restored to the church, and the new era of revivals which opened during the administration of Mr. Elmer, came out from the clouds of discord and appeared as the shining day. In relation to the most interesting period of this pastorate, Mr. Osborn has left the following minute: "In 1765, there was a remarkable awakening and revival of religion. In almost every house, one or more were subjects of the gracious work. The whole number added to the church in 1765-6, was

eighty-nine. It has been observed, that the revival was still and orderly, though powerful."

After a ministry of fifteen years, Mr. Ramsey, at the comparatively early age of thirty-nine years, was removed by death.

In 1773, he was succeeded by Rev. William Hollingshead, who presided over the church ten years, and was then transferred to a pastoral charge in Charleston, S. C. Of his ministry, Mr. Osborn says,—"Nothing uncommon occurred until the winter of 1780-81, when the Lord was pleased to visit his people with another shower of Divine grace. In May, 1781, there were forty-eight admitted to full communion. In December following, forty-six more were added to the church, and several afterward, so that the whole number added to the church in 1781 and 1782, was one hundred and fifteen. Well may the people of Fairfield say—Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and blessed be his name!" In one of his manuscript sermons, I find this additional remark respecting that season of special interest—"It has been said that this revival was attended with more commotion and crying out than the preceding one. 'There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.'"

The time honored edifice, now so extensively known as the Old Stone Church, was built during the pastoral administration of Mr. Hollingshead, and used by him during the last two years of his continuance here. In our remotest knowledge of the congregation, we find them worshipping in a

log meeting-house, called the Cohansey Church, situated in the entrance corner of the old graveyard referred to in the notice of Mr. Elmer, and about a mile from where the present Old Stone Church stands. The log house was supplanted by a wooden structure, on or near the same site. This, in Mr. Hollingshead's time, became so decayed as to be unsafe for use, and the pulpit was removed to the open air, under the shadow of a large tree. There he continued to address the congregation until they entered their new sanctuary, September 7, 1780.\* The graves of Mr. Elmer and Mr. Ramsey are where the shadow of the wooden church fell upon them. Mr. Powell was doubtless buried in the same cemetery, but no trace of the place of his interment remains.

After the removal of Mr. Hollingshead, in 1783, the congregation appears to have lived under the precarious and comparatively thriftless ministry of occasional supplies, until in the winter of 1788-9, when in the manner already described, the providence of their covenant God guided hither the youthful minister whose long walk and labors among them now come up for notice.

---

Much of Mr. Osborn's pastorate was like his general life, tranquil and not abounding in historical points. The quiet every-day labors of a faithful

---

\* For this date I am indebted to the researches of Judge Elmer.

minister of God, will fill a large space in the revelations of eternity, but they present few biographical incidents. The leading events of his ministry are the special effusions of the Holy Spirit, which, from time to time, swelled up the numbers of the church, and preserved the wholesome tone for which it was distinguished in the times now under review. In his own account of his pastoral administration, revivals were his historical eras—the landmarks by which he kept himself historically accurate. Still the first twenty years of his ministry appear to have passed with only the ordinary amount of spiritual prosperity. Writing to the *Christian Observer*, he says that in 1790, (immediately following his settlement,) the number of church members was one hundred and twenty-five. In his historical sermon, he informs us that in April, 1809, there were one hundred and twenty-four, thus barely keeping up with the current losses. Of the state of things during this time, he says—

“Regular discipline in the church was kept up, and the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was administered. Members of the church very generally walked in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. Small additions were made to the church from time to time, so that the number remained nearly the same.”

This “regular discipline,” in those days, took a high rank among the means of spiritual edification. In the Fairfield church, the administration of it was sometimes rather unique, but it was applied in a gracious mood, and generally to the purpose. Let

us take an example from the records of the Session, under date of August 25, 1792 :

“Mr. John Ogden having brought a complaint against Mrs. ———, they both appeared and produced their evidences before the Session, which being heard, it was judged that Mrs. ——— deserved a severe censure for accusing Mr. Ogden of stealing her corn, *and that both of them should be cautioned concerning several things.*

“Mr. Zeb Woodruff also brought a complaint against Mrs. ———, [same defendant again.] The evidence being given in, the Session judge that both of them should be admonished to lay aside ill-grounded suspicion and all contentions, and live as becometh the Christian religion.”

This defendant's tongue appears in the end to have been an overmatch for the diligence of the Session, for we find eight months afterward, a record of her “exclusion” for falsehood.

Another example:—

“1st May, 1797. The Session met, and was constituted with prayer. Present—Ethan Osborn, Amos Westcott, Jeremiah Harris, Jedediah Ogden, William Bateman, and Thomas Burch. Several members of the church were mentioned as persons faulty, either in commission of offenses or omission of duty. After due consideration of their particular cases, it was agreed that Mr. William Bateman make inquiry of ——— concerning a complaint made against her for breach of the Sabbath; that Amos Westcott, Esq., inquire of ———, his reason for absenting himself from the Lord's Supper; that Mr. Thomas Burch inquire of ——— his reason for not having his children baptized; and that Mr. Jer. Harris inform ———, that it is the desire of this Session that he refrain from the sacraments till a certain criminal allegation, now depending in law, is cleared up. The reports of these several cases to be made at the next meeting of the Session. Concluded with prayer.”

Near the close of 1805, Mr. Osborn, in connection with some neighboring pastors, entered upon a course of co-operative effort for the advancement of religion in the region around them. An extract from a letter to his familiar and much beloved friend, Gen. Ebenezer Elmer, of Bridgeton, then in Congress in Washington, will exhibit the character of this effort. It is dated January 11, 1806.

“We had a monthly meeting at Bridgeton. We began them at Fairfield the first Tuesday in last month. The next is to be at Deerfield, the first Tuesday in February. These meetings, agreed upon by the neighboring ministers, are to be by rotation from one congregation to another, where ministers reside, on the first Tuesday in every month.

“A little past the middle of last month, Mr. Freeman and myself took a preaching tour three days successively, at Alloway’s Creek, Pittsgrove, and Deerfield, and talk of taking another after awhile. Last Tuesday evening, we four\* agreed to preach at seven places, mostly in the outposts of our congregations, on the same day and hour at four of the places, and about once a fortnight by rotation. The general object of all these meetings is the promotion of religion.”

This movement on the hearts of these pastors may have been the dawning of a special operation of the Holy Spirit, which in Fairfield, three years afterward, culminated in the first great revival under Mr. Osborn’s ministry. We will take our account of this work of grace from his own pen.

“The Lord once more appeared for his favored church in Fairfield. Through the summer and fall of 1809, a general awaken-

---

\* The four present at the monthly meeting in Bridgeton, Mr. Osborn, Mr. Freeman, Pastor in Bridgeton and Greenwich, Mr. Davis, Pastor in Millville, and a fourth now unknown.

ing to the concerns of the eternal world prevailed among the people. Conference, or prayer-meetings, were held in different parts of the congregation, not less than six or seven evenings in the week. It was truly a revival time, both to saints and sinners; the Spirit of grace was poured upon each. Some were severely experienced and brought into deep distress; others were exercised in a mild manner. Though there were divers operations, yet the same God wrought in all. In a few months, a considerable number entertained a hope, and thanks to God! he continued his gracious work for many months. On December 3, 1809, just twenty years from my ordination, twenty-four were admitted to the church. In April, 1810, thirty were admitted to full communion; in August following, twenty-seven more, and small numbers at the two communions following, so that in the space of two years, there were added to this church one hundred and twelve. The Lord hath done great things for us, and blessed be his name!

“Though various means were used, yet it was evident that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of men. This appears from the great change wrought, and the good fruit following. Though I was not idle during the revival, yet it seemed as if I was a spectator beholding the wonderful operation of Divine grace convincing and converting sinners. My brethren of the Session were alive and diligent in prayer and religious conversation, and perhaps I may have aided, in some measure, the good work of the Lord. But I was only one among a multitude of agents who were active in the same employ. Truly my soul rejoiced to see many return unto the Lord and enlist under the banner of King Jesus.”

This revival, Mr. Osborn informs us, was followed by a maintenance of prayer-meetings, and an orderly walk in the church generally, “keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” but “no remarkable occurrence in the state of religion,” until the year 1819. Then the soul of the Fairfield pastor was again enlarged in a year of the right

hand of God. The revival of that year was first manifest in prayer-meetings, commenced in the part of the township known as Sayre's Neck, but its influences were felt in other parts of the congregation. As the result of it, fifty-six were added to the church.

In the sermon which contains the account of this revival, Mr. Osborn again speaks of his own agency in a tone of humility, which his friends will not fail to recognize as in keeping with his uniform spiritual temper. Those who are familiar with this temper, will have no doubt that he felt as he spoke when he said—

“Though I promptly seconded the proposal, yet a Christian brother whom I shall forever esteem and love, first proposed the prayer-meeting, which was so signally blessed for the spiritual good of the congregation. I think that brother, as an active instrumental agent, has done much more in promoting the good work than I have.”

He then adds some reflections on the power of lay agency in promoting revivals, which come with a double interest to us in this year of our Lord, 1858—a year in which the use of this agency forms so prominent a feature of the stupendous work of grace now in progress over our whole country. He says—

“I now speak it as my candid opinion, that in any revival of religion, the ministry is only one among many agencies which co-equally operate in promoting the blessed work of God. If a lay brother is active in prayer and exhortation, the people are more impressed with his sincerity, so that what he says and does

may have more influence on their minds. And not a little have my Christian brethren and sisters, as agents under God, contributed to maintain and promote the blessed religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank them for their labors of love, and I thank my God for moving them to labor. Mine exhortation to them is, not to be weary in well-doing, for in due season they shall reap a glorious harvest."

During the next few years, there was only the ordinary amount of spiritual movement in the church. The pastor labored as usual, faithful and affectionate, in public and private, and some Divine influences distilled as the gentle dews. About this time, Mr. Osborn preached to his people a sermon descriptive of his pastoral visits to families—a mode of effort which he had reduced to a system. I have the manuscript of this sermon before me. An extract from it will afford a fine specimen of the man in the character of a Christian shepherd.

"In the first place, I aimed to represent religion as the most important of all things with which we have any concern, and that it ought to be the chief object of our desire and pursuit. I aimed to show that our neglect of religion must lead to everlasting ruin. I also represented religion as good and amiable in itself, as it assimilated us to the blessed God, and generally said some things concerning the nature of religion, as it consisted in a heart and life conformed to God. And as we are fallen, depraved creatures, I urged the necessity of a change, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of God's Spirit. As such a change is all-important to us, I urged it home to the conscience by this serious question—'*Do you really think you have experienced such a change, or possess true gospel religion?*' I generally observed, that though we may not know as certainly as God knows, yet we ought to make it a frequent serious question to

ourselves, in order to form a right judgment of our religious character and present preparation for eternity, whether if we should now die, our eternity would be happy or miserable. I put this or a like question to heads of families; indeed, it ought to be the great question with all, both old and young.

“When the answer was in the affirmative—that they entertained a prevailing hope of being in a gracious state, I reminded them of their constant need of the grace of Christ to keep them in such a state, and their obligation to live near to God, by walking as Christ walked. I observed, that to live thus would conduce to their own peace and comfort, as well as to the glory of God. I also cautioned them against the deception of a false hope, and exhorted them to be always willing to examine themselves by whatever might serve as a test of their sincerity. So doing, they might be either undeceived, or find their piety and faith made more evident.

“When the answer was in the negative—that they did not consider themselves in a gracious state, I reminded them of the lamentable character of such a conclusion, and their gloomy prospect beyond the grave. I solemnly warned them of the danger of resting there, and exhorted them immediately to seek for mercy by imploring God to bring them out of a state of condemnation, and to pardon and save them through the redemption by Jesus Christ. Here I frequently enlarged, by putting them in mind of life’s uncertainty, of the folly of risking their salvation on their possible repentance at some future day, and how dreadful their eternal state must be, should they die impenitent and unpardoned.

“After mentioning some essential duties, such as repentance, faith, love, and obedience, I spoke of the relative duties of parents and children, and urged on parents and guardians the important duty of bringing up their children in the fear of God. I observed that they should discourage in them what is evil, and endeavor to restrain them from it, and encourage them in what is commendable and right. At the same time, they must pray God to prosper their endeavors for the good of their children.

“After this, I led on the conversation to the duty of family

prayer, and inquired whether it was performed in the family. When the answer was in the affirmative, I observed that we should pray to God with reverence, in sincerity and faith. I mentioned some good effects which, by the blessing of God, it tends to produce in the minds of both parents and children. When the answer was, that family prayer was not attended, I then observed that the neglect of it must certainly imply a fault in them; that they either had no grace, or neglected the proper exercise of it. I told them they ought to pray, and do it right, and I exhorted them seriously to consider it, and to pray for a spirit of prayer.

“After this I turned my conversation to the children and others present. Here I urged the importance of obtaining religion in early life, as youth is the most favorable time for it. I represented religion as conducive to their own peace and welfare, the welfare of others, and the glory of their Heavenly Father. I recommended it as Divinely excellent, and of absolute necessity, for without it, we must be miserable, but in the spirit and practice of it, we shall be like angels, and qualified for the joys of heaven. Sometimes I asked them questions, and counseled them to learn, and advance in goodness as well as knowledge. I reminded them of their duty to their parents, and solemnly charged them not to neglect that or any other known duty, but to be dutiful and pious children. And in order to move them to it, I led on their thoughts to the solemn day of judgment, the joys of heaven and the sorrows of hell. After speaking of our present state of probation and the all-important consequences which must follow, I concluded with prayer.

“Such, my brethren, was the general line of conversation which I pursued in those religious visits, aiming to bring into view things of universal concern, our duty and happiness in time and throughout eternity.”

It is a suggestive, as well as interesting fact, that a round of pastoral labor, similar to what is here described, preceded the last general effusion of the Holy Spirit noticed above.

In this connection, we ought not to pass over another form of pastoral labor which Mr. Osborn performed with strict punctuality, until the growing up of denominational jealousies in after years, forced him to abandon it. Once in three months, he visited all the schools in the parish, for the purpose of hearing from the scholars recitations of the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and affording such explanations of its doctrines as he thought adapted to their age and condition. It must be remembered, that during the early part of his ministry, his church stood alone in the township. The Baptist Church in Cedarville, (since resuscitated,) was scattered and dead, and the Methodists had not come in. The custom of teaching the Shorter Catechism in the public schools, brought from New England, was agreeable to the antecedents of the people, and there is no doubt but it contributed largely to that clear, discriminating appreciation of preaching which prevailed among hearers thus trained. It would not be an unprofitable meditation, to reflect here upon the contrast between that practice, together with the general Scriptural knowledge of the people under it, and the times when prejudice has expelled the primary catechism of our church, even from many of our own parish Sabbath-schools.

One of the three remarkable preservations from death, in moments of imminent peril, which were registered in the memory of Mr. Osborn, occurred

during one of these catechetical instructions.\* It was some forty or fifty years ago, in a school-house which stood near the present residence of Ephraim H. Whiticar, Esq. While he was standing with the children around him, the house was struck by lightning, and the fluid, apparently following the course of a row of nails in the floor, entirely tore away a toe from one of his feet, without inflicting upon him any other injury beyond the temporary shock of his system.

The disasters of the day were not, however, ended. In the evening, the house was accidentally set on fire by a light carried by one of the family into the attic, while searching for a bandage for his foot. It was first discovered by some person in the road, and for the second time in the history of this parish, the wild cry of *fire!* rung fearfully out from the pastor's house.† Help was gathered in sufficient time to save the building, but not without injury extending to the destruction of a considerable portion of the roof.

It was on the whole, a gloomy night for the family, but doubtless a good one for the man who was armed with the life-long habit of faith, and to

---

\* One of these providential deliverances was experienced during his boyhood, in connection with the upsetting of a loaded wood-sled. The second has been recorded as following the capture of Fort Washington. The third is now related.

† The house of Mr. Elmer was consumed by fire, in, or a little previous to A. D. 1759, involving the loss of the records of the church, already noticed.

whom the trial of this grace was more precious than gold. *The Lord will provide.* The earnest of it was not long in coming. The next morning, almost before the family had time to deliberate upon measures of relief, parishioners were seen coming up with boards, rafters, shingles, nails, saws, hammers, and whatever else the occasion demanded, and before night, the household were snug and dry under a sound roof, and went quietly to their rest, after blessed thanksgivings, mingled with many prayers for that "kind people" who were so often on Mr. Osborn's lips and in his heart.\*

Returning to the spiritual history of Mr. Osborn's pastorate, we find no strongly marked events until the year 1826. That year closed amidst another extensive work of grace in the congregation. The most full account which I have obtained respecting it, is in a letter to his brother, Capt. Eliada Osborn, of Litchfield, May 19, 1827.

---

\* In relation to the peril of this house, one might almost say, as a Fairfield gentleman once said to the writer, at another strife with the consuming element. In the spring of 1848, I believe, while a township election was going on within it, the Old Stone Church was fired, through a defect in the stove-pipe, between the ceiling and roof. Men were plenty, but it was not so with ladders, buckets, and the all-important article of water. For some minutes, the salvation of the building was regarded as an impossibility. The gentleman referred to, (not a professor of religion,) was standing near me. I said despairingly—"The church must go." "Not a bit of it," was the reply, "it *can't* burn down." "Why not?" I inquired. "*Because,*" said he, "*the good man above won't let that building be burned; mind I tell you.*" I may add, the fire was subdued, with only some inconsiderable damage to the roof.

“The Lord, we believe, has been carrying on a wonderful gracious work among us since last November. There seemed to be some unusual seriousness among the people through the fall, and nine were added to the church on the first Sabbath in December. From that time, a general awakening seemed to prevail, and a wonderful spirit of prayer was poured out on old and young. Prayer-meetings were multiplied, and that cold weather in January could not stop the people from going to them. They were often crowded.

