

A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1862,

AT THE FUNERAL OF THE

REV. SAMUEL OSGOOD, D. D.,

LATE SENIOR PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
IN SPRINGFIELD.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

MINISTER OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN ALBANY.

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TO THE  
REV. HENRY MARTIN PARSONS,  
WHO HAS ENTERED SO EARNESTLY AND SO HAPPILY  
INTO THE LABOURS OF  
MY REVERED AND LAMENTED FRIEND,  
THIS DISCOURSE  
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

## DISCOURSE.

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### ACTS XXIII. 1.

—I HAVE LIVED IN ALL GOOD CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD UNTIL THIS DAY.

PAUL, from having just been in the hands of the mob, was now removed to the High Priest's Court; and he began his defence before that tribunal in the words which I have now read to you. It was a noble declaration of conscious integrity and innocence. He had indeed acted according to the dictates of his conscience antecedently to his conversion; for he elsewhere declares,—“I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;” but the conscience which he obeyed then was a darkened, prejudiced, misguided conscience—that which controls him now is a conscience enlightened, disenthralled, renovated, by the wonder-working power of Christianity. When he says,—“I have lived,



in all good conscience, before God, until this day," he dates back only to the time of his conversion: he refers to the principles and spirit which had controlled him as a follower and a minister of Christ. He does not mean to imply that he has done every thing that God has required, and nothing that He has forbidden; for, though a Christian, he is far from having reached the fulness of the stature of a perfect person in Christ—he only means that he has made God's revealed will the rule of his conduct, and has honestly, earnestly, steadily, endeavoured to conform to it. Nor are we to suppose that this declaration was dictated by an ostentatious or self-righteous spirit; for the Apostle, with all his lofty qualities, both as a man and as a Christian, was distinguished for the grace of humility; but it was eminently proper—arraigned, as he was, before the Jewish Sanhedrim, to answer as a criminal—that he should make this manly protestation of his integrity. It was due to his character as an Apostle. It was due to the Court by which he was to be judged. It was due to the honour of that Saviour whose cause he so nobly represented.

Paul, in making this declaration of himself, spake not as a disciple only, but as a minister, of the Lord Jesus; and the integrity which he here claims, and which his ministry so signally exemplifies, is doubtless to be regarded as one of the leading elements both of his dignity and of his usefulness. It will be no perversion of the text, then, to consider it as suggesting *the importance of a high standard of integrity in the ministry.*

I can imagine that it may occur to some of you that this statement is little fitted to elevate your ideas of the sacred office, inasmuch as integrity is an essential element of every day morality. Let me say that I take the word in a far more comprehensive sense than ordinary usage attributes to it—I mean by it, not merely a quality of nature, but a higher quality of grace—not merely a general intention to do right, at least so far as the external act is concerned,—subject, however, to the influence of circumstances, and admitting of exceptions in extraordinary cases, but that state of the heart which, under the control of the two great principles, the love and fear of God, aims to do right always; that asks but

the one question,—“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”—that counts not even life itself dear, where duty clearly demands the sacrifice. In this sense, integrity is eminently a Christian virtue,—pervading and giving complexion to the whole character and life. In this sense, it is peculiarly fitting, nay absolutely essential, to the Christian minister.

But you will bear in mind that even the highest degree of integrity that any minister can possess, is seated in a heart in which grace has only partially triumphed; and therefore it may consist with an occasional lapse from duty, owing either to the power of temptation or to a misapprehension of the Divine will. The uprightness of the most exalted saint is not the uprightness of an angel. The former sometimes hesitates and falters; the latter, never.

