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LOCAL HISTORY

2551

DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the Death

OF THE

VENERABLE DANIEL WALDO.

Washington March 12 - 56

Dear Sir I received your letter a few days since, & now inform you, that when the Revolution commenced I was a boy, 13 or 14 years old. When a little over 16 I was drafted & sent to London for a month. After that I enlisted for eight months in the State service of Conn. was taken captive near the close of my term of service, & incarcerated two months in the Sugar House N York. Of course I could not be Chaplain in the revolution.

In the war of 1812 I was Chaplain in Col Belcher's regiment at Groton Conn.

I have no letters that ^{can} be of service
to you.

Yours with due respects

Daniel Watson

Mr Franklin Henry
Philadelphia

Chaplain to Congress

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AUGUST 2, 1864.

IN THE

PLYMOUTH CHURCH, SYRACUSE,

ON OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REVEREND DANIEL WALDO,

WHO HAD NEARLY COMPLETED HIS ONE HUNDRED AND SECOND YEAR.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

MINISTER OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, ALBANY.

NEW YORK.

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL PREACHER;

1864.

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FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

"AND all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died."—GENESIS 5 : 27. --

NOTWITHSTANDING the individual here referred to lived longer than any other inhabitant of this world has ever done, his life occupying about one sixth of the whole period since the creation, all that we know concerning him is comprised in two or three sentences. He was born in the year of the world six hundred and eighty-seven, and was the son of Enoch, one of the brightest stars that appeared in all the patriarchal ages. In the year eight hundred and seventy-four was born to him Lamech, to whom belongs the dishonorable distinction of being the originator of polygamy. In the year sixteen hundred and fifty-six he died, at the wonderful age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years. Thus endeth the record concerning him. What was his occupation or character, or what the details of the history of his life, we have no data from which to form even a conjecture. The death of Methuselah occurred the same year with the general deluge;

and as the name is compounded of two Hebrew words, one of which signifies *he dies*, and the other, *the sending forth of water*, it has been supposed that it had in it something prophetic of the event to which his death stood in such immediate proximity.

Though Methuselah's age considerably exceeded that of any of his cotemporaries, or of any other man that ever lived, the ordinary period of human life was, during the whole patriarchal dispensation, much longer than it has ever been since. One reason of this, no doubt, was that, as the writing of the history of this period was to be postponed for many centuries, and the materials for it were to be gathered chiefly from tradition, it was desirable, for the sake of authenticity, that the facts to be recorded should have passed through but few hands; for, though Divine inspiration might have secured an infallible record, under any circumstances, yet it is the manner of our God never to interpose a miraculous agency for the accomplishment of his purposes, until all ordinary providential influences are exhausted. From about the time of Moses, human life settled down to nearly its present period of duration, though there are a few cases in which the ordinary limit is considerably transcended. As God does nothing without a purpose, so, no doubt, He has wise ends in lengthening out the life of here and there an individual to an extraordinary age. It will be a legitimate use of the text, as well as in harmony with the spirit of the occasion, to inquire briefly *what some of these ends are*.

I. I remark, in the first place, that cases of extreme old age are fitted to *reproduce and render more impressive the teachings of Divine Providence*.

Though the Providence of God—thanks to the Divine goodness—is not our *only* teacher, yet it is always delivering to us lessons of truth and wisdom; and these lessons will ever be found to be in exact accordance with—I might say a living commentary upon—the more direct and definite teachings of his word. The voice of God is uttering truths, in some form or other, in every event that falls within the range of our experience or observation; and these truths are suited to the different circumstances and wants of our intellectual and moral nature. Providence enlightens and instructs us, bringing home to our very senses the perfections of the Divine nature, and the principles of the Divine government. Providence admonishes and rebukes us, by exhibiting to our view the legitimate tendencies of moral evil, and pointing us away from the path that leads to death. Providence encourages us when we are prone to despond, by surrounding us with examples of the triumph of fortitude and perseverance against the most adverse influences. Providence comforts us in our sorrow, by making one event explanatory of another, and leading us to expect, in regard to our own experience, that, sooner or later, light will shine out of darkness. And while there are these deliverances of Provi-

dence in the ordinary course of things, still more emphatic are they in extraordinary events, which, by presenting human nature in some new phase, well nigh bring the mind of the world to a pause. We may receive these lessons or not, according to our pleasure; but that they are always in the process of being addressed to us, is as certain as that the sun shines and the earth revolves according to God's ordinance.