“Such a degree of general earnestness and anxiety in religion, I never before witnessed, either here, or in any other place. Many were seriously inquiring what they should do to be saved; and there were several instances of alarming conviction and distressing fears, sinking almost in despair. One young man, after conversing with another in the evening, on the interesting subject of religion, while returning home, felt such a burden of guilt that he could hardly move along. He said it seemed every moment as if the lightning would strike him. After going along awhile, he kneeled down by the fence and prayed; he went further and prayed again, and again after he returned home. The heavy rain of that evening had thoroughly soaked his clothes, but he scarcely thought of that, so intensely was his mind occupied with the concerns of religion and eternity.

“A meeting for prayer and conversation with the anxious, was established, and afterwards another, but so many crowded in, that in a few weeks they became common prayer-meetings. The boys, of their own accord, began a prayer-meeting, and afterwards another, both of which are yet continued. You will understand that all these prayer-meetings are weekly, on fixed evenings. But besides these, there were in the winter, frequent extra meetings collected in the two villages,\* on two or three hours' notice. One week our people counted nineteen meetings, fixed and extra.

“Previous to the sacrament, the Session appointed two days to converse with those who should come forward. The total num-

---

\* Fairton and Cedarville, four miles apart, with the Old Stone Church nearly midway between them.

ber propounded and admitted to full communion with the church was fifty-one. This we believe is the Lord's doing, and while it is marvellous in our eyes, we would rejoice and give thanks. Among the aforesaid number were five men with their wives. A large proportion of the new members are young people, and two of the age of thirteen, one of whom—thanks to God! is our dear son, Robert.\* The gracious work seems to be still in a measure progressing."

In Mr. Osborn's notice of the church, published in the *Christian Observer*, he says, without adding any particulars—"In 1831, we were blessed with another revival, during which about eighty were added to the church." But in this account, his mind evidently embraced the work of 1827, which is not otherwise noticed in that article. The year 1831 was certainly a season of peculiar religious interest. On March 30th of that year, he writes to Litchfield—

"The state of religion is more encouraging. Four or five were added to the church last December; nine are coming forward next Sabbath. We are to have a three days' meeting, beginning on Friday and continuing on Saturday and Sabbath. Four or five neighboring ministers attend and preach, and one of them stays with us over the Sabbath."

In the following August and December of that year, there were twenty-seven received on profession into the church, so that regarding the movements of this time as a continuation of the interest of 1827, we have the "about eighty" much more than made good.

---

\* Now Rev. Robert Osborn, of Point Pleasant, Western Virginia.

At this time, with but little numerical increase of the population of the township, the number of communicants in the church had increased from one hundred and twenty-five at the time of Mr. Osborn's settlement, to three hundred and thirty-six. The Old Stone Church had become so filled that not a pew, and scarcely a sitting, either on the floor or in the spacious galleries, remained without rent.

In 1836, (Mr. Osborn then being in his 78th year,) Rev. David McKee, from Kentucky, was installed as co-pastor, to take part in the labors of this large parish. During this year, the Spirit was once more poured from on high, in a work of grace which the aged pastor characterized as the most powerful which had occurred during his ministry, with the single but lamentable exception of its short continuance. In August of that year, sixty-one united with the church, the largest number received at any one communion during his pastorate.

As this closes the history of ingatherings under his pastoral administrations, it may here be said the number received on profession under his ministry, is a fraction over six hundred. And it is recorded with peculiar satisfaction, that notwithstanding his was so eminently an administration of revivals, still the aggregate number which we have counted up as the fruit of those revivals, makes but little more than one half of the total accessions just named. Almost one half were the occasional dropping in of new members as the fruit of the every day faithfulness and faith of the pastor and people, in the regu-

lar means of grace. It is a notable evidence that the absence of great outward religious demonstrations, is no evidence that Christ has forsaken his ministers, or is not present in their administrations.

Mr. McKee's pastoral relation to the church continued only about two years. After his dismissal, *Father* Osborne, as it is now time to call him, under his weight of four-score years—the time when men are generally expected to

“Rather sigh and groan than live,”

was once more left alone in the pastorate. His labors would have been sufficiently arduous, even if the sky had been as serene as formerly, over his administration. But he was now to pass under some clouds and meet some anxieties and cares which were new in his experience.

Though calm in his spirit toward *men*, he seldom failed to take his position on *questions*, and it was done in such a way that all knew where to find him. In the troubles of the Presbyterian church previous to 1837, and which then resulted in the organic division into what are now known as the Old and New School, *Father* Osborn's sympathies were with the latter, while some influential members of his session and church, and a majority of his Presbytery were with the former.

Although he believed and preached the doctrines of personal election and the certain perseverance of Christians, still his friends never claimed that he was a strongly Calvinistic theologian; and in this time of unusual sharpness in searching out heresies, he

made several free exposures, (once at least before an assembly of co-presbyters, under much provocation as he averred,) of views of the atonement which were sure to be offensive to a rigid Calvinist.

It was in the midst of these excitements that the Presbytery of West Jersey, which geographically includes Fairfield, was set off from the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in the new Presbytery he stood alone among the ministers, on the questions which were rocking the church. Although he had for long years been an acceptable co-presbyter with men of the highest orthodox stamp, such for example as Doctor Ashbel Green, still his ecclesiastical position was now seriously imperiled. Measures did not, however, reach the length of formal charges of heresy, but there was much earnest discussion of the matter, both in and outside of the meetings of the Presbytery. The final result of the agitation was the dismemberment of his church, and the organization of the Presbyterian church in Cedarville, known as the Brick church, and finally the transfer of himself and the old church, from the Presbytery of West Jersey to the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia.\* In this last connection he continued to the

---

\* It is proper to say that the Cedarville organization is not wholly due to this disturbance. The necessity of a separate church in that village, had long been a subject of thought, and without the excitement of the times, things were nearly ripe for it. There is, however, no question that the events recorded above were the immediate occasion of the separation, and it is certainly owing to the earnest strife of that day, that the village of Cedarville now contains *two* Presbyterian churches.

end of life, in great peace with all branches of the church of our common Redeemer.

But while Father Osborn took his position strongly, and maintained it amidst a warm excitement rising sometimes to asperity, he was enabled to maintain in the view of all sides, his character for integrity and piety. The settling away of the first excitements of the dispute, found him still high in the confidence of both Old and New School, and in the society and pulpits of all, he was once more the dear and honored minister of Christ. The difference, so far as it affected his personal relation to his brethren, was soon forgotten by almost all, and by none sooner than himself. I believe I may say that at the time of his death, every church in Fairfield bearing any relation to his former charge, and every minister of the Presbytery to which he formerly belonged, regarded him with the same unaffected reverence as if the times from 1836 to 1840, had never had an existence.

I knew him when these events were yet fresh, before lacerated tempers generally have time for healing, and my relations to him were such that if he was disposed to transmit any latent grudge to any living mortal, he would probably have sought to imbue me with it. But I rejoice to say I never heard from his lips a word which would have gone harshly to the feelings of those with whom he had come into ecclesiastical conflict. It was a subject upon which he seldom spoke, and as time wore away, he as seldom thought. It is a fact full of significance

respecting his spirit, that when his memory began to be seriously impaired, the division of the Presbyterian church was the first ecclesiastical event of any importance which in his mind, was clouded with a haze. Four years previous to his death, when the outlines of the history of his pastoral charge were still clear in his remembrance, and when he spoke freshly of the formation of the Presbytery of West Jersey, he was bewildered when asked for the circumstances of his separation from it, and only succeeded with great difficulty, in recalling the fact of the division of the church. It is a mournful spectacle to witness the waning powers of a noble mind, but the thought could hardly be avoided, that if the failure of his memory had produced no obli- vions more painful than this, he might almost have been congratulated on its decline.

About the same time with the organization of the Old School church in Cedarville, Father Osborn was called to give up another portion of his people who, on account of the local inconvenience of the Stone church to them, formed a New School church in Cedarville. Most of the members of this church went in with certificates from the old Fairfield ses- sion. Thus the organization which had remained intact for about a century and a half, became sud- denly multiplied into the three Presbyterian churches which now exist in the township of Fairfield, to wit: The First Presbyterian church of Fairfield, since re- moved to the village of Fairton, which retains the legal succession, and is now under the pastoral

charge of Rev. James Boggs; the First Presbyterian church of Cedarville, (the Brick church,) of which Rev. John A. Annin is pastor; and the Second Presbyterian church of Cedarville, (the White church,) under the pastorate of Rev. Charles F. Diver. The first and last are connected with the Fourth Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the Brick church with the Presbytery of West Jersey. All of them are in a state of thrift, perhaps exceeding that of the average of churches of their circumstances and breadth of field; and they live in as harmonious intercourse as any group of churches within my knowledge. Harmony was the spirit breathed into their parents under the ministrations of their sacramental father, and until recently, the sight of his venerable form among them, has been a gentle and living admonition—"Children, love one another!"

Father Osborn continued to preside over the mother church after its severe depletion by the drafts from Cedarville, until 1844. He had then reached his eighty-sixth year, and his weight of years seemed to present an imperative necessity for his release from the care of a congregation. He presented his request for a dismissal, to the Presbytery, and that body thereupon sundered the long, well sustained, and mutually affectionate relation between the pastor and people of the Old Stone church. It was felt by all concerned as a mournful necessity. It is seldom that a minister becomes in so many respects, the spiritual father of his flock. There was but here and there one who could remember his coming

among them. Of all who were members of the church at that time, one aged man alone remained. \* Fairfield, since his settlement, had received but little increase by immigration, and consequently accessions to the church by certificate, had been rare. Almost all who were members at the time of his dismissal, had received their baptism at his hands, and their covenant vows from his lips. They were the children for whom he had travailed in birth until Christ was formed in them. But it was a necessity which should be met by submission, not rebellion; and the Presbytery, pastor, and people all bowed under it and said, "The will of the Lord be done!"

In closing the history of his pastoral administration, the minute adopted by the Presbytery, on the occasion of his dismissal, April 1844, may be appropriately subjoined. It was prepared by Rev. David Malin, D. D.

"In complying with the request of our venerable Father and Brother in the ministry, the Rev. Ethan Osborn, to dissolve the Pastoral relation between himself and the church and congregation of Fairfield, New Jersey, the Presbytery feel that there are circumstances of interest which render it worthy of peculiar notice.

"For fifty-four years, Father Osborn has ministered to this branch of Zion, during which time a degree of harmony and

---

\* Mr. Nathan Bateman, whose subsequent death and burial are noticed in a letter to Father Osborn's sister, Mrs. Kilbourn. "Nov. 7, 1848. This morning Nathan Bateman died. Of 125 members of the church at my ordination, he was the last. I am requested to preach at his funeral to-morrow. 8th. I returned from the funeral near noon. A large number attended. My text was Heb. iv. 9."

friendship has subsisted between pastor and people, and a success has attended his ministry, highly creditable to them, and happily illustrating the beauty and importance of a permanent pastoral relation.

“Now, late in the evening of life, in the eighty-fifth year of his age, after having been permitted to enjoy in connection with his labors, several revivals of religion; and after having buried all but one of those who composed his flock at the time of his installation; and after having seen the children of two generations, baptized with his own hands, succeeding to the places in the church vacated by their fathers, he comes with an undiminished regard for his people, and in the unabated enjoyment of their confidence and affection, to commit his united and happy charge to the care of this body.

“The Presbytery commend this church for providing that their worthy and venerable Pastor may continue to lean upon their arm while he lives, and recline on their bosom when he dies, and hope that other churches may follow their example.”

## PART III.

### FROM HIS DISMISSION TO HIS DECEASE.

FOURTEEN years of life remained to Father Osborn as a minister without a pastoral charge. Those who supposed that after his dismissal, he would resign himself to the repose which an old man is expected to seek, underrated the strength of his devotion to the work of God. In his own breast there was no such thought. In a letter to his Litchfield friends, written after he had announced his intention to ask a dismissal, but before it had been carried into effect, he says—"Do remember me to James Birge, Esq.\* and tell him I shall still preach more or less, when I am dismissed." The ruling sentiment of his heart had been love to Christ, to his work, and to the souls of men. From step to step, it had carried him through rising degrees of devotion to his profession, until at the moment when he received ecclesiastical liberty to retire, he found himself under another law, as if written upon the chamber of his heart, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

Throughout the churches of the region, his name was a household word, and there were few of them to whom a pastor could offer a more acceptable occasional treat, than to present before them

---

\* A companion in arms during his service in the army.

Father Osborn as the preacher for the day. He availed himself of numerous invitations to supply neighboring pulpits, either to fill vacancies, or to give pastors a Sabbath's respite. Preserving those methodical habits for which he was peculiar, he was accustomed to spend the months from the cooling off of summer heat to the time for "going into winter quarters," as he expressed it, in a round of preaching excursions sometimes reaching from Pittsgrove to Cape May. In this circuit, denominationism was ignored. To him, the pulpits of Presbyterian, Baptist, or Methodist churches were all the same, if he could but use them to "speak as a dying man unto dying men." November 7, 1848, (remember he has now passed his ninetieth year,) he writes to his sister Kilbourn :

"Since my return, [from his last visit to Connecticut,] I have not been idle, but have preached here and there among the Baptists, Methodists, Old School and New School Presbyterians. Out of twenty-five Sabbaths in succession, I have preached nineteen; in all cases but two, in the surrounding congregations."

By the "surrounding congregations," I suppose he means those which are in Fairfield and the region around. He was a frequent preacher in the Old Stone Church, the scene of his former labors; indeed for at least six years, he conducted the morning service there about once a month.

The last sermon which he wrote, was a farewell to that venerable edifice, on the occasion of the removal of the congregation to Fairton. The setting off of the Cedarville churches had created such a

geographical change in the congregation, that a new location became essential to its prosperity. A new house of worship had been erected in the growing village of Fairton, about a mile and a half west, and by arrangement, March 20, 1850, was designated as the time when, with preaching and sacramental communion, we should turn from the consecrated walls, hallowed by so many exhortations, prayers, sacraments, sorrows and joys, and leave them alone, a silent memorial of the past, a monument of change and death.

At the request of the pastor and session, Father Osborn accepted the charge of preparing a sermon for the occasion; indeed there would have been an unpardonable impropriety in any other arrangement. The reader will be grateful for some quotations from this sermon.\* I will offer no apology for lengthening the number of these pages with copious extracts from a performance which may exhibit less vigor than some of his earlier efforts would show. We have passed his prime. I now wish to bring out the aged preacher, in all the faithfulness of his still loving heart, and under circumstances which could not fail to awaken for him the sympathy of his audience. He is now in his ninety-second year. The place where he stands was the scene of his eventful ministrations for more than half a century, and he does not expect ever to preach from that pulpit again.

---

\* For a copy I am indebted to the family of his son-in-law, Rickart Hurd Esq., of Cincinnati, through whose care the original MS. has been preserved,

After referring to the ministry of his predecessor, who in 1780 preached the first sermon in the house, to his own labors there, and to those of the writer of this memorial, then the pastor of the congregation, he proceeds—

“I may safely say that by the preaching of these three ministers, in this house, the doctrines and all things essential to duty and salvation, have been clearly explained and faithfully urged upon the people. The doctrine of human depravity has been explained and proved from Scripture and common observation. Here also the doctrine of regeneration has been repeatedly set forth, and the absolute necessity of it urged upon the people. It has been shown that we must be new created in Christ Jesus, must have the love of God ruling in our hearts, or we can never be admitted into his kingdom.

“Also the doctrines of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been faithfully preached in this house, and their absolute necessity in order to obtain pardon and heavenly felicity. Likewise the duties prescribed in the gospel have been explained and insisted on. The people have been informed that supreme love to God is their indispensable duty. Here also they have been taught the duties we owe, one to another, to do good to all according to our abilities and opportunities: and to ourselves, to live sober and religious lives in the world. Here also, that the law forbids every sin, whether in action, word or heart, and pronounces a curse on every transgressor of it. For ‘cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’ And as all have sinned, therefore no human being can be justified before God by the deeds of the law, or by meritorious obedience. The law requires perfect and perpetual obedience. But as no man has yielded such obedience, or possessed sinless perfection, therefore in vain do you now look to the law for justification,

‘Since to convince and to condemn,  
Is all the law can do.’

“But, thanks to God! the gospel reveals a way of justification, how we may obtain forgiveness and the favor of God. And this blessed gospel has often been preached in this house, the gospel which offers a free pardon to every humble penitent. ‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ The blessed Saviour invites the weary and heavy laden sinner to come to him, assuring him that he will raise him up at the last day, to eternal life. Such is the inviting and beneficent language of the gospel. But at the same time, both law and gospel denounce everlasting punishment on such as reject the Saviour and die impenitent.

“Now the interesting question is, How have the people improved the preaching of the law and the gospel? Most of those who lived under the ministry of my predecessor have gone to the grave.\* But to you who are yet living and hearing the gospel, the question is solemn and important. Have you so improved the preaching of God’s word as to become wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus?

\* \* \* \* \*

“To those who are pious believers, I would say, you have chosen the good part, and God has begun a gracious work in you which he will carry on until it terminates in glory. So that by faith in Christ, having laid hold on the hope set before us, you may have a strong consolation, and go on your Christian course rejoicing. Be not satisfied with your present relative attainments, but press forward to the mark of perfection, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Use the appointed means of reading and hearing the word of God, not forsaking the assembling of yourselves for public worship, as many do, and by no means neglect the privilege and duty of prayer. Ask and receive, not only that you may have grace to serve God, but that you may also grow in grace and in the knowledge of your Lord Jesus Christ. In this way religion will become more pleasant. The

---

\* He might have said *all*—literally so, if he referred to those who when they heard his predecessor, were old enough to recall any of the instruction imparted.

nearer you advance toward heavenly perfection, the more delighted you will be with heavenly enjoyment. ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good.’

‘Come learn his pleasant ways,  
And let us taste his grace.’