In illustrating, very briefly, the thought which I have derived from the text,

I. I remark, first, that integrity secures a *diligent* and *laborious* ministry.

The work to which the Christian minister is called, is sufficiently comprehensive in its range, and momentous in its import, to put

and keep in requisition the highest degree of physical and intellectual vigour ever devoted to it. It is nothing less than the work of saving men; of assisting to carry into effect the great purpose of redeeming mercy; of bringing God's truth in contact with the mind, in humble dependence on God's grace to renew and sanctify the heart. And while each minister, in all ordinary cases, has his own more immediate field of labour, there is a sense in which his field is the world; for neither his aspirations nor his efforts may stop short of the world's entire renovation. Is it not obvious then that the man who holds this office, with an enlightened and steady desire to do right in all things, must bring to its varied and responsible duties the utmost diligence? Must he not feel that his whole time is demanded for his work; that he is called upon to be a rigid economist in respect not only to hours but moments; that, while he is on the alert to avail himself of the ordinary means of doing good incident to his office, he is to be watchful for those extraordinary opportunities, which occasionally occur, of accomplishing great good in a little time. No



truly upright man can be a drone any where,—least of all in the Christian ministry. Integrity, true Christian integrity, will not only keep his eyes open to the greatness of his work, but will keep his heart beating, and his mind labouring, for its accomplishment.

Let me say a word here, however, to prevent misapprehension. I do not mean to imply that the appropriate duties of the minister are to be understood as superseding or cancelling the obligations of the man,—of the citizen, especially of the head of a family. Ministers sustain relations in common with others; and these relations involve duties which they are not at liberty to disregard; and these duties require time and thought; so that when we say that a minister is to be wholly devoted to his work, we mean only that that is to be the commanding object of his life; while yet it is to be pursued in connection with all other duties that fairly devolve upon him. And let me say, the right discharge of these other duties, instead of lessening his appropriate official influence, increases it. If, for instance, you were to see a minister so intent upon his official duties as not to provide his family with

bread, you would say that that ministry was at least of an equivocal character, that involved an offence against one of the first laws of nature; while, on the other hand, the minister, who should exercise a prudent concern for the comfortable subsistence of his family, you would recognize as only fulfilling one of the common obligations of humanity; and you would honour him not the less but the more, because, besides being a good minister, he was a good husband and father.

II. Integrity secures also a *bold* and *uncompromising* ministry.

It cannot be concealed that the work to which the Christian minister is called, involves not only great responsibility but great difficulty. It seeks to change the views, the tastes, the tempers, the habits, of men. It comes in direct conflict with the ruling passion of the unrenewed soul. It urges truths to which the ear is not willing to listen, and demands sacrifices from which the corrupt heart instinctively revolts. It aims an exterminating blow at the whole tribe of idols that men worship; or rather at the spirit that leads them to worship *any* idols. The great enemy with which it has

to contend is sin;—sin in every form,—from the most daring iniquity to the most intense self-righteousness; sin in every condition,—from the splendour of the palace down to the hut of humblest poverty; sin in every variety of intellectual character,—from the most gifted and cultivated intellect to the mind that has only light and strength enough to be guilty of actual transgression. To such a work as this it is obvious that a timid and hesitating spirit is altogether inadequate—there must be an energy of purpose, an heroic resolution, that has never learned to retire before obstacles, and that knows how to bring both God and man to its aid in accomplishing its ends. And this is the legitimate offspring of the integrity of which I speak. Let a minister, who has taken, for his motto, “a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man,” be placed in circumstances,—no matter how difficult and trying,—and you may expect with confidence that the exigency will reveal a principle of courage in his heart that will render him adequate to meet it. Suppose he cannot preach what he believes to be God’s living truth, without offending the tastes and

rousing the passions of those whom every worldly consideration would dispose him to conciliate,—he will, indeed, as he is always bound to do, choose out acceptable words; but he will deliver the very message which he believes God has entrusted to him, and leave the effect to be determined by Him who has constituted him his ambassador. Suppose he finds himself called to act in circumstances of perplexity and embarrassment,—circumstances, it may be, that distract and divide the public mind, and in reference to which prudence might seem to impose silence, or neutrality, or the taking of some other ground than that which his convictions force him to occupy,—here again, he will not confer with flesh and blood—he will do what he honestly believes the Lord would have him to do, without stopping to take counsel of worldly policy, or the love of ease, or any thing that would forbid a prompt response to what he regards the claims of duty. He is liable, indeed, as he is only a man, to mistake in his judgments; and he ought always to be careful that his conscience impels him in the right direction; but integrity is not less favourable to correct discernment



than to resolute action; and even when the judgment of a good man is at fault, the practical mistakes, consequent upon it, rarely bring in their train any very serious evils.