Now, while we are bound to hear the voice of God, as it speaks to us in current events, so, also, are we to recognize a Divine communication in the past; and we are to study the past, as a means not merely of gratifying an idle curiosity, but of enlarging our views and improving our characters. We may be thankful, indeed, for a well authenticated record of the years or the centuries that have preceded our time; but who does not feel that we get a far more impressive view of great events, from conversing with those who witnessed them, or, perhaps, had an agency in bringing them about? Of the stirring scenes of the Revolution, that gave us our independence—of the battle of Bunker Hill, or Saratoga, or Yorktown, for instance, you can get a correct and definite idea from history; but when you come to converse with one who was a witness and a sharer of the bloody strife, the scene comes up to you with a freshness that makes it seem almost like a present reality. And so in respect to every thing: not only can the men of a bygone age tell us of much which has never been recorded, and which would otherwise be lost to the world, but their testimony throws us back into immediate contact with the times or the events of which they speak, and thus the voice of God comes to us far more directly and impressively than it could through any other medium.

II. In cases of extreme old age, we have an illustration of both *the sovereignty and the goodness of God*.

Yonder is a man who is scarcely in the decline of life when he has filled up his threescore years and ten. He has lived on till he has completed one century; and he is carrying with him, into the second, a mind so bright and a heart so warm and genial that you would say that neither had ever been touched by the frost of age. That man, it may be, stands alone in the community in which he lives; perhaps in traveling a great distance you will not find another, whose birth dates back to so remote a period as his. And wherefore is it that he is the subject of this marked distinction—that though he has seen three generations die, his own time has not come yet? Is it that he was originally constituted with extraordinary physical energy, by which he has been enabled to withstand the shocks of a century? But thousands, who, in their youth, surpassed him in powers of both activity and endurance, have been asleep in their graves so long that scarcely any memorial remains of them. Is it that he has

been a model of carefulness in all his habits of living, that he has kept himself within a healthful atmosphere, and has brought temperance, and cheerfulness, and exercise, and all the other handmaids of health, to his aid? But multitudes have *been* and have *done* all this, and yet half a century has elapsed since they were gathered. The truth is, you can resolve that instance of wonderful longevity into nothing short of the sovereignty of God; the only answer to be given to the question, why he stands as the sole survivor, or as one of a few survivors, of his generation, is, that our times are in God's hand, and that He alone fixes the bound that we can not pass. True, indeed, that life has been preserved through the operation of physical laws, with which we are familiar; but we are to bear in mind that these laws are ordained of God, and are nothing else than the channel through which his almighty power and infinite wisdom display themselves.

But here, also, is a marked expression of the Divine goodness. Be it that the person whom you contemplate has been, during nearly his whole life, an humble disciple of the Lord Jesus, *who* can begin to form an adequate estimate of the amount of blessing of which he has been the subject? If the light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to the eyes to behold the sun; if the indulgence of the senses, within proper limits, is a legitimate gratification; if friendship, and social life, and the means of intellectual growth are to be reckoned as blessings—then, surely, such a life as that of which I speak, must, in respect even to temporal benefits, prove the exuberance of the Divine goodness. But when we come to consider this long life as a scene of spiritual experience and activity—as a period in which the heart has been all the time growing purer under the united action of the Providence and Word and Spirit of God, in which the life has been becoming increasingly prolific of good deeds, and the immortal crown, reserved as a recompense for them, has been constantly gaining a fresh lustre—can any human language do justice to that gracious agency by which, under such circumstances, the present existence has been so protracted? For though it be true that Heaven is better than earth, that there is more happiness in the reward than in the labors and struggles that have preceded it, yet these labors and struggles form the divinely appointed preparation for the glory that is to follow; and the longer the discipline lasts, and the better it is improved, the richer will be the inheritance that is to succeed. Is not that individual, then, most graciously dealt by, who, instead of being taken to Heaven in his youth, as soon as he has received the impress of the Divine image, is kept back from the full measure of his reward, until, by a long life of vigorous activity, and self-denial, and spiritual culture, he is prepared to join the community of the saved at an advanced stage of purity and joy?