“Never be weary in well doing, for in perseverance, you shall in due time reap a glorious harvest. As an inducement thus to live and spend your remaining days, remember your judge and mine will ere long call us to answer, how I have preached the gospel and how you have improved it.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I now turn to those of you whose future happiness is not yet secured by faith in the Mediator. Your situation is awfully dangerous. You are now suspended between the possibility of eternal happiness or eternal misery. You are now between the two vast extremes, or if I may more plainly express it between heaven and hell. Either celestial happiness or infernal misery must in a short time be your everlasting portion. How solemn is the prospect before you—the joys of heaven or the sorrows of hell, one of which must be your everlasting portion,—the latter except ye turn at God’s reproof. ‘As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.’ Believe me when I say it is my heart’s desire and prayer to God, that you and I may have a joyful meeting at the judgment, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*

“As we expect this to be the last Sabbath on which I shall speak to you from this pulpit, let me say, in the presence of God who knows my heart, that I have endeavored and prayed that I might faithfully perform my ministerial duties. Though I am conscious of much imperfection, God is my witness, that I have ever preached such doctrine and precepts as I verily believe are agreeable to his word. I have repeatedly said, ‘the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.’ With gratitude to God I look back upon the religious revivals with which he has blessed us and the friendly relations which have subsisted between us. It is no small satisfaction that as pastor and people we separated as friends, and that a pleasant

intercourse subsists between myself and my successor, your present pastor. Never were the people more dear to me, I shall love them as long as I live.

“Excuse my plainness, and permit me once more to say in the fullness of my feelings, that my heart’s desire and prayer to God for you all is, that you may be saved. As it will not be long before we must each answer to God—I for my ministry, and you for your improvement of it, let us be diligent in what duty remains and in advancing toward heaven. Let brotherly love continue and abound, until it shall be perfected in the heavenly kingdom. And may God prepare us all to meet in heaven! I now bid you a cordial farewell, praying that it may fare well with you in this world, in blessings of health and prosperity, as far as shall be for God’s glory and your own good, and that in the future world, entered with your blessed Saviour into the joy of your Lord, you may FARE WELL.”

There is a mournful comeliness in the circumstance that his last attempt to compose a sermon should have been reserved for the last Sabbath service that was held within that venerable sanctuary, which, to him, was the most sacred place this side of heaven. It almost seems as if the building which, while its walls were yet fresh from the hands of the builder, had received him as the messenger of heaven, and which had advanced along with him from youth to old age, grew weary of the voice of men as the time approached for his plain and gentle-toned utterances to be heard no more.

In speaking of this discourse as his last attempt at sermonizing, I refer to the labors of his study—writing for the pulpit. It must not be understood that he then ceased to preach. From this time forward, it is true, there was a more perceptible falling away of power for public labors; still his friends in this

region know how dearly that blessed old servant of Christ loved to preach, and how earnestly he continued, for several years more, to lift up his voice for the gospel. But nature could not hold out forever. The intervals between his pulpit labors lengthened, until the summer of 1855, when at the age of ninety-seven, in the church in Fairton, he preached for the last time. Who can tell how affecting a service it would have been to himself, had he supposed that it was, with the exception of assisting in subordinate parts of service, his last official ministration. Was it not a gentle providence that he did not? This service, reckoning from his licensure in 1786, completed sixty-nine years of actual service as a preacher of the gospel of salvation.

While among the last things of Father Osborn, the reader will find room for some thoughtful reflections in perusing what is supposed to be the last letter which he wrote.\* It is dated a little more than two years previous to his death, and addressed to the sole survivor among his brothers and sisters, Mrs. Thalia Kilbourn. Mark how oblivious he becomes of long periods, speaking of the characteristics of the country as if he were a fresh emigrant giving information that was all new to her, and of his exchange with Mr. Smalley, a clergyman who had been deceased some twenty years, as if it were a recent event. Observe also, how the fact that all his brothers and sisters, except herself had gone,

---

\* One of later date has been discovered since this paragraph was written.

has passed from his memory. The thought of his offering himself, at ninety-six years of age, to supply a vacant congregation in Connecticut, may excite a smile, but it will be one of pleasure in the inexhaustible strength of his devotion to the work of his Master. It is the expression of his indomitable passion to be always preaching Christ.

“FAIRFIELD, NEW JERSEY,

January 23, 1855.

“DEAR SISTER,—Through the goodness of God, who is the giver of every good gift, we enjoy good health. I say *we*, meaning Sarah McQueen and myself. We live in a two story house, with a good cellar under it and chambers. The water is not quite so good as it is in Connecticut, though better than that which is still nearer the salt marshes. The face of the country is one vast extended plain for miles around. No stones on the surface; some are found in brooks and rivulets. The land has been so worried with crops, year after year, that it produces about the same as in Connecticut.\* The land does not produce potatoes so plentifully as in Connecticut, but they are more mild and have no strong taste. They make no use of potatoes for fattening and raising hogs. They feed their horses almost altogether with corn.

“Their religious practices are commendable. Very few families who attend no religious meeting. I know of none. We have different sects as you have; the Presbyterians most numerous; then the Methodists, and then the Baptists. They are mingled in the same neighborhood without any contention, and unite in business as if of one denomination. I have exchanged pulpits with Mr. Smalley, a Baptist minister: no complaint was made. In religion, the earth seems to be still and at rest. I trust many have vital piety. The ordinances of baptism and the

---

\* He is speaking of the country as it was before the agricultural advancements of the last twenty-five years.

Lord's Supper are regularly administered quarterly—four times in a year.

“Do write before long, and tell who of our father's children and grand children are living, and who of the Landons are living. Who is your minister now? And who preaches in Milton? If they have none, I think I should be willing to preach for them awhile. I was dismissed by my own request. Mr. Meeker is our minister now, and is well esteemed. We live in peace, and may the God of peace be with and bless you.

“ETHAN OSBORN.”

From this time forward, there was supposed to be a rapid decay of his mental powers. Having before this time been transferred to a parish in another State, I had few opportunities for a personal observation of the condition of his mind. When I occasionally did see him, it appeared to me—and in this view I am supported by some of his most judicious friends—that his faculties generally were in a much sounder condition than casual observers supposed. His memory was far gone, sometimes so far that he seemed to lose the recollection of those who were dearest to him in life. Often he could not remember the common events of life, an instant after they had passed. He would sometimes perform family worship twice in the morning, and I believe in some cases a third time, forgetting that it had been observed at all. It is however a striking index to the state of his heart, that his memory of worship was never treacherous in the opposite direction. He never forgot to observe family devotions.

Still I could never perceive but his perception of truth, his reason, and even his judgment were sound,

when some friendly voice was at hand to keep his mind from losing the points of a conversation. Without such assistance, he would soon become bewildered. But with the simple aid of prompting his memory, I have heard him, within the last year of his life, make observations, and even draw conclusions from a process of reasoning, with the sense and shrewdness which belonged to his better days. Let it be remembered how the loss of the single faculty of memory *seems* to unhinge the whole mind, and the *apparent* intellectual decay of Father Osborn, in his last year, is explained.

With all the infirmity which he carried into these years of almost absolute retirement from the world, it may with truth be said that his last days were his best days. His spiritual sense was never dimmed. Ask him of things of this world, even the number and names of his own children, and in the effort to gather up a correct reply, his mind would often become so confused, that the whole subject would escape his attention. But ask him of the dealings of God with his soul, and his bow abode in strength. Among earthly things, he might often be lost, but he never wandered in the way to the throne of grace. People said with wonder—"How happy Father Osborn is! and how happy he makes all around him!" It did seem strange that one so lost to the natural enjoyments of life, and who was such an object of care and anxiety, requiring for his safety an almost sleepless vigilance, should still retain the power of diffusing such a serene tranquillity

around him. But there he sat, or walked from room to room, or wandered about the grounds, singing some happy song of Zion, or relating some sweet experience, talking always of mercies, and wondering how any can complain when God is so good.

But his work for God is not yet done, and we are to contemplate him once more in the field of active duty. The winter of 1857-8, was to all the churches of Fairfield, a season of great refreshing. The work was general, powerful, and full of incidents illustrating the power of prayer.

The cry—*A Revival!* was one which would almost move Father Osborn in his coffin: certainly while living, it could not fail to kindle all the inflammability that was left in his nature. It did not start his spirit into new life, for it found him already girded, arming himself for his last battle in the earthly Christian warfare. It came not to rouse him to prayer, for it found him praying for this one more sight of the glory of salvation among the community whom he never ceased to call his people. It may well be doubted whether, in the sight of God, there was any human agent in that great revival, more active than the old pastor, wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant, in his Bethel home. Like the patriarch, he wrestled almost literally until the breaking of the day, for so engrossing had the work become to his own soul, that he sometimes rose from his bed, in the dead of night, to pray for particular unconverted persons whose spiritual peril awakened in him anxieties too deep to allow slumber.

His apprehension of things around him, such as the spiritual condition of his neighbors and the state of the churches, experienced an astonishing resuscitation, and he was once more in the blaze of the old revival years. Most of this, it must be remembered, was at a remove from the sympathetic influences of crowded assemblies with their mourning sinners and happy converts. It was mostly in the quiet of his own household, and in the deeper seclusion of his communion with God. He attended only a few of the public meetings; his infirmities forbade his going abroad oftener. But he kept himself advised of all that was going forward, and preached to his family, (then consisting of two persons in addition to himself,) of the wondrous salvation of God, and held with them many meetings of prayer for a blessed ingathering of souls.

His last appearance in church was in connection with this work. He was then in the one hundredth year of his age. It was in the "White Church," in Cedarville, at a meeting of "young converts," in number from one hundred and fifty to two hundred, to listen to a sermon from Rev. Mr. Parker, who had greatly aided some of the local pastors during that season of arduous labor. He heard Mr. Parker with fixed attention, through a long and interesting discourse, and was then called on to add an exhortation, and offer the concluding prayer. Concerning this performance, the pastor, Mr. Diver, writes me—"He seemed like an old veteran commander in the army, taking a view

of the recruits just entering the service for King Immanuel. He reminded them it was a service for life, and their warfare would not be done until they obtained their crown. In such a manner he spoke, and then prayed God that they might be faithful unto death."

From this scene he returned to his house, and when he next went to the sanctuary, it was where the glorified congregation worship—

"Where the assembly ne'er breaks up,  
The Sabbath ne'er shall end."

His translation was at hand. Though more vigorous in body and mind than he had been a few weeks previous, he saw with unerring accuracy, that the time had almost come, and his peace was as a river. He expressed his consciousness of the near approach of death to his beloved niece, who for many years had filled a daughter's place and given to his aged heart a daughter's love. Filled with sorrow by the suggestion, she inquired—"What shall I do without you?" He took her by the hand, and looking upon her out of his loving eye, bade her be comforted, and said—"When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up."

I have been furnished with a letter, written by this lady to Rev. Robert Osborn, containing a vivid sketch of the experiences of the last week of his life. Though written without a thought of its publication, it comes so freshly from the chamber of death, that with Mr. Osborn's permission—indeed

at his suggestion, I subjoin it as better than any other account which it is now possible to furnish of that almost beatific scene. As Mr. Osborn justly remarks, in his note forwarding me a copy of the letter, the description is peculiarly valuable in view of the source from which it comes. "She was," he says, "an eye witness, and was not one who is liable to be swayed by her feelings alone."

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—It appears to me like months instead of weeks, since I stood by the dying bed of my ever dear uncle, and saw him draw his last breath. Of how little importance did the world then appear to me! He had so long been the object of constant care and solicitude, the centre of all my thoughts and labors, that it almost seemed that there was nothing left for me to live for; and I still feel an indescribable dreariness that none can realize who have not felt the same. I am glad it is not wrong to weep, and I can at times rejoice that his glorified spirit is free, no longer cramped and bound by the frail tenement that had borne the trials of almost an hundred years. But he was so ripe for heaven and enjoyed such a blessed nearness to the Saviour, and was so abundant in prayer, that although for him to depart and be with Christ was far better, yet his death has left a void that no common Christian can fill.

"How I wish you could have been with us the day before he was taken down. I shall always feel thankful for the privilege of being with him when he had, (as I believe,) a view and foretaste of heaven. He had passed a night of suffering. In the morning he slept till ten o'clock. When he awoke he was all life and animation, and his whole appearance was changed. He had been so long confined, mostly to the house, that his complexion had become very fair and clear. Now, his face was full, without a wrinkle, his eyes sparkled, he walked erect; the stoop in his shoulders was all gone—his appearance was beautiful. He came out of his room singing words that I never heard him sing

before, 'O happy! O happy! My happy, happy home!' then spake in a loud clear voice, 'O what a glorious King is Jesus! The martyr Stephen saw Heaven opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.' He then spoke of the glories of Heaven as described in the Revelation. After repeating the passages— 'and there shall be no night there; they stood on a sea of glass; they sang the Song of Moses and the Lamb;' and after speaking in the same strain a long time, he sang—

'O glorious hour! O blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God,' &c.

"I could but look and listen 'almost spell-bound, and the words 'They shall flourish in immortal youth,' were constantly in my mind. He took a slight dinner, and then seated in his rocking chair, with his head resting on the back of it, and eyes fixed upwards, he sang songs of praise most of the afternoon, without the least apparent fatigue; not low, humming, but loud and clear, ringing sweetly through all the house, and heard distinctly at the barn.

"When asked to supper, he said, 'Yes, willingly and thankfully.' He wheeled round his chair, asked a blessing, and then sang—

'My flesh shall slumber in the ground  
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;  
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,  
And in my Saviour's image rise.'

"It was the first time he had sung that verse, though the preceding ones he had repeated often. He took supper with a good appetite, and in the evening asked us to sing—

'How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord.'

"He attended family prayer three times, and went to bed apparently in good health. He was awake most of the night, but did not suffer as usual.

"Next day he slept till noon, took a little dinner—then slept again. At three o'clock I found he was unwell, and called the Doctor, who was very attentive to the last. About midnight he expressed his belief that he would soon leave us and be with the

Saviour, where there is 'fullness of joy.' He gave me his last charge to trust in the Lord, look to Him and He would not forsake me. These were his last connected words. But let me pass over those two days and a half. Suffice it to say, 'he was made perfect through suffering,' and left us at noon on Saturday!

'Servant of God, well done!  
Praise be thy sweet employ.'

Such a close of such a life! Could the one better befit the other? Almost literally like the prophet Elijah, he went on talking with us along the country of Jordan, until it came to pass as he still went on and talked, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted him from us. It is not strange that when we beheld such a translation, we cried—"My father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" Be ours the supplication that a double portion of his spirit may rest on us!

From among the numerous testimonials to the worth and loveliness of Father Osborn, contained in letters of sympathy addressed to his family, the following from the Rev. Heman L. Vaill, of Litchfield, Conn., is selected, as affording an interesting illustration of the abiding remembrance in which he was held in the home of his childhood.

"LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT,  
May 24, 1858.

"*Benj. Thompson, Esq.*

"MY DEAR SIR.—The tidings that the venerable Ethan Osborn has at length passed away, came somehow very unexpectedly to me, for, notwithstanding his great age and consequent feebleness, I had in a manner hoped, and almost believed, that he might be permitted to remain on earth a little longer, at least till the round

hundred of his years should have been complete. I wrote on the 5th instant, to one of the Professors in Dartmouth College, and expressed my hopes as above stated, not knowing at that date, that our venerated friend who had so long 'walked with God,' had been already translated. I also sent, at the same time, to the Faculty of the college, some historical sketches of the four Osborns, his cousins, who were educated at Dartmouth, and a brief notice concerning himself and the Rev. Joseph Vaill—his cousin, for more than fifty years pastor of the church in Hadlyme, Conn. These six young men, born and reared through their youth, in the same neighborhood, all went within a few years of each other, to the same college; and as its next Triennial Catalogue will show, have now all gone to the eternal world.

"Your friend Ethan never received, nor sought for, the *second, or master's degree from college*; but he did receive from all the friends of Christ who knew him, a nobler honor than earthly universities can give—the honor of being 'a good minister of Jesus Christ'—'a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;' and now beyond all this, he has received that last and highest degree, such as the Lord himself confers, when he calls to his faithful and worn out servants, who have finished their course, saying, 'Come up hither!'

I am now myself an old man, of upwards of three-score; but I remember with pleasure, far back to the days of my earliest childhood, the visits of our departed friend and father to the old homestead where he was born; and the calls he was wont to make on the families in the neighborhood. I well remember how he used to preach, and how he used to converse—grave and serious always—and yet always genial and attractive. Yes, and I remember how in the little social religious meetings, held here, because *he* was here, *how he used to sing*; that high, yet soft and sweet tenor voice, in the Psalm 89th of Dr. Watts, 'With reverence let the saints appear,' &c., sung to the tune 'Virginia.' But though this good old tune is now a thing of the past, that same 89th Psalm, as David wrote it for 'Ethan the Ezrahite' remains; and the Ethan of ancient time, and our Ethan the 'Saint of God' may now be singing the same words, 'I will sing

of the mercies of the Lord forever,' members of the same choir, and worshipping before the same throne. Praying that we may all be the true and faithful friends of Jesus Christ, while here on earth; and be at length all welcomed home to the Heaven where they all sing, I remain,

“Yours very respectfully and truly,

“HERMAN L. VAILL.”

Where death has been, there must be a funeral. The attendance, the expression of the countenances of the assembly, and the general cast of the services at the obsequies of the departed, are sometimes good indications of the estimate placed upon them while living. Probably the county of Cumberland was never before the scene of a funeral where people assembled in such a throng, and where the assembled throng came, attended, and returned under more profound impressions.

Father Osborn's mortal remains were interred with the customary Christian services, on Thursday, the fifth day after his death. Several well written notices of the event were published in the local papers, and in Philadelphia. One from the Bridgeton Chronicle, is selected for insertion here, in preference to those in the religious papers, only as coming from a secular publication, it may better show the hold of our departed father upon the affections of the people at large.

#### “FUNERAL OF REV. ETHAN OSBORN.

“THURSDAY, May 6th, 1858, was a great day in Fairfield. The whole township seemed awake for some great gathering. There was to be a funeral, but not a time of great mourning. There had

been no untimely frosts to blast the ties of blood and friendship, but one had come to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season. 'Father Osborn,' the man longest and best known, and best beloved, had died among the people of his first choice, and 'devout men' were about to carry him to burial.

"We started from Bridgeton with another carriage or two, but before arriving at Fairton, we found we were in company with a dozen, which was increased to between twenty and thirty after we had passed through the town.