III. I remark, in the third place, that integrity in the ministry is essential to its *permanent acceptableness*.

I am well aware that this is not the conclusion to which a superficial view of the case might lead. When it is remembered how averse men naturally are to the strict requirements of the Gospel, and how prone to welcome any substitute for taking up the cross, and especially how ready to acknowledge by their caresses any thing that seems like indulgence from ministers in regard to a life of worldliness, it might seem, at first view, that, if a minister would live in the smiles of worldly people, he must sink his ministrations to a level with their own standard; while, on the other hand, the direct and faithful dealing to which his integrity would bind him, must inevitably forfeit their regard, if it does not awaken positive disgust. But this is a capital mistake; and it results from a partial view of the constitution of human nature. Man has indeed

evil propensities that make him disrelish the Gospel; but he has also a judgment and a conscience, both of which render an instinctive homage to the Gospel. What then though the former should lead him temporarily to smile upon one who handles the word of God deceitfully, and whose ministry scarcely rises above the dignity of a mere worldly compromise; yet, be assured, the latter, even amidst those very smiles, will be writing against him a sentence of deep condemnation. And ultimately the judgment, and the conscience, and not the evil heart, will prevail. The minister whose integrity constrains him not only to wield the naked sword of the Spirit, but to perform all other self-denying duties, will, sooner or later, be openly approved and honoured, even by those to whom his fidelity has been a terror; while he, on the other hand, who, for the sake of conciliating the gay and the worldly, has been false to his obligations, rendering his ministry a perpetual shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, may be sure of finding a very low place even in the estimation of the world. I could point you to multitudes of ministers whose

fidelity to their convictions and their vows, caused them, for a time, to walk in deep waters, and beneath dark clouds—but ere long they stood on high ground, and under a glorious sky; they went down to their graves, honoured and revered as faithful men; and it will be a long time before the world will have delivered itself of all the grateful testimony it has to bear concerning them. Who that has ever heard of the name of Paul, does not know that God's revealed will was his only standard; that, when that will was ascertained, no personal or earthly considerations had a feather's weight in determining his course; and that that which, now, after the lapse of nearly twenty centuries, throws his name into the very brightest lustre, is the heroic purpose, nobly expressed and nobly carried out, not to know any thing in his ministry save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

IV. I observe, in the last place, and as the legitimate result of the action of the several qualities already mentioned, that integrity secures an *effective* ministry. It involves, as we have seen, all that agency on the part of the ministry itself, that is necessary to bring

about this result. It is a security for a right appreciation of the great objects of the ministry, and for the constant and vigorous exercise of the faculties with reference to these objects. It guards against that timid, truckling, compromising spirit, that would forsake the Saviour, if it would not absolutely sell him; and nerves the heart and the hands for enterprises,—no matter how difficult,—provided only God's claims can be recognized in them. It even carries the judgment and conscience of the unrenewed world; thus preparing the way for the entrance and the operation of God's renewing Spirit. And, to crown all, it involves a reverent dependence on the power of that Divine Agent; that state of mind which at once honours his office, and seeks his aid, and pleads his promises; in short, that fulfils the condition on which we may expect his gracious co-operation. Is it any wonder that such a ministry should be successful, embodying, as it does, finite and infinite power; laying man under contribution to the utmost, and then bringing God down to work effectually in human impotence?