III. I only add, in the third place, that instances of extraordinary longevity, such as we sometimes witness, impressively teach the lesson that *man, in his best state, is altogether vanity.*

As we are accustomed to judge of things by comparison, we naturally enough, in comparing the veteran of a hundred years with the infant in the cradle, become impressed with the idea that life with him is something more than a vapor that appears and then vanishes. But let the man whose earthly existence has actually been thus protracted, testify, and he will tell you that, however long his life may seem to others, to himself it appears as a shadow, a hand's breadth—a dream when one awaketh. Well may he ask, What is the duration of a life like this compared with that of many of the works of men's hands, which still remain firm as the mountains? What, compared with the earth we tread upon and the heavens which overhang and illuminate it? What, compared with this thinking, reasoning principle within me, or with that Almighty Power that sustains and controls creation? In such a light as this, surely the longest life dwindles to a point. Verily, the man who has traveled through his century, is but a creature of yesterday.

But, notwithstanding the period of man's continuance here is, at the longest, so very brief, there is an importance attached to it that outruns the farthest stretch of human thought. For it bears directly upon his whole eternity. Here his thoughts, his affections, his actions, every thing pertaining to his character, receives a decisive and enduring direction. Here are gathered the elements of retribution, which will develop themselves in the joys or the woes of the next world. Here man, according to the influences to which he surrenders himself, becomes moulded into a seraph or a fiend. Let this period of probation, then, whether its limit be nearer or more remote, be sacred to the preparation for an immortal life. Let the passing days and years be so improved that the record, both within and above, shall minister only to our joy. Let the vanity that pertains to our present state quicken our desires and our efforts for that higher, purer, nobler existence, to which, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, it is our privilege to aspire.

The train of thought into which we have now fallen has, I trust, prepared us to contemplate the remarkable life which has just come to a close,—the singularly blameless and elevated character which we are assembled to honor and embalm. But, of course, it is only a general outline of the life, and a rapid glance at the character, that will consist with the necessary brevity of these funeral exercises.

Our lamented venerable friend was born in Windham, Scotland Parish, Connecticut, on the 10th of September, 1762—thirteen years before the commencement of the War that terminated the allegiance of this country to Great Britain. He was the ninth of

thirteen children, eleven of whom lived to become heads of families. His parents were both exemplary professors of religion, and were careful and faithful in the Christian training of their children. His early years were spent, partly in laboring on his father's farm, and partly in attending a district school in the neighborhood. He remained at home till the year 1778, when, at the age of sixteen, he was drafted as a soldier for a month's service, during a time of imminent peril, at New-London. That term having expired, he returned home, but, almost immediately after, enlisted as a volunteer in the service of the State.

He now proceeded to Horse Neck, where he remained for five months, and was then taken prisoner and carried to New-York. He was arrested and captured, not by British soldiers, but by Tories, then known by the epithet of *Cow-boys*. He was standing sentinel on a dark, rainy night, when, owing to the temporary withdrawal of another sentinel from his post, a party came rushing upon him, one of whom snapped his gun, pointed at him, with a manifest intention of taking his life; but, as a good Providence would have it, the gun remained undischarged. Whereupon, Mr. Waldo laid down his own gun, acknowledged himself a prisoner, and as such claimed protection. He sat down in perfect calmness, and witnessed for some time the depredations of the invading party, and then was marched off with some twenty or thirty others to the city of New-York. They reached their destination sometime the next day, and were taken immediately to the far-famed "Sugar-House," then the grand depot for prisoners. Here he found about four hundred men, most of them physically and morally degraded, suffering from stinted and miserable rations, and forming a company in which virtue or even decency could have been little at home. In this dismal abode he was closely confined for two months, except as he was allowed occasionally to go out under a guard. As soon as he regained his liberty by being exchanged, he set out to walk home; but his strength now failed; and his brother, who lived in Sharon, Connecticut, being informed of his condition, met him and took him to his own house, where he remained for some time, and then returned to his paternal abode.