"In Fairton, business was hushed—

'No busy hum,  
Nor sound of anvil, nor of plane was heard,  
But peace and holy quiet reigned around.'

"The faces and dress of the inhabitants wore a Sunday-like aspect, and their ways were turned toward the 'Old Stone Church.' The meeting at the house was at 10 o'clock, and in more than half an hour after, the procession arrived, with the body, at the church. But long before this—excepting the seats reserved—the building was filled from the neighboring country around. Bridgeton, Greenwich, Hopewell, Deerfield, Pittsgrove, Millville and Newport, were all represented and nearly 250 carriages were on the ground. Hundreds remained outside upon temporary seats in front of the church, or standing at the side windows. There would have been hundreds more if the early morning had been auspicious and accommodations prepared. Seventeen ministers were present, mostly occupying the platform and pulpit. After the hearse had been raised to the platform, the Rev. B. B. Hotchkiss stated that the last time our lamented Friend and Father sat at the table, he spontaneously broke forth in singing the last three stanzas of the 17th Psalm, to the tune of Glasgow,

'This life's a dream, an empty show,' &c.,

which was accordingly sung by the congregation, to the same tune, led by Mr. Williams.

"Rev. Mr. Cattell, of Deerfield, read from the second chapter of 2 Kings. 'And it came to pass, when the Lord would take

up Elijah into heaven,'—following with prayer. The Rev. Mr. Hotchkiss then arose and stated that it had been deputed to him, as eldest son in the pastoral office to the venerated dead, to take the principal part in the services, and although he had but little time for preparation, with such an inspiring theme, he could plead no apology. His text was in the 12th verse of the 12th chapter, of 2 Kings,—‘My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.’

[The synopsis of the discourse, as here given, is omitted, all its particulars being reproduced in the present Memorial.]

“The 2d, 3d, and 4th stanzas of the 623d hymn were then sung.

‘Servant of God, well done ;  
Rest from thy loved employ ;  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy master’s joy.

‘The voice at midnight came,  
He started up to hear ;  
A mortal arrow pierced his frame,  
He fell—but felt no fear.

‘Tranquil amidst alarm,  
It found him on the field,  
A veteran slumbering on his arms  
Beneath his red cross shield.’

“Rev. Dr. Kollock, of Greenwich, made a short and interesting address from these words: ‘And when they had taken up the body and buried it, they went and told Jesus.’ He was followed by the Rev. Mr. Cattell of Deerfield, who feelingly called to the minds of his hearers, the eternal themes, which the voice now hushed in silence before them, had so often sounded in their ears. The Rev. Mr. Boggs, of Fairton, read the Testimonial of the Pastoral Association of Philadelphia, to the churches of Fairton and Cedarville. The congregation then sang the 1st, 3d and 4th stanzas of the 624th hymn

‘Why do we mourn departed friends.’

“The Rev. Mr. Gillette, of Shiloh, made the concluding prayer in the church. After which the body was removed to the front of the church, that all might take a last lingering look at all that was mortal of Father Osborn.

“At the grave, the Rev. S. Y. Monroe, gave out the beautiful hymn

‘Unveil thy bosom faithful tomb,  
Take this new treasure to thy trust,  
And give these sacred relics room  
To slumber in the silent dust.’

“Mr. Monroe then closed these interesting services by exclaiming, ‘Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace;’ and pronounced the Benediction. Thus ended probably the largest and most interesting funeral ever attended in our country. Who can estimate the good done by the *life* of such a man! What a living epistle! From the exhibition of Christianity, as seen in him, influences have emanated, which, like dews and showers, have distilled upon generations. And it is not improbable that his life and glorified death have given as sweet a savor to religion as his inculcation from the Pulpit.”

## PART IV.

### GENERAL VIEWS OF HIS CHARACTER.

WE have followed the career of Father Osborn, in consecutive order, from his entrance upon the mortal to the immortal life. Some remarks upon his official and personal character, illustrated from his discourses and family correspondence, which were not convenient for chronological arrangement, have been reserved for this place.

The first impressions of a stranger making his acquaintance, would be that he was in the presence of a calm, equable Christian of a gentle heart, and whose life was running like an even spun thread—a plain, common sense thinker, and an earnest friend of Christ. It is true, further intimacy would confirm these views, but it would reveal some unexpected traits, such as deep, native shrewdness, a tact for the administration of affairs that was peculiarly his own, and a prudence of manner which seemed almost feeble, but which was found in the end to grasp some bold results. I have often noticed with surprise how, with the least appearance of doing it, he would read men through and through, and how, in a few simple words, almost pointless to one who did not comprehend their drift, he would make the power of rebuke felt in exactly the place which he wished to reach.

The portraiture of Father Osborn as a preacher,

he shall draw for himself. I have obtained from among his manuscripts what is labeled, "A Charge delivered at Mr. Edwards' Ordination." There is no information accompanying it respecting the time or place of this ordination. It was probably at Cape May, near the beginning of the present century. In a letter to his brother, June 1809, he mentions Mr. Edwards as the pastor at Cape May. From this charge the reader can learn his theory of the preaching and conduct of a Christian pastor, and there is no lack of living witnesses that what he regarded as a good theory, was with him a law of performance.

"DEAR BROTHER,—You are now, with your own consent, solemnly set apart to take part with us in the ministry of the gospel. You have devoted yourself to a most weighty and useful employment. See that you undertake it from right motives, and fulfill it in such a manner as to meet with the approbation of your Master and Judge. 'Take heed unto *thyself* and unto the *doctrine.*' Let thy preaching and example so correspond with each other, and with the gospel, as to mutually strengthen and enforce each other's influence. Consider thyself a worker together with God, employed by him, and self-devoted to the building-up of his church among men. Therefore be alike indifferent to human censure or applause. Let the Word of God be the rule of your preaching, his approbation your most emulative endeavor, and his glory in the edification of his church, your highest end. Endeavor so to vary your subjects and discourses, as to suit the various characters and cases of your hearers. Deal out to every one a portion in due season.

"Preach the law and preach the gospel. Preach the law in all its strictness and spirituality, as an eternal rule of right, binding on every moral agent, and as covering all the exercises of the mind as well as outward actions, requiring perfect and perpetual

obedience in every act, word and thought, on pain of condemnation. And make close application to the conscience for the conviction of impenitent sinners, to make them duly sensible of their sin, and to make them feel as if standing in the day of judgment.

“But not confining yourself to the law, preach the gospel. Hold up the blessed remedy it provides for guilty, perishing sinners. Preach Christ and him crucified, in all his fullness and freeness to save. Preach him in all his offices and sacred characters, as the way and the only way to the Father, through whom alone we can be redeemed from the curse of the law, and obtain salvation. Show his ability and willingness to save all who come to him believing, and also the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s influence to enable and dispose them to come believing. Show the happy consequences of belief, and the fatal consequences of resisting the Spirit’s influence and remaining in a state of impenitency and unbelief. Show the indispensable duty of all to repent and believe, and the increasing guilt and just condemnation of such as persist in the neglect of it.

“Do not confine yourself to general doctrine and truths. Descend frequently to particulars, that so you may touch the particular cases of your different hearers, whose different cases study to know, that you may be able rightly to divide the word of truth, giving to each one according to his respective case. In a word, declare the whole counsel of God as a faithful ambassador of Christ, and keep back nothing that may be profitable for the people to hear and know.

“And let your practice correspond with your preaching, that it may appear you do believe and feel the influence of those truths which you preach to others. Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel. Be an ensample to the flock among which you are made an overseer, ‘showing thyself a pattern of good works, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.’

“And should you have occasion to contend against heresies, be zealous yet temperate, ‘in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.’ In a word, let the life of our bless-

ed Saviour be the pattern of your deportment, conversation and life, that your light may shine before men, and your example may recommend to them the heavenly religion which you preach. As you have time and opportunity, visit the sick and such as are awakened or in distress, and administer to them such instruction and counsel as their cases seem to require.

“Pay a proper attention to the discipline of the church to purify and build it up. And as the success of your ministerial labors depends on the efficacious influence of the Divine Spirit accompanying them, accustom yourself to secret prayer, and exhort your people to do the same, as the means which has the most direct tendency to keep up the life of religion in the soul, and to draw down the blessing of heaven upon your ministry.

“And in all things approve thyself a minister of God, in much patience and perseverance in the blessed work to which thou hast devoted thyself. ‘Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.’ ‘Watch for souls as one who must give account, that thou mayest do it with joy and not with grief.’ ‘I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things.’ Be faithful to thy Lord until death, and he will give thee a crown of life.”

In this charge we have Father Osborn’s *ideal* of a gospel preacher. We turn next to his effort to give *reality* to this ideal, in his own person. I quote again from his autobiographical discourses. The text it will be recollected, is, “Ye know \* \* \* after what manner I have been with you,” &c.

“Ye also know after what manner I have varied my subjects of discourse. Well knowing from mine own experience, and from the remarks of others, that the people wish to hear discourses on various subjects, and observing how much sameness there is in

some preachers, I have aimed to discourse on many different subjects. This I have done with a view of entertaining the people, not only with an agreeable, but also a profitable variety. How far I have succeeded in this endeavor, you can judge.

“But after several years, I was convinced that in trying to shun one error, I had run into another; that I had spent too much time on some points less interesting, and had dwelt too little on others which are of vital importance. For although the parts of religion are numerous, yet those which relate to experience and practice, are certainly the most essential and interesting, and should therefore be most frequently brought into view. \* \* \* \* For a time, my aim and labor was to find out new subjects and matter, but for many years past, the chief difficulty has been to bring forward subjects in due season. Sometimes several things seemed to demand an immediate hearing, and I have to bring them forward, one after another, as they seem to be most urgent.

“You know after what manner of style I have preached to you—that it has been a simple and plain style. Though I might have used a more elegant, learned, or sublime style, yet I thought it my duty to follow the example of Paul in speaking to you with great plainness of speech. For the design of preaching is to convey ideas, and give instruction and knowledge to the hearer. But if my language is above the understanding of many hearers, I might as well speak to them in Greek or Hebrew. And, therefore, to speak the truth has been my first object, and next to speak it in such language as to be intelligible or easily understood. I have been all along sensible that by using such a plain style, I have sacrificed my reputation for learning. But that is a matter of little consequence. I ought not to care whether I am thought learned or ignorant, if I can but promote your Christian knowledge and be a helper of your faith.”

There spoke our blessed Father Osborn! “No matter for my reputation as a speaker, if I can only

be of good to your soul!" The reader who has been accustomed to hear him, can easily supply the rest from his own recollections. Recall in your mind the slender and lithe form standing in the lofty eagle's nest of a pulpit, under the "sounding board," in the Old Stone Church, bending over the congregation, with his manuscript (to which, however, he is but loosely confined,) held before his face with one hand, while the other is stretched over the people: in imagination listen again to the flow of that mellow, earnest voice, but slightly modulated, except as it occasionally rises to a majesty of utterance, or breaks under the fullness of emotion, yet never aspiring to anything higher than simplicity of speech, and you have a vivid likeness of Father Osborn as a preacher.

The trait of earnestness in delivery abode with him to the last. When he was so far enfeebled by years that it was painful to witness his embarrassment in some other parts of service, let him once get out his subject and feel himself settled in the harness, and the hearer was soon made conscious that all was right—the old minister was at home. "Does the old man fail in the pulpit?" was the question which one of his absent friends asked of a Fairfield gentleman in 1852. The reply was, "He fails among the hymns and chapters, but get him on his preaching legs, and he goes like a house a fire."

Between himself and his constitutional associates

in the government of the church, the session,\* great cordiality seems in general to have existed. Speaking of the commencement of his pastoral administration, he says—

“I was favored with a session of able and pious men, and never shall I forget the first prayer meeting, in which they assisted me in this house. They prayed with the spirit, and my mind was so sensibly affected, that perhaps I could not refrain from tears of gratitude and joy. And respecting the session ever since, the Lord has highly favored me and the church.”

It was common for him, in his later years, to speak in pleasant terms of those who had shared with him the governmental administration of the church. One circumstance which I had never before heard, and which I presume would otherwise have been

\* From the time of his settlement to his dismissal, the following persons had seats in the session.

Eleazer Smith,	Jeremiah Nixon,
Ephraim Harris,	John Bower,
Levi Stratton,	John T. Hampton,
Amos Westcott,	Jedediah Ogden,
Jeremiah Harris,	William Bateman,
Norton Lawrence,	Joseph Ogden,
Thomas Burch,	Thomas Harris,
Henry Howell,	Daniel Burt,
John Howell,	Ephraim Westcott,
Nathaniel Diament,	Bergen Bateman,
Asa Fish,	Ephraim H. Whiticar,
Nathaniel Howell,	John Holmes.

Only five of this number were living at the time of his death. By reading across the columns above, the names appear in the order of their election.

lost from the knowledge of men, is presented in his autobiographical sermons.

“After a few years, [from the date of his settlement,] the session on some accounts were dissatisfied with me, and conversed with me on the subject of their complaints. Whether I gave them any degree of satisfaction, or not, there was no further altercation between us. Believing that they did what they thought was their duty, I cherished no ill will toward them. And ever since, my friendly attachment to the session and church has been growing stronger. May our friendship be immortal!”

The fancy of those of us who were intimate with Father Osborn, can readily supply the meagreness of the account of that interview with the session. They doubtless found him open to conviction. If he saw they had just cause of complaint, he frankly acknowledged it, and rendered all reasonable satisfaction. But if he regarded his own position as right, he certainly said so, and he said it in such a way that we may be sure “there was no further altercation” in the matter.

It is true he was a man of much humility. We have seen this in the spirit in which he speaks of the success of his ministerial labors. Extracts from other sermons and from his correspondence, might be given in further illustration. Two of the marked and often mentioned traits of his character were humbleness and meekness. But he had no mawkish affection of modesty. He knew how to appreciate his position, and in the sight of men, to respect himself. “If you thought,” he says in one of his sermons, “that I intend to do my duty, you thought

right. Respecting my aims, I have like Paul, lived in all good conscience before God, until this day. \* \* \* \* You will consider that in choosing the subject of a discourse, I have to judge alone. I have no human counsellor, no earthly friend to consult how I shall proceed, or what I had better say. Single and alone I have to judge for myself, to be responsible for my judgment, and bear the burden of my labor.”

The prevalent gentleness of his temper is a more noticeable trait, from the fact that it appears to have been one of the triumphs of grace within him. He often spoke of his habitual mildness as a thing very foreign to his natural constitution. In one of the sermons before me, he says:—

“If I have followed Paul’s counsel to let my moderation be known to all men, I have not acted out my natural temper. One of my friends observed to me, ‘You are a moderate man.’ Thought I, you do not know what I am made of. Though I wish to follow the aforesaid counsel, still my natural constitution is fire and thunder. Ye avaricious misers who grind the faces of the poor, I would trample you under foot and thrust you out of the world. Ye cruel and tyrannical oppressors, I would blast you with the lightnings of Heaven. Ye profane swearers, drunkards and liars, I would strike you through with a thunderbolt. *That* is the ‘moderation’ of my natural constitution. If by the aid of reason and religion, I have been enabled to confine it within proper limits, or give it a right direction, it is ‘by the grace of God I am what I am,’ and I have reason to thank him if ‘his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain.’”

Throughout his life, an occasional scintillation from that pent “fire and thunder” betrayed the

truth of his faithful judgment of himself. But it gave a brighter reflection from his grace, that it so abounded over the corrupt nature that extraordinary mildness was generally supposed to belong to his native temper. Yes, gentle father, we will blend our thanksgivings with thine, that the grace bestowed upon thee *was not in vain!*

No one acquainted with him will doubt that if he ventured an imprecation upon any human being, none would sooner come in for it than those "who grind the faces of the poor." Nothing could sooner rouse his sympathies than the cry of the needy. This was with him an inherited susceptibility, quickened also, like the gift of young Timothy, by the counsels of his mother. He has told us that her first charge to him, on his assuming the care of a church, was—"Be kind to the poor." He was located in a community where people are not severely pressed with calls for the relief of poverty immediately around them. There is little known in Fairfield of either of the extremes of overgrown opulence or biting penury. In their pecuniary condition, the families are generally *well off*, in the true sense of the term. But there have been periods in the history of his pastorate here, which brought out the temper of those who possessed any means of helping the distressed. He has described one such season in a letter to his brother in Litchfield, dated June 20, 1817.

"Such difficult and distressing times, the oldest man living never saw. For weeks and months past, there have been con-

stant vendues of household goods and other property, by the sheriff and constables, for less than half their value; sometimes less than a third or quarter. I was told of a horse lately bought at vendue, for one dollar, by a man who said he would not take thirty for him. Many families not long ago in independent or comfortable circumstances, have been sold out, and reduced to beggary and want. The paupers increase. People are tired of going to vendues. Many have no ready money to pay for articles, and to see one family after another stripped of food and clothing, is enough to sicken and draw tears from a person of any feeling. May the Lord have mercy on them!"

I have no record of his personal sacrifices in aid of the distressed at that time, but I find this sentence in a sermon preached a few years afterward.

"If I am a friend to the poor, or partial in their favor, you will not wonder at it. If I was not their friend, after having received so many tokens of their friendship, I should be a monster of ingratitude. May the Lord bless them with every needful good, making them rich in faith and heirs to his heavenly kingdom!"

But we need no written record of his habits of practical benevolence, either toward the children of want, or the institutions for the advancement of religion. His living epistles are all around him. The cause of the poor and the support of religious enterprises, were all his life brought prominently into the very methodical manner in which he managed his pecuniary affairs. His salary never exceeded what is regarded as a living mark; indeed many would say it was never up to it. He began his service of the congregation, with a salary of £100, equivalent to \$266.66, and the use of a parsonage. In a few

years it was raised to \$300.00. In 1807, having previously given up the parsonage, his salary was raised to \$400.00. In 1809, it was further raised to \$450.00, and in 1812, to \$500.00, at which last mark it remained until the settlement of a colleague in 1836, when it was reduced to \$300.00. When he was again left alone in the pastorate, the division of the church had so weakened its pecuniary ability, that no attempt was made to increase his compensation. At his dismissal, he received the guaranty of an annual payment of \$100.00 during his natural life. Although this salary was his main means of support, still under his careful management, a small property was eventually secured from it.