But it is time to arrest this train of remark,



and direct our thoughts more immediately to that dispensation of Providence, which has spread mourning on every side, and shrouded this place of your solemnities in funereal gloom. I will not dissemble the fact that, when the request reached me that I should render the last tribute to the memory of my honoured and beloved friend, before he was carried to his long home, it suggested itself to me as a question of delicacy, whether the service might not more appropriately devolve upon some one who has been in habits of more frequent intercourse with him in his later years than I have been—the thought passed through my mind, but I confess it did not lodge there; for not only did the request come from one, the faintest wish of whose bleeding heart would have the force of a command with me, but, as soon as I began to take counsel of my own sense of bereavement, I could not but instinctively ask, *Who* will stand beside that coffin, that can speak of him whose remains it encloses, out of a fuller heart, and with more tender and earnest appreciation, than I can? It will be forty-four years next August, since my acquaintance with him began, in a casual visit of an hour

which I made at his house. The next year, I came into this neighbourhood, as a candidate for the ministry, and he was here to welcome, and encourage, and counsel me. He took a deep interest in my first settlement, and assisted in introducing me to the sacred office. During the ten years that I lived by the side of him, our friendly and fraternal relations were never disturbed for an hour. And since we have been thrown farther apart, we have never relaxed in our mutual good-will and confidence, our interest in each others' joys and sorrows; and I can truly say that I have anticipated my occasional meetings with him as marking some of the brightest spots in the year. My last parting with him was here, in the vestibule of this house, a few weeks ago, in the full sunshine of his frank and genial spirit. But *what* a parting would it have been, had it been revealed to us that our next meeting would be a meeting of life and death; that my next visit here would be to follow him, as a mourner, to his grave!

In presenting you with a brief account of Dr. Osgood's life, I am happy to be able to avail myself of somewhat copious memoranda, which I took from his own lips, several years ago, and

which, I have reason to believe, supply the only authentic material, at least the only material ever furnished by himself, for an outline of his history.

Dr. Osgood was descended from a highly respectable family, and was born at Fryburg, then the District of Maine, on the 3d of February, 1784. His early youth seems to have been passed in a somewhat miscellaneous way, and to have been divided between going to school, working on a farm, and serving as a clerk in a store; and, at a little later period, when he was seventeen years of age, he engaged in teaching a school in the neighbouring town of Conway. His last teacher, before entering college, was DANIEL WEBSTER; who, he told me, was accustomed to pray in his school, and was understood, at the time, to have serious thoughts of entering the ministry. Between Webster and his pupil there existed, ever after, a cordial friendship; and the great statesman has been known, more than once, to testify his high respect for the minister who had grown up out of the youth whose mind had received an early impulse from his instructions.

Mr. Osgood joined the Junior class in Dartmouth College in 1803, and graduated in 1805. He then commenced the study of Law at Hanover, and, after about two months, returned to his native place, and continued his studies there, under an eminent civilian, for nearly the same length of time; when he accepted an invitation to receive under his care and instruction a few boys, at Dorchester, in this State. He had intended to prosecute his legal studies there, in connection with his services as a teacher; and actually entered a lawyer's office in Roxbury; but he was too little interested in them to proceed with much vigour, and it was not long before he abandoned them altogether. He began now, without any very definite purpose, to read works on Theology; and the interest which he took in this kind of reading suggested to him the idea of entering the ministry; and, at no distant period, he was preparing for it, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Harris. He was licensed to preach by the Old Colony Association in August, 1805. He preached his first sermon for the Rev. Dr. Porter of Roxbury, and his second, at Quincy, in the presence of two illustrious



men, one of whom had been, the other was destined to be, President of the United States. He then preached a few Sabbaths in Lexington and Haverhill, successively, after which, in October, 1807, he went to Princeton, to prosecute his theological studies still farther, under that eminent scholar and preacher,—the Rev. Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith. Here he remained until June, 1808, vigorously pursuing his studies, availing himself of all the helps to intellectual and religious culture within his reach, and occasionally supplying a vacant pulpit in the neighbourhood. His venerable teacher, Dr. Smith, he regarded not only with great respect but with intense admiration; and those who have been familiar with him, can hardly fail to remember some of the numerous anecdotes which he delighted to relate, illustrative of the character and habits of that great man. It was during Mr. Osgood's residence at Princeton that his theological opinions seem to have first taken a definite form. When he was licensed to preach, he would probably have found it difficult to frame a creed that should not have been of the most general character; though he does not seem,