Shortly after his return, he suffered an attack of fever and ague, which, for three or four months, rendered him incapable of any labor; though the disease left him in more vigorous health than he had enjoyed for some time before. On his recovery, he resumed his labors on the farm, and continued them without intermission till he had reached the age of twenty-one. About one year before this, his mind took a decidedly religious turn, in which originated the desire to devote himself to his Redeemer in the ministry of reconciliation. Having, in due time, formed the purpose to do this, he went to Somers, Connecticut, to prosecute his studies preparatory to entering college, under his cousin, the good

and great Dr. Charles Backus. But scarcely had he commenced his studies, when his eyes failed in consequence of excessive application, and he returned home, doubtful whether, after all, he should not be obliged to relinquish his favorite object. Subsequently, however, his eyes recovered, in some degree, their strength, and he returned to Somers, and was fitted for college in the almost incredibly brief period of eight months.

He entered Yale College in 1784, and graduated in 1788. During the last two years of his college course, he occupied the same room with Jeremiah Mason, who afterwards became one of the brightest stars of the legal profession in the United States; and at their graduation they shared together a forensic dispute.

Immediately on leaving college, Mr. Waldo commenced the study of divinity, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Hart, of Preston, then one of the most distinguished theological teachers in New England. After prosecuting his studies for about a year, he was licensed to preach by the Association of Windham county, then holding its session at Pomfret. His first sermon was preached in South Mansfield; shortly after which he went to Bristol, Connecticut, and preached three months; thence to Cornwall, and preached three months; thence to Torrington, and preached three months; and thence to West Hartford, where he passed some two months, partly as a student, and partly as a guest, in the house of the Rev. Dr. Perkins.

Toward the close of the year 1791, Mr. Waldo accepted an invitation to preach as a candidate at West Suffield, Connecticut, and in due time he was called to become the pastor of that church. Having signified his acceptance of the call, he was ordained and installed there on the 24th of May, 1792.

Though the congregation of which he took charge had been somewhat distracted previous to his settlement among them, they became united under his ministry, and remained so during nearly the whole period of his pastorship. He was privileged to pass through several seasons of special religious interest, which were followed by considerable additions to the communion of the church. Owing to a delinquency on the part of the parish in paying his salary, he became somewhat straitened in his worldly circumstances; and I suppose that it was on this account that, toward the close of his ministry here, he took a mission of six months, for two successive years, under the Connecticut Missionary Society, into Wayne county, Pennsylvania, and the southern counties of New York. This, too, was a principal cause of his resigning his charge, as he did, in 1809; though I think I have heard him say that he was influenced to this partly by the terrible affliction which had overtaken him some time before, in the mental derangement of his wife.

On leaving Suffield he went to Colchester (Westchester Parish), and, for three months supplied the pulpit which had then been

recently vacated by the dismissal of the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, afterward Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia. Thence he went to Salem, distant a few miles from Colchester, where he supplied upwards of six months. Having fulfilled his engagement here, he made a visit to Andover, Massachusetts, and there made the acquaintance of the Rev. Dr. Pearson, whose character he greatly admired, and whose memory he cherished to the last with profound veneration. It was through the influence of that eminent man that he was employed as a supply by the church in Cambridgeport, for one year, in 1810 and 1811; and during his residence here he made many valuable acquaintances, among whom were the President and several of the Professors of Harvard College.

When the year for which he had engaged at Cambridgeport had expired, he went, under the patronage of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, on a three months' mission, more particularly to visit the schools and promote the cause of education, in Rhode Island. After having performed this service, the same Society continued him, for a year, in the same field, in missionary labor of a more general character. Subsequent to this period, until 1820, he was stationed at Greenwich, except for three months in the year, when he was traversing the State. During this time he organized a church in Smithfield, and resuscitated a decayed one at Greenwich, and another at South Kingston. In Greenwich his labors were attended by a considerable revival of religion. There was no period of his ministry to which he oftener referred, or which he seemed to remember with more satisfaction, than the nine years passed in Rhode Island.