But he was accustomed to say that he must pay his salary also. Accordingly he set apart from it, an annual stipend for widows in straitened circumstances. He kept a list of these beneficiaries, and when death or any other circumstance, removed one from the list, another was sought out to fill the place. One half of his marriage fees was sacredly devoted to charitable purposes. How much was realized from this, may be judged from the fact that in the course of his ministry, he solemnized between seven and eight hundred marriages.\* During my own pastoral administration in Fairfield, in our collections for benevolent objects, his figures uniformly took the lead in magnitude, and such I was informed, had long previously been the case. Indeed the disparity between his contributions and those of others, must

---

\* In 1846, the record has 725.

sometimes have been quite too striking; certainly so, if there is no slip of the pen in this sentence which I find in a letter to his relative in Litchfield, under date of July 10, 1844,—“ We took up a collection on Celebration Day, of \$5.00, to which I have added \$50.00, and enclosed it in a letter directed to the Treasurer of the Colonization Society in Washington city.” Toward this Society, he cherished a peculiarly warm attachment. His usual contribution to it was \$10.00 at a time.

For his short service in the army, he obtained in his old age, a small pension. Although there was then every prospect that he would be obliged to draw upon the substance of his little property for the support of his declining years, still with his habitual trust in God, he divided all but \$10.00 of this pension between the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Philadelphia Home Missionary Society, and the Colonization Society.

Let it not be thought, however, that his faith in God as a provider for his old age, was a reckless or improvident trust. The following extract from a letter, written to his nephew, Myron Osborn, shortly after his dismissal, will show that there was calculation as well as faith in the matter.

“ Perhaps I mentioned to your father that the terms on which I was dismissed were, that the congregation should continue to me the annual payment of one hundred dollars. This is ratified by a written agreement. I feel not the least uneasiness about a comfortable living, for if my income is not enough, I can easily lean on my own resources. It is calculated that the growth of

my wood land, (one hundred and sixty or one hundred and seventy acres,) is as much as fifty or sixty cords every year. All that I have sold, (several hundred cords,) I have sold for \$2.00 a cord, on the stump. And the people would not let me suffer, for they have ever been kind and friendly, and done for me all that I asked of them, so that I ought to love them and pray for them as long as I live. You see that I linger on this subject, as if I could not leave it. And truly I feel interested in it and affected with it. I ought to be very thankful that the Lord has cast my lot among such people."

Of the \$10.00 reserved for himself out of his pension, after the expenses of collection, only about seven remained annually for his personal use. A better picture of his spirit and life could hardly be drawn, than to produce him sitting at his table, and as he noticed the absence of some favorite article of food, saying with a smile—"We will have it when my pension comes. It is but little, *but it is a great deal better than nothing.*" It must not, however, be supposed that Father Osborn was allowed to want while waiting for the pension. The means which he had stored were more than enough for his comfort, and if they had not been, he had children who loved him, and around him were "the people" of whom he so often spoke. He was safe enough.

It is impossible to transfer to paper the pleasantness in which his content and gratitude were expressed, not only in relation to his pecuniary condition, but on all subjects involving his comfort. In 1850, at the age of ninety-two, he had a severe attack of erysipelas, which it was thought at the time would prove fatal, and which in the end, left

one of his eyes in total and permanent blindness. "Thanks to a merciful Providence!" he said in a letter to the writer, shortly after his recovery, "thanks to a merciful Providence! my health is once more restored. The disease has, however, blinded my right eye, but I cannot complain, for I have one eye left for which I would not take all the gold in California." It would puzzle the brain of a satan to contrive a method of seriously disturbing the happiness of such a man.

Sometimes his pleasantry varied from a devout to a mirthful tone. Judge Elmer, of Bridgeton, in a letter to myself, containing some valuable material and suggestions for this memorial, relates the following incident:—"About 1815 or 1816, I remember stopping at his house with a carriage load of young people—he had a daughter then grown up. Some one asked for water. It was brought in a pitcher, but no glasses. Mr. Osborn, in his peculiarly pleasant manner remarked, 'I would tell you that all our glasses got broken, and in these war times we could not afford to buy any more, but it rather mortifies Mrs. Osborn, [she was present.] So I suppose I mustn't say any thing about it.' "

Though not exactly german to the last point, I may as well in this place relate an incident furnished me by another gentleman, for whose aid I have already expressed my obligation. It illustrates Father Osborn's considerateness for the feelings of others—a trait around which a host of pertinent anecdotes might be gathered. In his later years, after his memory was seriously impaired, he at-

tended the funeral of a man who left a wife to mourn his death. He prayed earnestly for the parents, brothers, and friends of the deceased, but omitted any supplication for the widow. In the evening, he was told that he had forgotten to pray for her. "Didn't I?" he exclaimed in sorrowful surprise. He waited only until the early morning, and then set off, post haste, to assure her of his sympathy, and commend her to the widow's God.

Another scrap, bearing on his personal habits:—Writing, in 1831, to his Litchfield friends, who it appears had with him taken an early stand in favor of the temperance movement, he says—"I advise you to give up the use of tobacco as well as rum, as I have done. Not a morsel have I chewed or smoked since last September. I think it will be for your health as well as mine." He was not, however, cordial toward what he regarded as fastidious abstemiousness, and he resolutely adhered to his favorite beverage of coffee. Sometime about his ninetieth year, a guest at his table declined coffee and took water instead, adding a remark on the subject which did not tally with the old gentleman's *hygiene*. He, however, only replied with his bland humor—"Some folks say that coffee is poison, but it has been a very slow poison with me."

While in the sporadic way, another incident may be related, illustrating the wide respect which his name commanded. A Cumberland county farmer, whose general good character was marred by one bad habit, was one night picked up by the police in

the streets of Philadelphia, in a state of intoxication. A night in the lock-up restored him to sobriety, but he was notwithstanding marched up to the police magistrate to give an account of himself. He stated, as was true, that this was his first offence against the peace of the city; that he was an honest, and in the main, a quiet citizen of New Jersey, and that if now discharged, he would go home and offend the majesty of Philadelphia no more.

“In what part of New Jersey,” inquired the magistrate, “do you live?”

“In Cumberland county.”

“Cumberland—Fairfield is in Cumberland county, is it not?”

“Yes sir, and I am well acquainted there.”

“Perhaps you know Father Osborn, the minister.”

“Know *him!* yes, well—have been to his meeting often. Every body there knows that good man.”

“Well, if you are a neighbor of Father Osborn’s, I think we must let you go this time.”

And out from the clutches of the municipality he went, wondering and rejoicing that such a name should have been to him a shield of defence afar off, where he supposed himself out of all reach of friends.

It is not, however, to be supposed that a respectable official’s sense of duty, was so light as to allow the bare fact of a man’s neighborhood to Mr. Osborn to settle the question of his discharge. He doubtless saw that the dismissal of the offender was

in itself proper, and happening himself to know of the aged pastor, took this playful method of honoring his name.

To return to the weightier points of his character; his sacred office did not overlap his sense of his civil responsibilities. Father Osborn was a PATRIOT, and he was not scrupulous of making himself known as such. He came down to us from the times when the absence of such a virtue would have been little less than moral treason. He brought the spirit of a soldier of the Revolution along into his whole following life, and he felt no hesitation in linking the patriotic duties of the citizen to the articles of practical religion. He never lost his interest in public celebrations of our national independence, and whenever, as was often the case, he took part in them, he sought to turn the minds of the people into a religious meditation on God's mercy to our country. He was a uniform voter at the political elections, and not always a silent politician, especially when he supposed that any class in the land, were suffering under political oppression. He held aggressive war in peculiar abhorrence, and nothing raised his hostility toward an administration to a higher mark, than measures of a warlike tendency.

In this connection, I am permitted to quote from a letter of Judge L. Q. C. Elmer, who, as well as his father, General Elmer, was on terms of personal intimacy with Mr. Osborn :

“ A biographical sketch [of Mr. Osborn,] which does not mention his political opinions, will be incomplete. He was a sup-

porter of Mr. Jefferson. I have before me five letters from him to my father, then in Congress, dated in 1802, 3 and 6. In February, 1803, he says—‘I was glad to hear of your good health, and congratulate you and every well wisher to his country on the happy effects produced by our beloved President, and the brave patriotic republicans at the last session. From the verge of national ruin, we are rescued and set in a prosperous way. A degree of national gratitude is due to the beneficent agents, but the highest degree to the Divine moving cause who hath not dealt so with any other nation.’

“Three-fourths of his congregation [Judge Elmer adds,] agreed with him in politics, until the contest between Adams and Jackson in 1828. It had been a frequent custom of his to preach a political sermon previous to the fall election, which was generally well received. During the presidency of John Quincy Adams, he together with the most leading republicans of his flock, adhered to him, and rejected Jackson. The congregation became about equally divided. In 1832, he preached his last political sermon, which produced such a ferment that he abandoned the practice.”

An anecdote concerning that last political sermon, will show that there was a vein of shrewd humor in some of the hearers, as well as in the Pastor of the old church. As already noticed, there had always seemed to hang a little mist over his Calvinism, and he had some hearers who occasionally expressed a wish that he would preach the doctrine of election a little oftener, and a little more plainly. While returning from church, a member of the session remarked to his family, who were sitting with him in the carriage—“Well, I do not think any one can complain that we have not had the *doctrine of election* preached to-day.”

It is presumed that this sermon was fully up to the ferment point; for at that time, his mind was highly incensed by what he regarded as a breach of a solemn treaty of our government with the Cherokee Indians, and the imprisonment of the Cherokee missionaries, Worcester and Butler, by the courts of Georgia, in consequence of the refusal of the administration to regard that treaty.

My correspondent is, however, not aware that Father Osborn did carry his politics into the pulpit at subsequent times. The Mexican war excited his warm hostility toward a subsequent administration, and his sentiments were incidentally but unsparingly proclaimed in his sermons, on more occasions than one between 1844 and 1848.

I give these particulars because I think, with Judge Elmer, that they are essential to a fair view of his life and character. When it is remembered, that in his youth, and especially in New England, politics was not an uncommon theme for the pulpit, and also how deeply his spirit was imbued with the civil events of those times, we can with great complacency accord to him a privilege, which under present circumstances, ministers of the gospel cannot claim without deep detriment to their appropriate work.

There is a precious odor in the remembrance of Father Osborn, as he was known in the domestic relations of life. As he advanced in years, his mind often went back to the home of his childhood, and its circle of parents, brothers and sisters, with a

warmth which seemed to melt the frosts of age, and rejuvenate all the affections of his nature. In a note to his mother, appended to a letter to his brother, under date of September 9, 1816, he says—

“DEAR MOTHER,—Your son, Ethan, is yet alive, and through the goodness of God, is, with those of his family who survive, in good bodily health. And I pray the Lord we may be in good spiritual health. And may the Lord support my kindest of parents, and grant you those consolations of his grace which are neither few nor small. Never shall I forget my obligations to you for all your care, forbearance, indulgence and kindness toward me, from my infancy up. Though I can never reward you, I pray and trust the Lord will, and with the blessings of eternal life.”

Writing to his last surviving brother, Eliada, March 15, 1832, he commences—

“DEAR BROTHER,—Your last letter, dated the 9th of last month, we received a few days after it was written. The melancholy news it contained was quite unexpected. When I read—‘I write to you as my *only* brother,’ my mind was so agitated with grief that I stopped. I anticipated the words which followed, that my other brother was gone to his long, long home. Reading on, I soon found that what I anticipated was true—that brother John was indeed gone, and as we trust, gone to his heavenly rest.”

A few extracts from another letter to the same brother, February 21, 1833, will close our notice of his yearnings toward Litchfield.

“Though I have so long neglected to write to you, I have often thought of you and desired to see you. No distance or length of time can ever separate you from my thoughts and affections. As

our relatives are removed by death, and we are left more alone, it seems as if we become more endeared to each other. When I look to my father's family, my parents are gone, my oldest brother is gone, besides many of my cousins and former neighbors. But I espy one dear brother left, and dear to me he ought to be. Often do I run back with a kind of mournful pleasure, to our days of childhood and youth. How many days and nights we have worked and slept together! In my mind, I often go with you into the cornfield, or into the meadow to mow and rake. And when our day's work is done, we walk together down to the brook, and sometimes get on the great rock a little north of the bridge, to wash our feet. Those childish affairs do often occupy my thoughts, and afford some pleasant meditation, though mingled with serious reflections.

"As our relations are, one after another, going the way of all the earth, we must ere long follow them. I can truly say that after I went away from my father's house, and for months and years was far absent, I felt very sensibly the ties of affection between us, and you seemed to be the nearest relation I had in the world. Yet those ties must be dissolved. And happy for us if we are so united to the blessed Jesus by the ties of faith and love, as that when all things here fail us, we shall be received into everlasting heavenly habitations. Dear brother, I hope you are giving diligence to be found of God in peace, not having on your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by faith in Christ Jesus, that so you may be accepted and welcomed to the joy of our Lord. And whether or not we ever meet again in this world, I pray that God would prepare us for the first resurrection, and for a happy meeting in his heavenly kingdom."

To pass over Father Osborn's Fairfield home, would be an unpardonable omission, even in an outline of his life. That home was a centre of attraction for some of the best society in Cumberland and adjacent counties, who sought it, not for its hospitality alone, but for the impressions of tranquillity

which they were sure to carry away. Father Osborn's love for the society of his friends was unbounded. Those who were in the habit of visiting him, will never forget the benignant smile with which they were always welcomed, the cordial surrender of his time to their enjoyment, and the peculiar art with which he turned discourse on any subject into a cheerful current.

He loved a *home*, in the local as well as domestic application of the term. We have seen with what words of fondness he spoke of the things as well as friends of his home in boyhood—the cornfield, meadow, brook and rock—we almost expected him to add—

“The old oaken bucket that hung in the well.”

It seems to have been with him, a hereditary love. His nephew, Myron Osborn, writes from Litchfield—“Grandfather, [Mr. Osborn's father,] was a farmer, and if I am not mistaken, was seven years old when his father came with his family, to this place. The fourth generation are now in possession of the old homestead where my progenitors lived and died.” The above account leaves the family in possession of their Litchfield home, one hundred and thirty-seven years.

At an early period of his ministry, Mr. Osborn took measures to obtain a place which he might call his own. He secured a central situation, highly eligible for his purpose, and abandoning the parsonage owned by the congregation, he took possession of

it in 1803. His own care in giving it improvements, has made it the pleasant home so well known to his friends. There he trained his family, and there he died.

He was twice married. His first wife was Elizabeth Riley, born near Bridgeton, January 30, 1775, to whom he was married, September 18, 1794. Their children were—

Anna—born August 7, 1795; married to Lorenzo Lawrence, 1815; died in Cincinnati, September 13, 1845.

Betsey, born June 7, 1797; died September 28, 1825.

Ruth—born September 5, 1799; married to Benjamin Thompson, March 16, 1825; died June 4, 1836.

Ethan—born June 12, 1801; died August 6, 1811.

John Elmer—born December 4, 1803; married to Margaret Harvey, of Massachusetts; now living in Hennepin, Illinois.

Mary—born February 6, 1805; married in 1827, to Rickard Hurd, of Cincinnati, and now living.

Harriet Seymoure—born October 30, 1810; died September 2, 1816.

Robert—born August 27, 1813; now a clergyman in Point Pleasant, in Western Virginia, where he married Josephine Browne.

It will be seen that only three of the eight named above, survive. Mrs. Thompson is represented in the living world, by her children, Mrs. James Powell of Cedarville and Mr. Ethan Osborn Thompson, of

Philadelphia. Mrs. Lawrence has one living representative, in the person of Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Richardson, residing in Ohio. All the living children have families around them.

Their mother, the first Mrs. Osborn died, October 9, 1817, at the age of forty-two years.

He was married to his second wife, Esther Foster, of Pittsgrove, Salem Co. N. J. May 8, 1822. She was born in 1785, and died June 7, 1835.

Father Osborn had a peculiar manner of nourishing his domestic affections in silence. I have often been surprised to observe that he spoke least of those whose memories I found, on careful scrutiny, were most deeply treasured in his heart. Perhaps this habit grew out of his settled method of bringing forward only cheerful themes for conversation. Perhaps he was unwilling to trust his voice in the effort to speak where his feelings were too deeply interested. In a letter to his particularly beloved brother Eliada, he refers to their last parting which proved their final separation in this world, in these terms—"Since in parting, we shook hands, but could not speak." He talked but little of his bereavements, or the absence of his children, but his domestic relations had been happy, and his heart was often with the dead or absent ones of his household.

His surviving children have for many years, been settled in homes of their own, in distant parts of the country, and since the death of his last wife, the administration of his household has been conducted,

as already mentioned, by the devoted niece whom God in mercy preserved for the support of his helpless years. Her long, faithful watch over his comforts, merits at least this humble notice. \*

Passing from his home to his spiritual family, the church, the welling up of affection from his heart, though no more real, was oftener brought to the notice of the people. His love of his flock was one of the elements of his long influence over them. It was not alone the heavenly sentiment of love for their souls, but also the personal attachment of friend toward friend. They seldom listened to a sermon in which this did not in some way so break forth, as to secure a response in their own hearts. An example of this will be afforded by another quotation—the last which I shall make from the discourses which have so liberally contributed their material to this narrative :

“ My cordial attachment for my Christian friends has for many years been growing strong. I trust our friendship in Christ Jesus will be immortal in the happy heavenly realm. I love you because you love my Saviour, and are my fellow-travelers to the heavenly Zion, and candidates for a like crown of glory. As long as I live, your Christian friendship will be dear to me, a sweet balm of my life ; and in the morning of the resurrection, I

---

\* The personal friends of the parties, will be pleased with the notice of a transaction highly honorable to all concerned. During the last visit made by Mrs. Hurd to her father, while as yet he was competent to make a devise, at her earnest instigation his will was so altered as entirely to supersede herself in favor of Miss McQueen, the lady referred to.

hope to spring forward to greet you with ineffable delight. Let our brotherly love continue and advance until it be perfected in glory."