at any time, to have been strongly prejudiced against the system of faith which he finally adopted. But, under the instruction of Dr. Smith, in connection with other influences which he met at Princeton, his mind gradually settled into a belief of the doctrines commonly called *orthodox*, to which, I hardly need say, he adhered with undiminished tenacity till the close of life. And if the change in his views was so gradual as not to be very easily traced, so also was the change in his feelings: he had a strong hope,—often, I believe, an undoubting confidence, of having been the subject of a gracious renovation; but he always said that he could not designate the exact time when the change passed upon him.

Mr. Osgood left Princeton somewhat earlier than he intended, on account of having received an invitation to preach as a candidate in the Second Parish of Dorchester; but before he reached there, Mr. (afterwards the Rev. Dr.) Codman had preached to that people with so much acceptance that he preferred to retire, rather than seem to place himself in an attitude of competition. He then returned to his native place, and supplied the pulpit there three

months, without compensation, and received an invitation to settle, which, however, he declined. After that, he preached four Sabbaths in the North Parish of Andover; and then four Sabbaths, including a Thanksgiving Day, in this parish; and, after his second Sabbath here, you, or rather your fathers then constituting the parish, gave him a unanimous call; he having been their thirty-seventh candidate, or at least the thirty-seventh minister who had been employed here, after the pulpit had been vacated by the resignation of the venerable Dr. Howard. He was not, at first, inclined to accept the call, having become strongly prepossessed in favour of the North Parish of Andover, where the incipient steps for inviting him to the pastorship had already been taken. On his return to Andover, however, he became satisfied that the Providence of God pointed in this direction; and, shortly after, he signified his acceptance of the call, and came hither to make his permanent home. The previous arrangements having been made, his ordination took place on the 25th of January, 1809, on which occasion his theological teacher, the Rev. Dr. Harris, preached the ser-

mon, and my venerable colleague, Dr. Lathrop, gave the charge.

During the first three years of his ministry, great harmony prevailed between him and his people, and both the congregation and the church received considerable accessions. But in 1812, there sprang up a controversy, which became more and more exciting until, in 1819, it issued in the formation of a new parish. Mr. Osgood, as he became more deeply impressed with the importance of his own theological views, at length felt constrained to decline ministerial fellowship with those whom he considered as essentially departing from them; and, in carrying out his principle, he was under the necessity of excluding from his pulpit several gentlemen of acknowledged respectability, who occasionally visited here, and who were not only in intimate relations with some of the most prominent families in his parish, but were also his own personal friends. This necessarily produced a painful collision; but I would not, if I could, detail the particulars of it—for it has long since passed away; the variant parties, before they went to their graves, again became personal



friends; and that which had once seemed to some like an uncharitable and obstinate spirit on the part of the Pastor, has now long been universally regarded as a simple adherence to his own sober and honest convictions.

In 1827, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon Mr. Osgood, by the College of New Jersey.

It cannot be necessary that I should go into any of the details of Dr. Osgood's protracted ministry here, especially as a large part of it has been witnessed by the present generation, and as his sermon, preached on the fortieth anniversary of his settlement, is doubtless in most of your houses;—a sermon, by the way, which is equally remarkable for its strong evangelical tone and its bland and catholic spirit. It will remain with you, not only as an historical record, but as a tender memorial; and those who come after you will only have to read it to have their veneration awakened for the memory of the man whose ministry it describes, and their gratitude awakened for that gracious regard of the Good Shepherd towards you, which the record of this ministry reveals.