In 1820, through the influence of Dr. Pearson, who, meanwhile, had left Andover, and taken up his residence at Harvard, Mr. Waldo was invited to supply the pulpit in the last-mentioned place; and he did supply it—I know not exactly how long, but I believe for several months. During part of this time he was a boarder in Dr. Pearson's family, and in his daily intercourse with him found a source of rich enjoyment and improvement. On leaving Harvard, he returned to Rhode Island for a short time, and then directed his course to Connecticut. While he was making this journey, the uncertainty of his prospects, in connection with his standing domestic trial, occasioned him a temporary depression of mind; but the Saviour's direction to "take no thought for the morrow" came to him with an inspiring influence, and his confidence in his heavenly Father's care was at once renewed, and he went on his way rejoicing. After preaching for a few weeks for his nephew at Griswold, who was temporarily disabled by means of an injury, he was invited to preach in the neighboring parish of Exeter, then vacant; and having served them in this way, without any definite or permanent arrangement, for a year, he received a call, in 1823, to become their pastor, upon a salary

of three hundred dollars. This call he accepted, and he found here, in many respects, a pleasant home. His labors were not only acceptable, but were attended with decisive tokens of spiritual blessing. He continued in this relation for twelve years, and then resigned his charge, because the parish, owing to various causes, had become so much reduced as to be unable to continue even the small salary they had pledged to him.

On leaving Exeter he supplied the pulpit in Hanover, a parish of Lisbon, for about four months, and then transferred his residence to this State, in consequence of the removal hither of one of his sons. Shortly after his arrival here, in 1835, he accepted an invitation to preach for a year at Sodus Ridge; and, having fulfilled that engagement, he returned to Connecticut, and for three or four months supplied the pulpit in Eastbury, a parish of Glastenbury. He then came back to this State, where he ever afterward made his home. For two years he officiated as a supply in Rose Valley, near Clyde; after which he preached three months at Wolcott, Wayne county; then three months at South Butler, in the same county; and at a later period still, was stationed as a missionary for three years at Victory. On the completion of this latter engagement, in 1846, he went to Geddes to live in the family of his son, and remained there till 1856, when they removed to this city, where he has spent the residue of his days. During this period he has supplied different pulpits, sometimes for months in succession; and I believe always to much acceptance. The last pulpit he supplied continuously for any length of time was that at Manlius, and the last sermon he ever preached was at Jordan, since he entered his hundred and second year.

Perhaps the most memorable event in Mr. Waldo's history was his being chosen Chaplain to Congress for the years 1856 and 1857, when he was ninety-four and ninety-five years of age; this honorable position having been secured to him chiefly through the influence of one of the members from this city,* seconded by another member from this neighborhood,† both of whom he held in the highest esteem, and whose kind offices he always delighted to acknowledge. The duties of this important station he discharged to general acceptance; and the opportunities which this appointment secured to him for wide and varied observation, for forming an acquaintance with many illustrious characters, and listening to the congressional debates, in which he recognized the gathering of the cloud which has since been discharging upon us its fiery contents, marked this as perhaps the most interesting epoch of his wonderfully protracted life.

The day that completed his hundredth year came and found him with a degree of vigor of both body and mind that made him

* Hon. A. P. Granger.

† Hon. E. B. Morgan.

one of the wonders of the world. It was impossible that, in a community like this, such an occasion should be overlooked; and hence we heard of the appropriate exercises and grateful offerings by which you signalized it. And we too (I refer especially to my own congregation) were privileged to see the face and hear the voice of the venerable old man on the Sabbath immediately following your own jubilant demonstrations; and I can truly say that his wise and seasonable utterances well rewarded the most fixed and reverent attention. The services of that Sabbath morning we still hold in fresh and grateful remembrance.