We may well imagine how this unaffected expression of his holy attachment, wrought up the sympathy of his hearers, and prepared them to listen to the following sentences with child-like reverence and love. They close his autobiographical sermons, and in transcribing them, the writer parts from what has been to himself the interesting service of preparing this memorial.

"And now, brethren and friends, we have been together a long time, and how soon we may separate, God only knows. But whether our separation for this world be sooner or later, I solemnly charge all of you, in the name of God, to be ready to meet me at the right hand of our final judge. Let not one of you neglect the salvation of his immortal soul.

"We shall all stand on a level before our Judge, and he will pass sentence on us without respect of persons. I shall have no advantage over you on account of my present station. We shall each be tried by the same rule, the word of Christ who will judge us in the last day. If some of you are better Christians than I am, as I hope you are, you will be more glorious, and I shall rejoice with you in your superior dignity and happiness. There is no envy in that blessed world: all rejoice in each other's joy. My only hope of reaching it, is through the mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus. Brethren, *do* continue to pray for me, and I pray the God of peace to sanctify you wholly, and preserve you unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

END OF THE MEMORIAL.

# CENTENARY EXERCISES

AT THE

ERECTION OF A MONUMENT OVER THE GRAVE

OF

REV. ETHAN OSBORN,

AUGUST 21, 1858,

THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH,

WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE

EULOGY PRONOUNCED BY HON. L. Q. C. ELMER,

AND THE

ADDRESS OF REV. N. C. BURT.

536590



## CENTENARY EXERCISES.

---

THE remains of Father Osborn were hardly left to the quiet of the grave, before his friends in Fairfield and Bridgeton, started the enterprise of procuring a suitable token of remembrance to stand over the grave. The effort resulted in the erection of a plain, comely monument, composed of a shaft about ten feet in height, wrought from Italian marble, standing upon a square plinth, the whole sparingly, but neatly ornamented, and corresponding with the character which it is set to commemorate. Carrying out this likeness, the inscriptions on the four sides are brief, simple, and pertinent.

FRONT—"Erected August 21st, 1858, to the memory of Rev. Ethan Osborn, born in Litchfield, Conn., August 21, 1758; died full of faith, and in the hope of a joyful resurrection, May 1, 1858, aged 99 years 8 months and 10 days.

RIGHT SIDE—"Graduated at Dartmouth, 1784, licensed 1786, called to Fairfield 1788, ordained 1789, and resigned his charge 1844, having been pastor of this Church 55 years.

REAR—"A soldier of the Revolution, a good man, a faithful minister of the Gospel.

LEFT SIDE—"He obeyed the command—'Go preach my Gospel.' His children in the flesh and in the spirit lie around him."

Saturday, August 21, 1858, was the one hundredth anniversary of his birth, and it was selected as an

appropriate time for public services in connection with the erection of this monument. Once more a great assembly was gathered within and around the Old Stone Church. They came, as at the funeral, from all the country around, crowding about the outside of the doors and windows, after the seats, aisles, galleries, and pulpit and gallery stairs, were all crowded.

The presence of all Father Osborn's surviving children, who for more than thirty years, had not before been together under the family roof, was a feature of no small interest in the scene. His old Litchfield friends also sent on a delegate, in the person of his nephew, Mr. Myron Osborn. The following, as far as recollected, are the clergy who occupied the pulpit and platform.—The Rev. Messrs. James Boggs and Charles F. Diver, resident pastors with the supervision of the exercises; Rev. John A. Annin, also a resident pastor; Rev. George W. Janvier, of Pittsgrove, the patriarch of the Presbytery of West Jersey, and Rev. Messrs. S. B. Jones, D. D., T. W. Cattell, and J. W. Hubbard, pastors in the same Presbytery; Rev. Messrs. Challis and Kennard, of the Baptist church, and Hugg and Duffield, of the Methodist, all of Cumberland county. From without the State, the venerable William Neill, D. D., of the Second, Rev. B. B. Hotchkin, of the Third, and Rev. A. Converse, D. D., of the Fourth Presbytery of Philadelphia, and Rev. Nathaniel C. Burt, of the Presbytery of Baltimore.

The services were commenced by Dr. Neill, who

gave out the following hymn, which was sung with great effect by a choir under the leadership of Mr. Daniel Williams, now of Philadelphia, but for many years chorister under the old pastor:

“ O God of Bethel, by whose hand  
Thy people still are fed,  
Thou through this weary pilgrimage,  
Hast all our fathers led.

“ Our vows, our prayers we now present  
Before thy throne of grace ;  
God of our fathers, be the God  
Of their succeeding race.

“ Through each perplexing path of life  
Our wandering footsteps guide ;  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
And raiment fit provide.

“ O spread thy covering wings around  
Till all our wanderings cease,  
And at our Father's loved abode,  
Our souls arrive in peace.

“ Such blessings from thy gracious hand,  
Our humble prayers implore,  
And thou shalt be our chosen God  
And portion evermore.”

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Mr. Janvier. Hon. John T. Nixon, of Bridgeton, followed with a statement respecting the monument, and the various documents deposited in the foundation stone, comprising the names and proceedings of the Committee of Erection, a manuscript sermon written by the deceased, notices of his death and funeral, and other

articles, from the West Jersey Pioneer, Bridgeton Chronicle, Christian Observer, and American Presbyterian.

The audience then listened to the Eulogy pronounced by Judge Elmer, and the Address of Rev. Mr. Burt, copies of both of which are subjoined at the earnest solicitation of the family, and other friends of Father Osborn. The interval between the delivery of them was occupied by singing a hymn given out by Rev. Dr. Jones.

Rev. Dr. Converse, editor of the Christian Observer, and co-presbyter with the deceased, was then called upon for remarks. He responded by saying "That our late Father Osborn was loved, and honored, and held in high esteem by all the members of the Presbytery, and that at their last regular meeting they appointed a large committee to be here on this day, to unite with you in commemorating the hundredth return of his birth-day.\* In this appointment it was no doubt their purpose to act in accordance with the precept which God gave his ancient Church :

'Thou shalt stand up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.'

"The Presbytery would have rejoiced to be here by their Committee of which I am a member, to greet

---

\* At the spring meeting of the Presbytery, while Father Osborn was yet living, and his friends were looking for the continuance of his life beyond this period, a committee was appointed to represent the Presbytery in a contemplated congratulatory festival on the present anniversary.

and honor our aged and revered co-presbyter; but it has pleased God to disappoint our hopes, and to call our father to the assembly and church of the First-born in Heaven. We cannot regret his absence. Having accomplished the great purposes of life and finished the work God gave him to do, it was far better for him to be absent from the body and present with Christ, than to be here suffering under the infirmities of a hundred years. The speaker added that he could not think it proper to occupy the time of this large assembly, with desultory remarks suggested by the occasion, after the able and interesting discourse to which they had listened. Before closing he referred to the faithful sketch of Father Osborn, given by Judge Elmer. The honorable speaker had not called him a *great* man; he had presented him before us as a *good* man, unassuming—of great simplicity of character,—a man of true humility and modesty. And is not *simplicity* an element of greatness? Are not modesty and humility characteristic of greatness? We may mistake in our estimates of men, but our departed friend was a man of *great* influence, of which the hundreds convened here to-day are living witnesses. The influence of such a man survives on earth when he has gone to his rest." Dr. C. closed with a brief remark on *transmitted influences* as seen in that community, with a passing reference to the Rev. DANIEL ELMER, who was the Pastor of that church a hundred and thirty years ago.

The services were closed with a benediction pronounced by Rev. Mr. Challis.

## JUDGE ELMER'S EULOGY.

---

[STATEMENT BY THE PUBLISHER.—It was expected and earnestly desired, that the complete Eulogy, pronounced by Judge Elmer, should be given in this place. It is proper to state, that he and Mr. Hotchkin were engaged at the same time on their respective performances, and without any such facilities for conference, (being a long distance apart,) as would enable them to keep their tracks from interfering. Having both, to some extent, access to the same materials, and being in common familiar with the most observable traits of Mr. Osborn, their pens could not well avoid falling into several coincidences. These, however, are found to have been fewer than might have been expected. Still, it turns out that some historical portions of the Eulogy, and a few thoughts in review of the character of its venerable subject, had been anticipated in the "Memorial."

In view of this fact, the Judge felt great embarrassment in yielding to the request for a copy for publication. The consent at first given reluctantly, has since been followed by a letter so deprecatory of its appearance as a whole, for the reasons above stated, that we are constrained to defer to his feelings, and content ourselves with the publication of copious extracts, embracing however, more than three-fourths of the entire Eulogy.]

---

### EXTRACTS FROM THE EULOGY.

I COME to speak of the character and virtues of ETHAN OSBORN, with feelings of lively sensibility. Although out of the bounds of his congregation,

from my earliest recollection I have known and revered him. He was long the pastor of a people once ministered to by the Rev. Daniel Elmer, from whom all of the name, in this part of the State, are descended. He was the life-long friend of my father. Many ties bound them together. Although not then acquainted, they had both fought in that great contest which established our Independence. They were generally of one mind, in politics and in religion. Looking recently at Mr. Osborn's family Bible, I found recorded in his own hand-writing, the dates of the birth and death of Ebenezer Elmer; he alone, of all his friends, in nowise related by blood or marriage, being thus remembered.

But why this monument, this solemn ceremony, and this eulogy of a deceased minister? He neither coveted nor expected such distinctions. He was a plain man, and not specially distinguished for learning or eloquence. He was far more anxious to perform well the duties of a humble station, than to reach a high seat in the synagogue. His voice was seldom heard in the pulpits of fashionable congregations; and when it was, attracted no applause.

All of us who knew the man, feel, however, that he deserved to be thus commemorated. Our object is, not to glorify him, for to him the applause or censure of men is nothing. Our object is to benefit ourselves and posterity, by a record of the life, labors, and death of a faithful minister of the gospel, a true patriot, a prudent counsellor, a reliable friend, an humble, consistent Christian. He spent

a long life in the service of the one people, among whom he first settled. He was spared to an extreme old age, and from the beginning to the end of his life, commanded the respect and love of all who knew him. Children's children grew up and called him blessed.

A century has elapsed since his birth; a century of great events. Born a subject of King George II., he died the citizen of a great and prosperous republic. Seventy years, the allotted period of human life have gone by, since he left his native home in Connecticut, after having graduated at Dartmouth, N. H., and been licensed to preach about two years and a half. No steamboats or railroads then rendered a long journey easy and of quick despatch. Traveling on horseback, and not intending at first to go further south than Philadelphia, he was providentially directed to this congregation, which had been about five years destitute of a pastor. He came to a people prepared to receive, and needing such a man. They were of Puritan origin. For many years in their early history they had resorted to New England for pastors. Daniel Elmer was born and educated there; and when William Ramsey, who was of Irish parentage, and had been educated at the new College at Princeton, was selected to succeed him in 1756, it was thought advisable that he should go to Connecticut, and be there licensed. After a probation of six months Mr. Osborn received a very cordial invitation to settle, and obeyed the call. He was received by

the Presbytery of Philadelphia, ordained and installed December 3, 1789. Following Mr. Ramsey, a man of uncommon eloquence, and Mr. Hollingshead, who was also distinguished as a preacher, although differing much from them, he must have been an acceptable preacher. That, considering all his qualifications, he was well fitted for the place, is shown by the fact, that from the commencement of his pastorate, until advancing age and infirmities induced him to resign, after a service of fifty-five years, no one talked, no one thought of a separation. He had enlisted for life; his people chose him for life; and to the end of his life he remained among them, only ceasing to labor when his strength no longer permitted.

When he arrived, he found this "Old Stone Church," now in its turn abandoned, newly erected and occupied. The frame building, following the temporary structure of logs, which stood in the old grave yard, on the bank of the Cohansey, about a mile from this place, and which had been known for three-fourths of a century as the "Cohansey Church," having become unfit for use, the property here had been purchased and stone collected for a new building in the year 1775. But the trials and privations of the Revolution suspended the work until the year 1780, when it was resumed, and the building completed in that and the succeeding year. In the meantime the old house had so decayed, that it became necessary to remove the seats and the pulpit and place them under the large, old corner

tree, now gone, where Mr. Hollingshead was accustomed to preach. The first sermon in the new house was preached by him September 7, 1780, from the text, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Philip. iii. 7. The labors and sacrifices of the people, considering the time and circumstances, must have been great, and a great blessing from God followed them. About one hundred and twenty persons were added to the church during the ensuing two years. Such, however, was the effect of the destitution that followed the removal of Mr. Hollingshead, that when the new pastor commenced his work, he could find but one hundred and twenty-five members in all.

The congregation was scattered over the whole of Fairfield township, and in parts of the adjoining townships of Downe and Deerfield, including a portion of the people of Bridgeton where there was no church of any denomination, although it had been the county town forty years. The only churches then in the county were the Old Cohanscy Baptist Church, founded in 1690, probably the first in the county, which then worshipped at a house in lower Hopewell, near where Sheppard's mill now is; the Presbyterian churches at Greenwich and Deerfield; the Seventh-Day Baptist Church at Shiloh; a Baptist church at Dividing creek; a German Reformed church in Upper Hopewell, which had no pastor and soon went to decay; and the Friends meetings at Greenwich and Port Elizabeth. The population de-

pendent on this church for religious instruction, may be estimated at about two thousand.\*

It was the understanding of the new pastor and his people, as I have already remarked, that he settled for life. Such was then the usual tenure of the pastoral office, in the land of steady habits from which he came. He did not sit down among a secluded people, to prepare himself by a few years of careful composition and study, for greater usefulness in a more important charge, nor did the congregation stipulate that six months' notice should terminate the engagement. He did not come with a partner already chosen, but after a few years of careful saving, as one important preparation for housekeeping, found a wife among his hearers, and soon afterwards purchased a convenient and comfortable but modest house, with a few acres of ground, leaving the old parsonage and farm to be sold. In this house he lived fifty-five years, and there he ended his days, and died in the joyful hope of a glorious resurrection.

---

\* Since the above was spoken, I have ascertained that property was conveyed to Trustees for a Methodist Episcopal church at Port Elizabeth as early as 1785, and it is probable that there were a few Methodists in other parts of the county before 1789. The whole number of communicants belonging to all the churches at the last date did not exceed 600. The population was then about 6000, so that the communicants were about one in ten. At this time there are 8 Presbyterian churches with about 1150 members, 7 Baptists with at least 1000 members, and 17 Methodist Episcopal, with near 3000 members, the whole number exceeding 5000, which is more than one in four church members in the present population of 19,000.

Laborious in his habits, blessed through his long life with uncommon health, he went faithfully to work, to win souls for Christ. He adapted himself in all respects, to his circumstances. Although a very fair scholar, he soon lost his character for scholarship, as he has been heard pleasantly to remark, by striving to be plain and intelligible to the weakest capacity. In a sermon preached in 1822, he said with his characteristic simplicity: "As to my proceedings in the affairs of the church, I aimed to follow the practice of my worthy predecessors, without making any alteration, unless it could evidently be made for the better. I was favored with a session of able and pious men; and never shall I forget the first prayer meeting in which they assisted me in this house. They prayed with the spirit. My mind was so sensibly affected, that perhaps I could not refrain from tears of gratitude and joy. And respecting the session ever since, the Lord has highly favored me and the church."

\* \* \* \* \*

For twenty years or more after his settlement, he followed the ancient custom of preaching two sermons on the Sabbath, in the meeting house, with an interval of half an hour. But during the intermediate time, he was by no means idle. He visited the schools in the different neighborhoods; was at all times attentive to the sick and suffering, and visited and prayed with his people systematically and diligently.

When he began his labors, Bible, Tract, Mission-

ary and Colonization Societies were unknown; but when in the good providence of God, the church was aroused to some proper sense of duty in these matters, he entered at once and heartily into measures for promoting them. He was one of the founders of the Cumberland Bible Society, which preceded the American Bible Society, and was among the first in the country. He was also an earnest promoter of the movement in favor of temperance, cheerfully relinquishing his long practice of taking a small quantity of spirits daily, which he had been taught to consider important for his health, and acting upon the apostolic principle of total abstinence from whatever might make his brother offend.

But while he did not hesitate to combine with others to set a public example of abstinence when the emergency required such a testimony, and to endeavor by all suitable means to promote the welfare of his fellow-men, he was too wise, and too deeply imbued with the spirit of his Master, to fall into the prevalent error of attempting reforms, upon principles not sanctioned by his infallible guide, the revealed will of God.

[After some remarks upon the superficialness and certain reaction of reforms which ignore the moral and spiritual element, and after a notice of the political views and course of Mr. Osborn, corroborative of what is contained in the "Memorial," the Eulogy proceeds to speak of his Theological opinions in terms more to be regarded, because coming from one whose ecclesiastical connections are with the Old School branch of the Presbyte-

rian church. They probably express the views now entertained of the departed pastor, by the body from which the asperities of the times severed him.]

His theology was that of a very moderate Calvinist. Believing and preaching the doctrines of personal election and final perseverance of the saints, he as firmly believed and taught a general atonement. And this he did with the sincerity and openness that always characterized him. About twenty-five years ago, not being listened to when the subject was discussed at the monthly association, with the respect to which he thought his age entitled him, he prepared a sermon in defence of his views, which on a subsequent occasion he preached before them. When accosted, after the services by one of his brethren with the remark, "Well, brother Osborn, you gave it to Calvinism to-day with an Arminian cudgel," he good humoredly replied, "My opinions have been a good deal questioned, and I thought I would let you know my views."

Firm and decided as he was in maintaining his own opinions, he was entirely free from envy and jealousy, and was willing to accord to all others the same freedom of opinion he claimed for himself. He disliked controversy, and was a model and advocate of peace. So thorough was the conviction of his sincerity, so meek was his spirit, so blameless his life, and so courteous his manners, that although his brethren were grieved, at what they could not but regard as a departure from the true doctrine of their confession of faith, and of the Bible, they

never failed to accord to him their love and esteem, and to tolerate differences, which exhibited by another man or with a different spirit, might have produced very unpleasant consequences.