Dr. Osgood continued the active Pastor of this church forty-four years; and then, in May, 1854, though retaining to the church the relation of Senior Pastor, virtually resigned his charge into the hands of his successor. Since that time his labours have been put in requisition by various congregations, not far distant, whom I doubt not he has served both with fidelity and with acceptance. But his home has still been with you, and I am sure you have found him ready to every good word and work. You welcomed him to your dwellings as a helper in duty, as a counsellor in difficulty, as a comforter in sorrow. You loved to see him, you loved to hear him, in the house of God and in the place of your week-day meetings. You felt it a privilege even to exchange salutations with him in the street; for he was always friendly and cheerful, and sometimes dropped upon your ear, perhaps upon your conscience, a wise and fitting word, that you would not or could not let pass from your memory. And, finally, he has languished and died among you; and your kindly solicitude, so long as he was an object for it, succeeded now by your unaffected grief that you shall see his face no more, is evi-

dence enough that you will not let his memory die.

The occasion, not less than my own feelings, demands that I should say something of Dr. Osgood's character; and happily it is an easy task,—for his qualities were so perfectly patent that even a child could not mistake them. His whole character, physical, intellectual and moral, shared a common type—the mind and the heart were made for each other, and the body was a fitting habitation for both. His stately frame, his decided countenance, his unstudied air and movement, his comparative disregard of the mere conventional usages of social life, especially where they interfered with his convenience, or comfort, or the indulgence of his hearty and generous impulses, were perhaps the most striking characteristics of the outer man. Then when you penetrated beneath the exterior, you found an intellect of manly vigour and strength; eminently clear in its perceptions, and eminently practical in its tendencies. And as you passed from the intellectual to the moral, you found, associated with an utter disregard to ceremony, a generous, disinterested and sympathetic spirit;—

a heart that knew how to feel for a sufferer, and forgive an enemy, as well as any other. With this nobility of spirit there was combined an indomitable energy of will, that looked at obstacles as though they were not, and that could never be brought to take the first lesson in ignoble submission. A man, thus constituted, could not but be a loving husband and father; a sincere and steady friend; an active, influential, and honoured member of society. It were to be expected that his very frankness would sometimes be misunderstood; that the pliant and timeserving would wish that he would relax a little in his adherence to his own convictions of duty; and that even some of his friends, of a more passive temperament, would be ready to ask for him a fresh baptism of the spirit of prudence; but it were also to be expected that, when time had wrought out ulterior results, it would be found that even the most scrupulous and complaining had always revered his character, and that the whole community were ready at last to pronounce his eulogy. Qualities which some may have been ready to regard blemishes, as they were developed in the midst of party conflict, have



since risen, under the influence of time, into sterling, manly virtues, which it is alike grateful and profitable to contemplate.

But it is of Dr. Osgood's character as a *Minister* that the occasion calls me to speak more particularly; though, after what I have already said of him as a Man, one would be in little danger of mistake, if he were left to infer the leading characteristics of his ministry. If I were to say, in one word, what seems to me to have been its most distinctive feature, I should say that it was just that which Paul claims for himself, in the words of our text,—that “he lived in all good conscience before God”—it was *integrity*,—an honest desire and endeavour to do his duty in all things.

This all-pervading, all-controlling principle had its several legitimate developments in his ministry. First of all, it discovered itself in the great amount of labour which he performed. His natural tastes and early habits had combined to render him not only observant of what was going on in the world around him, but ready to lend a hand in aid of such secular objects as he regarded with special interest. And this might have sometimes deceived a

superficial observer in regard to the amount of his strictly professional labour. His power of physical endurance was indeed extraordinary. During the whole time that I was his neighbour, though I sometimes saw him under very heavy burdens of care and labour, I never heard him say that he was weary, or saw any thing to indicate that he was even capable of being so; and this remarkable energy of constitution continued unimpaired, I think, until he had passed his threescore years and ten. His ministerial duties were performed, not from impulse, but from principle, aided by fixed habit; and hence his activity was little likely to be a matter of public observation. But I may say with great confidence that the energies of his life were consecrated to his Master. He wrote more sermons than almost any of his contemporaries. They were not indeed in the highest degree elaborated,—never metaphysical,—never strikingly imaginative; but they were calm, luminous, discriminating exhibitions of Divine truth, designed to reach the heart and conscience through the intellect; and they were delivered with characteristic simplicity and plainness, and apparently with-