Since the period now referred to, Mr. Waldo has, for the most part, enjoyed comfortable health, the only very perceptible change until within a short time having been the gradual failure of his vision. His mind seemed to operate with a freedom little if at all diminished; his affections retained all their generous warmth; and his susceptibility to social enjoyment as well as his power of ministering to the gratification of his friends, were apparently just as they had been in other days. A few weeks since, the startling intelligence went abroad that, by a misstep, as he was leaving his chamber, he had been precipitated partly down a flight of stairs, and had sustained an injury which it was feared imperiled his life. I saw him a few days after this casualty, and when the hopes of his friends concerning him had begun to rise, but the change which had passed upon him was so marked that I could not repress my apprehensions of a fatal issue. Hence, I was not disappointed when I heard of the signs of approaching death; nor when I heard that death had actually done its work; and the calm and trusting and grateful spirit which he breathed in my last interview with him, taken in connection with his long life, which was fragrant with love to God and man, and was one continued expression of faith in the Redeemer, constitute all the evidence that could be desired that his hundred years' training on earth had fitted him for a higher, glorious life, not measured by centuries, but absolutely eternal.

It is proper that I should say something of what Mr. Waldo was, as well as of what he experienced and what he did; and yet, in doing this, I can not forget that I am speaking to those among whom he has long had his home, and many of whom, no doubt, have been in habits of much more frequent intercourse with him than I have myself been. Nevertheless, I am at no loss in respect to any of his characteristics; and however familiar you may be with them, I can not doubt that it will be a grateful exercise of your thoughts to call them up in more impressive remembrance in connection with these funeral solemnities.

Mr. Waldo was eminently favored in his physical constitution. With a vigorous and symmetrical frame, he combined a countenance expressive at once of a thoughtful and well-balanced mind and a benevolent and genial spirit. When I first saw him

(which was in the winter of 1810-11), I was struck with his personal appearance as being much more than ordinarily attractive; and though age could not fail to make its impression upon him, it did little more than throw an air of venerableness around his naturally fine organization. His manners were simple and natural, and betokened at once consideration and kindness.

And all and more than all that was shadowed forth in his exterior assumed a substantial form in his character and life. The cast of his intellect was rather sober than brilliant, rather sure than adventurous. He was at home in the domain of common sense and sound judgment, far more than in the regions of fancy or amidst the subtleties of metaphysics. He had a vein of keen wit, which he used always in a quiet and unostentatious way, sometimes for the amusement of his friends, sometimes for rebuking folly, or impertinence, or vice, and sometimes for silencing an adversary. He had an uncommonly retentive memory—scarcely any thing of importance had ever been deposited in it that did not remain there always. In the annual visits which he has paid me since he passed his ninetieth year, I have been deeply impressed by the fact that books which he had read, and even minute details which had been communicated to him, while he was with me one year, seemed perfectly fresh in his memory the next. A habit which he formed early in life of committing to paper what seemed to him the gems of thought in the various authors he read, was doubtless an important auxiliary to his memory; while it gave him ready command of these accumulated treasures in his ordinary intercourse.

Mr. Waldo was constituted with great equanimity and cheerfulness as well as great kindness of temper; and these qualities were sanctified and elevated by a living Christianity. In all my intercourse with him, I never saw in him the least sign of depression or discontent. Though he was undergoing a constant baptism in the cloud, from one of the severest domestic calamities, he always spoke of it with an air of calm and trusting, and even cheerful submission. He possessed a spirit of enlarged benevolence—a spirit that delighted in the happiness of all around him, and disposed him to contribute to the happiness of all whom his influence could reach. As to ample pecuniary means, he never possessed them; but, as a large heart is always inventive, he was never at a loss for opportunities of doing good, and was never slow to avail himself of them. He was especially interested in the well-being of the young; he always had a word in season to drop upon the ear of a youth, in whom he recognized any signs of wandering; and no doubt many have been restrained, and many others reclaimed, by his timely counsels and admonitions. He was candid and lenient in his judgment of others, and had no overweening estimate of himself. Those who have seen him on occasions of great public interest, since he has become an object of curiosity

on account of his wonderful age, have remarked the utter absence of every thing like self-glorying, and the kindly and even deferential consideration with which he has demeaned himself toward those who were, by half a century, his juniors.