When the disruption of the Presbyterian body occurred, no one doubted, on which side he would be found. But he was in no hurry to break up old associations. Writing to a sister in 1840, he said: "I have been frequently asked; what is the difference between the Old and New School. Yesterday, agreeable to previous notice, I answered the question from the pulpit. After explaining some difference of opinion respecting the doings of the Assembly of 1837 and 1838, and of a few doctrines, I drew several inferences, one of which was that the New School Assembly is the genuine constitutional Presbyterian Assembly in the United States. Whether we shall remove our standing to a New School Presbytery, we have not yet determined. I am much perplexed in a troubled situation, between two fires. May the Lord direct me, to do what is right and best." His church very soon seceded from the West Jersey Presbytery, and united with one connected with the other party. Before this, there had been a secession from his church and a new one constituted. The final result, as you know, has been that the one Old Cohansey Church, has become three, that at Fairton, claiming to be the regular successor, so far as I know, without a contestant.

Fairly to characterize Mr. Osborn's preaching, will be difficult. As I have already intimated, it

cannot be said that he was an eloquent man. Too busy to be a great student, he drew his sermons directly from the Bible, and depended on his own thoughts. Many here, remember his common practice, at a certain period of his discourse, of stopping and looking at his watch, and then saying, "Having gone through the doctrinal part of my discourse, I come now to make some practical remarks." He had a clear, distinct voice; "the finest, some of us thought, in the Philadelphia Presbytery," is the testimony of one, for many years a co-presbyter. His sermons were eminently practical, were well thought out, and well adapted both to edify his flock, and to alarm the careless. I can never forget the solemn emphasis with which I once heard him pronounce the awful warning of the last ten verses of the first chapter of Proverbs.

You have all heard of the famous Whitefield, that "prince of preachers," whose voice was once heard by multitudes of this and the other congregations in the county, when he preached in the year 1740, on a small hill near the meeting-house at Greenwich, and where in his own language; "The words gradually struck the hearers, till the whole congregation was greatly moved, and two cried out in the bitterness of their souls, after a crucified Saviour, and were scarcely able to stand. My soul was replenished as with new wine, and life and power flew all around me." What was said by this wonderful man, when put on paper, evinced no superiority to the productions of ordinary preachers. Gifted with

a most musical and powerful voice, and with deep feelings, his matchless power, like the power of all great orators, was due to his being able to communicate his own emotions and passions to his hearers, and thus to bring their whole minds into sympathy and union with his own.

The influence exerted by Mr. Osborn, although it fell far short of that exerted by Whitefield, I am persuaded was due to a similar power of bringing the feelings of those he addressed, to a lively sympathy with his own. His natural temper was quick and irritable, entirely controlled by perfect self-command; and he was endowed with a lively sympathy for others, and especially for those in trouble, and the poor and humble.

\* \* \* \* \*

A strong feeling for the poor, and for every class of his people, was shown in his countenance, and in every word and action. If he rose to address a Sabbath-school, with his ordinary greeting, "Well, children, I am glad to see so many of you here," every eye brightened, and every little heart beat with quick emotion, for all felt that his feelings toward them, were those of the most affectionate parent, and every word he spoke fell on listening ears.

He was not addicted to writing for the press. I am not aware that any of his sermons have been printed. In May, 1812, just before the declaration of war against Great Britain, he delivered a short address to a company of soldiers, then recently enlisted and about to depart, which in his own words,

was "by request (unexpectedly) of the officers and others, submitted to publicity." This address as now read, is in nowise remarkable, but it made a deep and lasting impression on his hearers, some of whom could repeat much of it from memory, and many preserved the paper containing it, among their choicest relics. He spoke from a heart deeply imbued with the feelings of a true patriot; he knew from experience the dangers and trials of a soldier's life; and he was anxious to benefit his hearers. First addressing to the soldiers suitable cautions and admonitions, he closed with the affecting words:— "And now, in taking leave of you with brotherly affection, we bid you a cordial farewell, praying that God would have you in his holy keeping, give you prosperous success and a safe return." Then to the people, he inculcated the duty of contributing to the comfortable support of the soldiers. "And at the call of proper authority, let us cheerfully and promptly aid their exertions, and consider them not as military slaves, dragged into service by a press-gang, but in the honorable character of volunteer citizens, going forth to put themselves between us and the hostile foe, defenders of our rights and avengers of our wrongs. Let us boldly aid the Christian cause, by frowning upon vice and wickedness of every kind and encouraging the duties required by the gospel. And as the battle is not always to the strong, let us implore the blessings of Almighty God, that he would bless rulers and people with wisdom and grace to rightly perform their

respective duties, that he would preserve our armies in camp from wasting sickness, shield them in the day of battle and give them the victory, and cause the war in its consequences to be subservient to the best interests of mankind and Divine glory."

With this spirit, he addressed himself to his people from week to week, with unwearied assiduity, carefully adapting his discourses to the times and seasons. There was much sameness of manner, combined with a great variety of topics. In his sermons, and in his conversation, he was accustomed to dwell very much, upon the overruling providence of God, in which he put his trust. When a drought occurred, he would appoint a day of fasting and prayer, taking care to say, If it pleases God to send us rain before that time, we will make it a day of thanksgiving and praise. And such faith did the community come to have in these special intercessions, that it became a common remark far out of the bounds of his parish, "We shall soon have rain; Mr. Osborn has appointed a day for fasting and prayer."

\* \* \* \* \*

Acceptable and successful as a preacher, he was still more beloved in the sick-room and at funerals. Who that has ever been present, can forget his manner of speaking to the mourning friends of the deceased? Ready at all times to "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep," perhaps no one ever more skilfully adapted his remarks to the circumstances of each particular case, and no

one was ever heard with more affectionate reverence. Speaking manifestly from a full heart, he yet maintained a calm demeanor, and spoke in a clear and distinct tone, eminently calculated to soothe and edify. So true was his sympathy and so delicate and nice was his perception of what was due to his hearers, that he could speak with a plain directness, which very few could imitate. He was felt to be a sincere friend and a wise counsellor.

In social intercourse he was kind and courteous, and was always an acceptable guest. Like most men of naturally quick temperament, he had a strong sense of the ludicrous, and although always mindful of his holy calling, would often let off a flash of wit or tell a humorous anecdote with no little zest; and being able to accommodate himself readily to every description of persons, he gained access to those who to others were almost inaccessible, and was thus enabled to enlarge the sphere of his usefulness. At his own house he was a model of hospitality and kindness, and let no one depart, without exciting the wish to see him again. I remember calling there a few years ago, after his faculties had begun to fail, but while he still retained his recollection, and could converse intelligently, with a clerical friend, who afterwards remarked how much he was struck with his cordial manner, his grateful sense of attention, and especially his mode of taking leave of us, following us out of the gate, thanking us for the visit, and showing as well as expressing how much he was pleased, looking after us until

we were out of sight. From my first knowledge of him, his manner was the same. I saw him for the last time, about a fortnight before his death, and although I could not be sure that he knew who I was, when he followed me to the door, and in his old pleasant cordial manner thanked me for the visit, and expressed his hope that we should meet again, if not here, in heaven. He seemed the same kind, courteous Christian friend I had always found him, during the more than fifty years of our acquaintance.

Whatever might be thought of him as a preacher, he was mighty in prayer. Long before I could appreciate his excellence in this respect, I remember to have heard his prayers spoken of as peculiarly acceptable to devout minds. They were the prayers of a man used to converse with God. After his faculties had so decayed that he could not remember the names of his children and grand children, he could lead the devotions of the family and of a congregation, with entire propriety. He preached his last sermon in this building, and took an affecting leave of the place where he had so long stood as an ambassador for Christ, in the year 1850, and attended public worship for the last time at Cedarville, about three months before he died, closing the services with some appropriate and impressive remarks to the people, and a touching prayer to the God and Saviour he had so long served.

Very few ministers of the gospel, could be so

aptly described in the language of Cowper, as Ethan Osborn.

“ Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve and own,  
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
 His master strokes, and draw from his design.  
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere,  
 In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,  
 And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,  
 And natural in gesture; much impress'd  
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
 And anxious, mainly, that the flock he feeds  
 May feel it too; affectionate in look,  
 And tender in address, as well becomes  
 A messenger in grace to guilty men.  
 He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,  
 Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart;  
 And arm'd himself in panoply complete  
 Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,  
 Bright as his own, and trains by every rule  
 Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
 The sacramental host of God's elect.”

In the fullness of time he has been gathered to his fathers. We do not sorrow. His body has been consigned to the tomb, his spirit has ascended, as we trust, to his heavenly home. But the good that men do lives after them. His faithful teaching, his fervent prayers, and his Christian life, have not been in vain. Many of his spiritual children, lie around him in this graveyard, where he buried the fathers and mothers and very many of the children of his flock. Some survive, to cherish his memory, and to

be living witnesses of the power of the gospel he preached. If there are any within the sound of my voice who turned a deaf ear to his faithful warnings and earnest entreaties; let me affectionately remind them, that soon they must stand at the judgment bar of Christ, and there meet the pastor, who in the long suffering mercy of God, was spared to them so many years. If "he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

## MR. BURT'S ADDRESS.

---

It is a sadly pleasant duty, which has been assigned me, my respected friends, of speaking to you thus to-day, as from beside the grave of our late lamented and venerated pastor. It is a sad duty; for a few months ago I had hoped that when this day should arrive, we should be gathered here just as now, but with him in the midst of us, laden with the mercies of a full hundred years, and, while receiving our congratulations, once more—if only once more—pronouncing upon us his blessing.

How sadly this occasion contrasts with that anticipation. Yet, as it hath pleased God to remove him from us, the duty is now a pleasant one, of doing what we may to call to mind the many things of his long life among us which we desire to have in lasting remembrance, and for the sake of which, especially, we have to-day reared this monumental stone.

It is as a parishioner, more particularly, that I would speak of Father Osborn:—it is as one upon whose infant head he laid his hand in baptism,—as one who often, in all the growing years of childhood, saw his beaming face in the Sabbath-school, and

heard there that uniform salutation so familiar to you all,—as one who dwelt for many years amidst the breakings of the word and the bread of life from his lips and hands,—as one whose parents' and grandparents' marriages he solemnized, and some of whose remoter ancestors he buried,—as one thus nearly and tenderly related to him, like as were so many of you;—it is as one of his parishioners, and in the name of all his parishioners present, that I would speak of him.

I could have wished, indeed, that the duty of speaking thus as a parishioner had fallen to the lot of some older person—of some one whose memory reaches farther back upon his life, and comprises a greater variety of its occurrences; for although thirty years have gone since my recollections of him begin,—since I first sat in you pew, next the front, and looked up into his face as he stood here, and childishly feared lest this sounding-board should fall upon him,—although thirty years have gone since then, yet he was then fulfilling his threescore and ten; so that it is only as an old man, and a very old man, that I have any recollection of him whatever. This deficiency has been made up, perhaps so far as could be, by the honored gentleman who has preceded me, speaking, as he has done, with the interest and affection of long acquaintance, and as a descendant of one who here occupied the pastor's place long before Father Osborn. I say the deficiency has been made up, so far as could be; for who is there among us old enough to recall his early

years? I see here and there, among his former flock, a form bowed down with the weight of years, but even these were young to him. The last surviving member of his original congregation, after lingering the last for many years, as you know, long since died. Yes; he was a rare exception in the matter of age. We are all children compared with him, whose life, stretching backward and forward, touched upon six generations.

We celebrate these services for the centenarian. And centuries! these are not periods in the life of a man, but in the life of nations and the world's history. Yet, what an affecting view we have of the shortness of life and the speedy flight of successive generations, when we think that even the long life of the venerated deceased was short, when compared with the brief existence of many things about us.

He is gone; but this house, which was new when he was young, still stands. He is gone; but that hickory tree yonder, which throws its evening shadow on these windows, which lived before this house was built, against which my grandfather leaned his gun when this roof was raised,—that tree waves its limbs as if in benedictions on the pastor's grave hard by, and still is young.

It is fit, my friends, to engage to-day in such services as these. You have done well to devise and execute the purpose which this monument speaks.

In honoring the memory of one so aged, you honor the memory of your own fathers, and fathers' fathers, whose companion and friend he was.

In honoring his memory, you pay a tribute of deserved praise to the heroes who won our nation's independence; for at the call of his country, as you have heard, in the ardor of youth, he threw down his books, and put off his student's gown, and catching up musket and sword, hastened to the standard of Washington.

In honoring his memory, you fulfill the decree of Heaven, that "the memory of the just shall be blessed," and you avoid the reproach of Heaven, which cries, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart." Ah! he was a good man. The common phrase in all this region, as you know, has been,—“as good as Father Osborn.” And if they whom the world calls great receive applause and win a monument,—nay, if it be so oftentimes with even those who excel only in what is fiendish in our nature, and whose career is one of crime and desolation, shall not he be honored who adorned himself with heavenly graces and scattered blessings all along his pathway?

Nor is this all; but more than all this, in honoring his memory you honor him who, for more than half a century, well and faithfully discharged the duty of a Christian Pastor among us. "I magnify mine office." Where is an office so sacred and so honorable? An ambassador of God—a minister of Jesus—a herald of salvation,—shall we not have him in revered remembrance who, more fully than most who occupy this office, felt its weighty import, and strove to meet its large demands? And where, further, I

may ask, is an office that so connects with it the tender and precious interests of men,—that enters so familiarly and fully into the affairs of social and personal life, acquainting itself with them and busying itself about them in loving sympathy?

The pastor is not only the interpreter of the oracles of God in the gathered assembly; he is a visitor in every home, and a personal friend of every individual. In every crisis of life he is at hand, soothing in sickness, comforting in sorrow, counseling in perplexity, and, at last, accompanying the dying, as far as he may, toward the brooding shadows of the dark and solitary valley; and in all this he is the friend of the soul, drawing from earth, leading to Christ, and inspiring with heavenly hopes. O there is none who so fully and so tenderly interweaves his whole life with that of each of a community, and draws after him and binds upon him such a train of ardent and holy affections, as the faithful and loving pastor. And such a pastor was he, whom we mourn. Nay, his career, extending through generation after generation, and ever widening and deepening its sympathies and cementing its affections, identified with him the life of this community to a degree seldom known. He has been a representative character among us, and his biography would be the history of Fairfield, in the most important respects, for the period which it would cover.

As one, then, venerable for years; as one who took his young life into his hands for our country's

deliverance; as one radiant with the virtues which God approves and which bless mankind; and as our worthy, long-tried, long-trusted, ever-loving pastor, we do well to honor him and call him to remembrance, by monuments more enduring than marble.

It is fit, too, to celebrate these services in this place. Here, rather than any where else, did he perform his life's work. And so little comparatively has this house been occupied since he ceased from his active labors, it seems sacred to his memory alone.

All things here speak of him. This was his pulpit, this his Bible; these walls echo his voice; this room is pervaded by his presence. I can almost see him—can you not?—coming in at yon door, walking up that aisle, treading these pulpit steps so solemnly, hanging his hat on that knob, (the right hand one, not the left,) closing the door of the pulpit as he seats himself, and then giving himself to brief meditation.

At such a time as this, the heart prizes the recollection of the little peculiarities which marked the object of its affection.—And thus in picturing him to ourselves in the pulpit, we love to think of such things as these, the frequent wrinkling of his forehead, his occasional rising on his toes, his opening his eyes for a moment, and at regular intervals, in prayer.—We all remember the form in which his sermons were cast,—of the doctrinal and the practical part, and the habitual performances with watch

and spectacles and handkerchief, which separated the two parts in the delivery.—We call to mind certain peculiarities of language; \* particularly the pronunciation *thoufore* for *therefore*, the substitution of *who* and *which* for *that* in his reading, as also the substitution of *shall* for *will*, in cases where Scottish usage had prevailed against correct English.—So we recollect the heartiness with which he joined in the singing, and the readiness and interest with which he caught and used our new tunes, notwithstanding his natural partiality for the older music.—And who, that has ever heard his preaching, will forget that silvery voice, so distinct in its articulation, that the dull ear of age caught every quavering syllable of his calm utterance, when the vociferations of others would give the impression only of a confused noise.—And although he could hardly be called an orator, yet we all remember the serious earnestness which marked his speaking. Yes; and there were times when this earnestness kindled into eloquence. It has often seemed to me, that I never stood so nearly face to face with the Great Judge of all, as when, sometimes, in the closing of his sermon on a summer day, he would turn and look through these open windows out upon the churchyard, with its great congregation of slumbering occupants, and referring to the scene, turn again to us, and, with roused voice, press the exhortations of his subject by the consideration of death and the life after

---

\* See Note A.

death. Often, at such times, I thought the archangel's trump might the next moment sound, and I could not but imagine the pious dead of the churchyard trooping forth from their graves, and, in robes of white, pluming themselves to meet the Lord in the air, while I trembled, lest the day of my doom had come. At such times, he was "the old man eloquent." He seemed indeed transfigured and inspired for a moment,—a heavenly messenger let down into the midst of us, to ply the ministries of God's mercy by the urgencies of the world to come.

And what a congregation was that which here listened to his discourse. For a long time, almost all Fairfield worshipped in this place. And, even within my own memory, the Sabbath assembling of his congregation, in the summer season, was a sight to behold. Recall the scene. Out from Cedarville on the south, Fairton on the north, Sayre's Neck and Back Neck on the west, and even the woods on the east, come pouring uncovered wagons and great covered carriages, and throngs of people on foot, men and women and children. The grove of oaks at the end of the church, and the road in front, on both sides of it for a long way, at length are filled with the vehicles. Those persons arriving before the time go—some at once into the church, others into the churchyard, others again into the grove or dooryard. By and by, but punctual to the hour, the pastor is seen slowly approaching.\* He

---

\* See Note B.

leaves his carriage in the grove. He advances up the dooryard, his summer gown flowing in the breeze. His coming is the signal for the scattered multitude to assemble and enter and be seated. And soon they come sweeping in, filling the seats below and the seats above, and often running over into stairways and aisles.—Aye, this broad gallery was crowded then, back to the wall. It contained indeed a large proportion of the entire audience, and perhaps it was this nearly even division of the assembly which suggested the classification of his hearers which the pastor often made in his preaching—a classification which I have never heard made elsewhere or by any one else, and in this case made upon what principle or for what purpose I have never exactly known, the classification of “all who are here present, either below or in the gallery.”