He was happily constituted to render himself at once attractive and edifying in social life. His well-stored mind, his good humor, often discovering itself in an amusing or a pithy anecdote, his calm and dignified yet winning manner, and his readiness to converse at proper times on subjects of the deepest interest, were sure to render him welcome to every well-disposed and intelligent circle. And I may add, that he was even more distinguished in epistolary correspondence than in conversation—there was a certain pith and point, a naturalness of thought and sententiousness of expression, that gave a charm to his letters that was quite irresistible. He often occupied himself in writing to young men; and if those letters could be collected, I doubt not that they would be found to contain a rare fund of both wit and wisdom.

As a preacher, he was at once interesting and instructive. Without ever troubling himself much with the metaphysics of theology, he embraced the system commonly called evangelical, in its scriptural simplicity, never attempting to be wise above what is written. His sermons, if I mistake not, were more than ordinarily practical, in the sense of having a direct bearing upon the life. They contained much vigorous and well-matured thought, and were written in a correct, terse, and luminous style. His manner was at the greatest remove from any attempt to be eloquent—indeed, he had no patience with any departure from simplicity in the pulpit—but there was a self-possessed and dignified earnestness that gave no inconsiderable effect to his utterances and secured the attention of his hearers to the last. A considerable number of his discourses had been rendered so familiar to him by repetition that, after his sight had become so imperfect that he was unable to read his manuscript in the pulpit, he could still deliver himself with great freedom and acceptableness; and if his memory was ever at fault, his ready power of extemporizing prevented all embarrassment.

As a pastor, I do not remember to have ever heard him spoken of; but with so much good sense, and benevolence, and power of adaptation, and devotion to his Master's cause, as he possessed, I can not doubt that he shone peculiarly in that relation. In every place in which he has labored for any considerable time I believe you will find traditions of, if not living witnesses to, the prudence, fidelity, and tenderness with which he demeaned himself toward those of whom he had the spiritual oversight.

Had Mr. Waldo died half a century ago, he would have closed a useful life and left an honored name; but he would not have had that enduring record in the history of the church which his later years have secured to him. That which makes him pre-

eminent among the ministry of the age, is the fact that he has not only much more than tripled the average life of man, but has continued to exercise his ministry during nearly the whole of this period, and at the age of more than a hundred years has been an edifying and acceptable preacher. A few other ministers in this country have lived to complete their century; but if any one has ever reached this age, with intellectual faculties so little impaired, with a heart so warm and genial, with such keen relish for social enjoyment, and such just appreciation of characters and events, and such ability to interest by his public ministrations, I confess the case has never come within my knowledge. It is in this respect that Mr. Waldo stands nearly, if not quite, by himself, in the history of the church.

No man, I venture to say, in this community, or in any community, contemplated the present perilous condition of our country with deeper concern than Father Waldo. By his labors and sufferings he had helped to purchase this goodly inheritance of free institutions; and it was impossible that he should see it thus assailed and imperiled without having his keenest sensibilities called into exercise. He noted carefully every thing pertaining to the progress of the war, and formed an intelligent estimate of the various agencies which had been put in requisition. But he had the fullest confidence that our cause is a righteous one, and that it will ultimately succeed; and in its success he delighted to think would be involved the overthrow of what he regarded the most gigantic of our national evils,—the institution of slavery. The day of our final triumph he did not expect to see—it was enough for him to feel assured that that day would come—and the thought of it made him well nigh jubilant, even though it must have been associated with thoughts of his own grave. It is a coincidence not to be overlooked that the day that witnesses to his funeral solemnities should find here, in the midst of you, two of the heroic dead, who have been brought from the battle-field, on their way to their final resting-places; and that one of these, who has just fallen, should, for the last two days, have been lying in the dwelling nearest to that in which this venerable relic of the Revolution was also lying in his grave-clothes.

In recording the death of this remarkable man, we record the death of the oldest graduate of Yale College; of the oldest minister, so far as is known, in the United States; of one of the very last of those who were actively engaged in the scenes of our Revolution. His death seems to have broken a cord by which the past was bound to the present. There remaineth not another such man to die. Centuries may pass away before the world shall look upon his like again.

And now what remains, my friends, but that we gather up the lessons—lessons of wisdom, of admonition, of comfort, of hope—which this hour so impressively teaches? Let the mourners,

bowed under the loss of a beloved and honored relative; the surviving children, who, though they are themselves advanced in life, have never until now been without the guidance of a father's pure example; especially the granddaughter, who has been for many years as a loving angel about his path, and toward whom his heart was always going forth in grateful acknowledgments and kind expressions—let all who recognize in this event the sundering of any of the ties of kindred, see to it that their sorrow is duly qualified with thankfulness—for who more privileged than themselves, in respect either to the exalted character of a departed friend or the long continuance of his life? Let those of us who bear the same high relation to the church, as ambassadors for Christ, which he held so long, accept with docility the teachings both of his life and of his death; and, by patient continuance in the duties of our calling, get ready to follow him in his upward track. Let those whom age has already brought within sight of the grave, pause in an attitude of earnest inquiry and solemn thought in respect to the scenes which are so quickly to open upon them; and let this survivor of a century speak to them, through the silence of his coffin, of the paramount importance of being girded for the final summons. Let those who have been accustomed to meet this revered man in the more general relations of society; those who have accounted it a privilege sometimes to visit him at his dwelling and listen to his words of wisdom and kindness; those who have been used to see his face, and often hear his voice, amidst the services of the sanctuary; in short, let this entire community, in the midst of which his last years have been spent, bear in mind that they have to account for the privilege of having had not only a prophet but a patriarch among them. May the mantle of Elijah rest upon many Elishas. And while the fathers die, let us be sustained by the reflection that a Greater than they liveth, and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

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Obituary. (July 1864)

THE REV. DANIEL WALDO.

"Father" Waldo died on the 30th ultimo, aged nearly 82 years. His great age, his seventy years of faithful service as a pastor in the Congregational Church, and the fact that he was one of the twelve surviving links between our own times and the Revolution, and the oldest graduates of Yale College, call for something more than a passing word to his memory. Daniel Waldo was born at Windham, Windham County, Connecticut, on September 10, 1762. When 17 years old he was drafted into the army of Independence, performing his share of the honorable struggles of the Colonists for the liberty of their new-born Nation. In the following year he was captured at the battle of Horseneck, taken to New-York, and imprisoned in the "Sugar House," being, however, exchanged after a confinement of two months. At the close of the war he commenced study, and graduated at Yale in the Class of 1788. On leaving College, he entered upon the study of theology under Dr. Levi Hart of Preston, Conn., and on May 24, 1792, was ordained pastor of a Congregational church of that town. This charge he resigned in 1804, removing to Cambridgeport, Mass., for two years; then to Rhode Island, as a missionary; afterward to Harvard, Worcester County, Mass., and finally to Exeter, Rhode Island, where he presided over the church for twelve years. At this period, 1826, he retired from any stated charge, frequently preaching, however, for various ministers. His son was then pastor of the Congregational Church at Syracuse. On December 22, 1853, Mr. Waldo, then 92 years old, was elected Chaplain of the House of Representatives, to which honorable duty he was again called the following year.

Long known as "Father Waldo," from the affectionate veneration in which he was held by his fellow-citizens, the deceased clergyman leaves a record bright with patriotism, generosity and liberality of thought. The long career of such a man, his unclouded memory to the last enabling him to recall the great events which crowded the history of the last three generations, his undimmed eyes, until two years since, allowing him to read the records of our more gigantic struggle for liberty, is something to reflect upon. He had often seen humanity beaten down and trodden under foot, despotism and unholy ambition crushing out the young, strong life of nations, cruel wars crimsoning the fairest portions of earth in the interest of base and wicked men, and before he died he saw the same horrors flung abroad in our own land by the hands of perjured and traitorous men. Such things sadden the faint of heart. But if it is permitted to the sons of men, when they leave us, to view with a clearer sight and a loftier knowledge the deeds done in the flesh, they know that while the innocent suffer, and humanity mourns, He by whom we shall all be judged ordereth all things well.

Written July 6, 1864
J. H. Davis