It is not my desire to dissect very closely the character of our departed father and friend. Our hearts are full of reverence and esteem for him, and we wish to look upon him as our hearts picture him, and receive the impression of his character and life as a whole, and in its broad native colors. Yet the picture, as a whole, has its strong features; and it may be well to glance at some of the prominent points of his character—those of which we cannot but think when we think of him at all, and those which most of all made him what he was.

If to any extent I should traverse the field gone over by the gentleman who has preceded me, it still may not be useless; for in the mouth of two or three

witnesses every word shall be established. *Good* is the word, as already intimated, most often used concerning him. And perhaps his goodness *was* his most prominent attribute. He was good, if by that we understand that he was remarkably free from imperfections of character generally, and possessed, in remarkable degree and combination, the various virtues and graces.—He was a holy man.—And he was good, if by that we understand that he was unselfish and benevolent. His was a gentle disposition, and an even course of life spent in doing good. He wished well—he thought well—he spoke well, of every one possible; and he acted as he felt and spoke. This gentleness may not have been wholly natural. It was, no doubt, in part acquired. He was not without a certain natural quickness of temper, and in view of what was mean and wrong he was capable of a ready indignation. But a St. John was once a Boanerges, while it may be said of Father Osborn, that his natural temper was, on the whole, singularly amiable, and that all his life long he was characterized by eminent gentleness.

Yet the word *good* does not fully describe him. The word *kind*, in its primitive meaning, must be added to the word good. He felt his *kindred* with mankind. He was of ready and tender and wide *sympathies*. His was not an intense and rugged personality walling him off from his fellow men; but in him humanity prevailed over individuality, and he came in contact with others at many points. He thought that “nothing of human concern was

foreign to himself," and reckoned as his friends all whom he could befriend. And with such a nature, stimulated and sanctified, he could not but have power. Yes; he was *good* if he was not *great*; and if he had not *genius* he had *geniality*, and these two are perhaps more nearly allied than we commonly think. As minor traits, suitable to be simply mentioned here, were his courteousness and cordiality of manners, his facetious humor, and his general and pleasing simplicity—all of which might readily be illustrated.\*

His *piety* was like his general character. Its exercises were of the calmer sort. His faith was simple, his love hearty, his peace ever flowing.

His *theology* answered to his religious experience. With no manifest exhibition of the Divine sovereignty in his conversation, such as that seen in the case of the Apostle Paul, and with no stormy conflicts of soul, such as wrung from that Apostle the exclamation, "O wretched man that I am," and wrought in him the profoundest sense of his absolute and immediate dependence on the grace of God, it was natural that Father Osborn should delight to dwell on the more general aspects of the divine favor.

His *preaching* addressed the conscience and the heart more fully than the understanding. It made statements of the truth rather than analytic exhibitions. It was popular rather than profound. He

---

\* See Note C.

commended the simple truths of salvation to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And he rung these again and yet again, until they sounded loud and long through the soul.

His *pastoral intercourse* was familiar and confidential. He will be especially remembered for his words of comfort in the house of mourning, and at the newly-made grave.\* He renewed his youth perpetually by perpetual intercourse with the young. And not only was his heart a fresh fountain for new personal sympathies, but he kept pace with the moral and religious progress of the age. Early he caught the missionary spirit. He was the fast friend of the Sabbath-school, and rehearsed the story of Robert Raikes with an ever increasing admiration for the founder of Sabbath-schools. He stood in the van of the temperance movement; he was an early and active supporter of the Bible Society; and he appreciated and urged, as few others in these parts have done, the claims and glory of the scheme of African colonization. His heart indeed embraced every good cause, and his hands were ready for every good work. Considering his extreme age, and the calmness of his natural disposition, and the comparative seclusion of his position, this spirit of moral and religious enterprise, was, in my opinion, as remarkable in the venerable pastor as anything we can say of him.

The heroic element did not largely enter into his

---

\* See Note D.

character, and his leading a soldier's life for even eight months, may seem an incongruity. Yet, while, no doubt, he well fulfilled his duty as a soldier, and would have done so in any case, it was providentially so ordered, that he was never called upon, though often in near prospect of battle, and for a long time dwelling amidst the hostile movements of great armies, and almost witnessing terrific engagements of portions of them—he was never called upon to face the enemy or fire a gun. It may seem amusing to sum up a soldier's history in the statement, that he was never in a battle, but was in a retreat: yet it was something to have been in the Retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks, and so it was something to have been in the retreat across New Jersey, in the dark days of seventy-six. He was called to endure as a soldier, if not to fight. The virtue exercised is none the less valuable, if it be not so brilliant; its exercise was, perhaps, more in accordance with his general character; and, in view of his after history, his negative career as a soldier is not to be regretted. We are glad that the necessity was never laid upon him who loved so well his every fellow man, and whose life was to be occupied in holy and merciful ministries to men, to mingle in the infuriate and deadly strife of battle.

It is the Providence of God which assigns to individuals as well as nations the bounds of their habitation; and we cannot but admire the wisdom and goodness which appointed to Father Osborn his residence in Fairfield. How admirably was he adapted to his position.

Connecticut-born himself, he found here a people largely of New England and Connecticut origin, and a people eminently Puritan in their manners. He was not a prophet in his own country, to fail of any proper honor; and yet he was a prophet in his own country, to perceive at once the ways and wants of the people, and to know how to apply himself to his work among them. He had not violently to deny himself the habits of his early training, but happily to preserve and perpetuate them.—And then, this peninsular position, retired from the great thoroughfares of business and travel—this nook of eddying waters, aside from the great rushing tide—how well it met his quiet disposition, how much it contributed to his even course of life,—nay, how materially it contributed under God to the wonderful lengthening of his life and the consequent significance of his life's work.

Old age is not the fruit of the hot excitements and intense living of the crowded city. It is the genial suns of many days and the gentle dews of many nights that bring on the harvest to its richest ripening.—I have seen the graves of three men side by side—successive pastors of the same church, whose united pastorates swelled to the period of one hundred and fifty years; but it was a country churchyard in which they lay, and it was a peninsular region in which they had lived,—a region secluded and quiet beyond even this.—In these days of the almost universal restlessness of men, in these days of perpetual movements and migrations, when the

attractions of native soil and home and friends dissolve before the prospect of new lands and El Dorados, and when the pastoral tie is readily sundered, and great bodies of ministers are always to be found in pastoral transit on the high roads of travel; it is well and delightful here and there to see an example of the permanency of home, and of the peculiar and happy results of a life-long ministry.—We bless God, this day, that to such a place as this, he sent such a man as him whom we mourn, and that he permitted him here to exercise his ever-growing ministry upon children's children, and live out his honored days.

It is no marvel, that God ordered it that he should live to such an extreme age. No; painful as it may be to witness the decay of the powers of the aged, and burdensome from its multiplied infirmities as old age may often be to itself and to others, I do not wonder that God here and there preserves a man to extreme old age. If it be not needful for such an one himself, it is desirable for others. If God have nothing more for him to do, it is much for such an one to stand in the midst of us as a simple witness for the Past. For not only do we dissolve our connections with things around us—with soil and home and living friends, but much more are we disposed to cut ourselves off from the Past—to lose the knowledge of its events, the memory of its people, the sense of our obligations to it, and the whole impression of its sacredness. Now to have a representative of the Past among us, a living tradi-

tion before our eyes, one whose life rooted in a remote generation blossoms and bears fruit in the present,—is it not of manifest and essential service?—These aged ones,—they are the overlapping members which tie the separate parts of the rising fabric; they afford the needed splicing for the joints of the loose construction; by them the life of the race finds continuous flow through its successive generations.

And well may we bless God to-day, that he permitted our departed father to live so long, after his life's work seemed to have been finished. He was with us, not only to afford a bond of union among ourselves, by his personal influence as was Joshua of old amidst the newly scattered tribes of Israel, but he was with us also, as Joshua was with his brethren, to testify of the past, to remind us of our ancestry and ancestral obligations, and to teach us to adore God's wonders of old which our fathers saw.

Yet he, too, must die. The stroke long delayed must at length come. He had survived so many people, he had buried so many who were so much younger than himself, and the hand of time rested so gently upon him, that, aged as he was, we did not think much of *his* dying. But of each of the antediluvian patriarchs whose name has come down to us, whose life numbered almost its thousand years—it is still written—“and he died.” “The fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live forever?”

And what a death was that of our pastor! So long a life, running so even a course, we should have supposed, would end, amidst the decays of age, in a gentle and peaceful slumber. We might well have anticipated a calm assurance, a steadfast faith, and a happy hope, fully sustaining him to the end; yet beyond this, in the matter of religious experiences, we should have expected little. But how different the fact! How much beyond this the reality! What raptures of joy and what seraphic devotions kindled about his departure, how for days he sung the music of heaven and walked as on the borders of glory, *they* have told, who so fondly and faithfully watched with him, and *he* has recorded, who occupies so worthily the old pastor's place.

His countenance seemed transfigured, and his going was almost a translation. We feel, in hearing the faithful narrative of his death, that had we been permitted, we should have watched for his departure, ready to cry, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," and to catch his falling mantle.

His triumphant death was due under God, probably, to two causes. He had just been receiving the fulfillment of his unwearied and earnest prayers for a revival of religion in this region of the church. A blessed tide of spiritual influences had set in upon Fairfield, as upon many other portions of the country, and, in the abundant watering, scores, and even hundreds, were inquiring after the Saviour or rejoicing in the hope of salvation. The cup of his bless-

ing was now full. It was his to say exultingly with the aged and holy Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Moreover, he was called to undergo great bodily suffering. He who for fourscore years hardly knew the meaning of pain, in his last days endured its sharp conflicts and long agonies. His mortal frame was wrecked at last, when just about to enter a quiet harbor. His declining sun, just ready to set, passed behind a storm-cloud hanging low on the horizon. Aged as he was, he yet did not die from old age, but from acute disease, such as may at any time overtake you and me, and before which we might fall. Now apart from such experience of suffering, probably his spiritual exercises would have been of a more quiet sort. His end would have been peace, yet not triumph. But under these strokes of God's hand his spirit mounted higher and higher. In his infirmity the power of Christ rested on him. From the conflict he issued a conqueror. Palms and robes of white were already his, as one coming out of great tribulation.

We cannot now wish that his death had been longer delayed. Long time God kept him from his home and crown, that he might still be with us. The friends of his youth, and manhood's prime, and even of his great old age, had passed into the blessed mansions in advance of him. The attractions of heaven had so multiplied before him and brightened upon him, his exile of earth and of age must have been weary. Yet still God had said to him—

“A little longer : Stay the aspiring hope : Bear the weariness and the exile : Abide still in the flesh.” Ah ! it was because this was more needful for us. But now, through a glorious death he has entered into peace : he has joined the companions from whom he had been long parted : he mingles with the general assembly and church of the first born : he looks on the face of the Lamb, and rests in the bosom of God. We bless God that he was so long with us, but we cannot mourn that his death was not longer delayed.

Almost a translation may have been his departure, yet not quite. His bones are with us. We have reverently laid them to rest. In this church-yard, filled with those to whom in their lives he ministered and whom in death he buried, all that was mortal of him reposes. Yet, if God has not translated him, as Elijah, but called him to die, and if God has not buried him in a secret place, as Moses, but given us his grave to have in the midst of us ; we would not abuse the privilege thus granted us to any vain or idolatrous purpose, but even while honoring him with suitable monuments and memorials, would still look away to his God and ours.

It is well, as already said, that we have raised this day, this beautiful monumental stone. He deserved such a token of our respect ; and there let it stand to honor the worthy dead. But more than this, we needed to raise this monumental stone for the sake of ourselves ; for his worthy life was especially em-

ployed in ministering to us of God's great grace for our eternal blessing, and herein had for us its significance. There, then, let that monument stand, to testify our gratitude to God for such a friend and pastor. There let it stand, to remind us of all his prayers and labors, in which he sought our salvation. And there let it stand, to warn us of the solemnities of the judgment, when all this life of privilege shall come in strict review.

And as often as we come from the places of our distant sojourning, to stand by the pastor's grave and read the inscriptions on this monument, or as often as in our daily familiar goings about this scene, we catch glimpses of its shining from afar, let us call to mind the responsible Past and the retributive Future, and ponder it well, that as he once stood in the midst of us a pleading witness for God, and as his monument here presides conspicuous over the tablets of the surrounding dead, so, in the great day, when the graves shall have given up their dead, and we all have appeared before the great white throne, he will again stand in the midst of us, a foremost witness in the great matter which shall decide our destiny; and let us strive evermore to be found then among those upon whom he shall smilingly look as they flock to his side, and of whom he shall say in joyful gratitude, "Here, Lord, are the children whom thou hast given me."

## NOTES TO REV. MR. BURT'S ADDRESS.

Note A., p. 130. "Certain peculiarities of language." Many of these were of New England origin. Thus, he was accustomed to say *hum*, for home, and *ceounty*, for county. Fairfield, the name of his church, and township of residence, he always pronounced *Furfield*.

Note B., p. 131. "At length, but punctual to the hour, the pastor is seen slowly approaching." Punctuality was one of the strict *moralities* of his life. The following is an instance of his punctuality. In the spring and summer which closed his 90th year, he made his last visit to Connecticut, traveling alone, excepting as he chanced to find company. Some weeks before his return, he wrote to his friends in Fairfield, to have his carriage at the steamboat wharf for him, on the afternoon of July 1st. On that day, the writer happened to be in Delaware, with a friend, waiting to return on the boat which would bring Father Osborn. Knowing his appointment to be at home that day, the writer said to his friend, "Now, we shall find Father Osborn on board, you may be sure, if he has met with no accident." Going on board, we immediately looked for him, but were disappointed at not finding him anywhere in the more ordinary resorts of passengers. We began to fear that some accident had befallen him; but no; ascending the hurricane deck, we descried him in the extreme end of the boat, quietly enjoying the ride, and happy in the prospect of soon meeting the friends whom he knew to be expecting him.

Father Osborn was not famous for his fast driving—but rather the contrary. His favorite horse, Selim, named from General Marion's fleet charger,—perhaps *lucus a non lucendo*,—was trained just to his mind. He could *trot* over a bridge at any time, without violating the ordinance against going "faster than a walk."

Note C., p. 134. "Minor traits of character." His old parishioners speak of the exceeding grace of manner, with which he would conduct a strange minister into his pulpit. In the few words of exhortation which he usually gave at the close of a stranger's sermon, he had a very happy way of commending the truth spoken, without flattering the speaker.

He was by no means a retailer of jests; yet he could very readily offset a good story told by another, by something as good from his own resources. A person talking with him about the exceeding depravity of a certain people, said, "I have been told that it is the rule with them to lie, and the exception to tell the truth." "Yes," replied Father Osborn, "I heard of one of them being prosecuted for telling the truth, because it deceived everybody."

His cordiality of manner was visible in everything, yet perhaps in nothing more strikingly than in his mode of shaking hands. It was rather a shaking of *arms* than of hands, and a *peculiar* shaking withal, lateral and longitudinal, vibrating the arm through a pretty large arc, and for a considerable time.

Father Osborn was reared to the observing of Saturday night as a part of the Sabbath. This was not a universal custom in his congregation, some keeping Sunday night. In order that his example might be wholly unexceptionable, he kept both Saturday and Sunday nights. And so strict was he in his observance of the Sabbath, it was commonly reported that he put off opening his letters received on Saturday afternoon, until Monday morning, lest their contents should distract his Sabbath meditations.

In connection with this remark about his conscientiousness, it may be said that his unaffected piety spoke in his most ordinary conduct and words. His common response to inquiries after his health was this, "Thanks to a kind Providence, I am quite well."

Note D., p. 135. "His words at the newly made grave." How solemn, as well as tender, were these words! His address at the grave was nearly the same at all funerals, and many persons may recollect its language. After thanking the company "in the name and on behalf" of the bereaved mourners, for their presence and sympathies, he would thus speak of the deceased—"Go to his late home—he is not there; go to the house of God on which he was so constant an attendant—he is not there. His spirit has gone to God who gave it, while his body lies here until the resurrection morning, when the archangel's trump shall awake the dead and call the living to judgment."

# Bridgeton Chronicle.

---

**GEORGE F. NIXON,**  
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

---

BRIDGETON, N. J.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1875

---

## A GENTLE REMINDER.

We would remind our readers that money is scarce, and that we carry on our books the names of quite a number of persons who owe us amounts ranging from two dollars upwards, for subscription to the BRIDGETON CHRONICLE. Bills have heretofore been sent to some of those in arrears, and other will be found with the present number of our paper. We trust that our friends will not fail to remember their little obligations.

---

## GENEALOGICAL.

In a Genealogy of the Peck family printed in Boston, in 1868, viewed in connection with the memorial of Ethan Rev. Osborn, published by W. S. & Alfred Martien, in 1858, we find his ancestry as far back as 1608. "Deacon Paul Peck" who was born in Essex Co., England, in that year, came to this country in 1635, and after a short residence in Boston, removed to Hartford, Conn., became one of its leading men and according to its record, was one of its proprietors in 1639. He was also Deacon of the Congregational church from 1681 to 1695.

His son Paul (Paul 2d) was born in 1639 and died in West Hartford in 1725. His wife's maiden name was Elizabeth Baisey.

Their son, William Peck, was born in 1686, and removed to Litchfield, Conn., in 1727. He married Lois Webster. They had children Jerusha, Timothy, Lois, Eunice, Margaret, Abigail and Sarah.

Lois was born in 1732 and married John Osborn. One of their children Ethan, was born in Litchfield, August 21st, 1758. He became pastor of the Presbyterian church, Fairfield, N. J., in 1789 and died in May, 1858, in the one hundredth year of his age.