out any thought of rhetorical rule. You know better than I do how he went about doing good in his parish; how frequently he was a visitor especially in the dwellings of the poor; how quickly his heart responded to the sighs of the careworn and the sorrowing, and how instinctively his hand opened to meet the claims of public or private charity; how ready he was to administer counsel in seasons of difficulty, and to meet the inexperienced youth with a word of timely admonition—in short, ye are witnesses that his life was filled up with active beneficence; and I am sure, if what is lodged in the memories and hearts of many of you could be called forth in testimony, it would give an impressiveness to his character greatly beyond what could be gathered from his more public demonstrations.

That that independent and fearless spirit which always spoke in his countenance, and breathed from his lips, was eminently displayed in his ministry, no one can doubt; and that it was not mere constitutional force, but the energy of a sanctified will and of an honest Christian conscience, is apparent from the fact that its actings were sometimes in direct con-

tradiction to his worldly interests, and even at the expense of wounding, not to say alienating, the feelings of his friends. What he believed to be truth, he would speak,—let men hear or let them forbear. What he believed to be duty, he would do,—no matter though the air might ring with remonstrances; no matter,—I verily believe,—though the martyr's stake should rise up before him. And he would utter the offensive truths, and perform the hard services, as calmly, as firmly, as if he were speaking and acting in harmony with every voice in the community. Whatever difference of opinion may have existed as to the propriety of his utterances or his measures, there could be no difference in respect to the depth of the convictions in which they originated, or the intrepid spirit by which they were marked.

But Dr. Osgood's ministry, notwithstanding it was, in some respects, of a more than ordinarily aggressive character, was, on the whole, highly acceptable. It is a rare case that a minister lives with the same people for so long a period as he did, under any circumstances—it is still more rare that he lives with them so long, and leaves behind him so



revered and honoured a name. The secret of it lies, in no small degree, in that integrity, which would never allow him to dissemble his honest convictions for the sake of securing temporary favour or avoiding temporary odium; for this quality approves itself to the moral sense of even those whom its operation offends. And then combined with this honesty of purpose, there came out in his ministry, as in his whole life, a spirit of magnanimity, and I may add, conciliation, that made it hard to stand aloof from him as an enemy. In illustration of this remark, I need only refer to the fact already mentioned,—that the Religious Society, which had its origin in the early, and to a portion of his people unwelcome, stand that he took in regard to ministerial intercourse,—though holding views of religious truth very diverse from his own, gradually resumed friendly relations with him, and awarded to him the respect and reverence due to a former Pastor; and often, very often, have I heard him speak, with grateful satisfaction, of the kindly spirit which the members of that Society,—especially in the present generation, have manifested towards him, as well as

of the pleasant social intercourse which he has enjoyed with its successive Pastors.

I cannot forbear to notice, in this connection, as significant of his own standing among you, the interest which he has often expressed to me in your prosperity as a congregation, and in the acceptableness and usefulness of his successor, since he relinquished the active duties of his pastorate. However amicable may have been the arrangement which resulted in the virtual resignation of his charge, it cannot be denied that his continued residence among you, while another was occupying the place which he had filled so long, must have put to a severe test both his kindness and his prudence. I can bear witness, however, that, in our most unreserved and confidential intercourse, not an ungracious or disparaging word has ever dropped from him in relation to his people; but that he has expressed great satisfaction that God had given them a Pastor in whom he had the fullest confidence, and in whose faithful ministrations they might well afford to rejoice. That such a spirit must have drawn you still more tenderly towards him, I cannot doubt; that it was reciprocated by his

younger brother, in every expression of gratitude and good will, reaching down even into the valley of death, I know.

I will only add that Dr. Osgood's ministry has been a much more than ordinarily successful one. He found here a large and respectable congregation; and it always maintained its position well, though it furnished the material, during his ministry, for the formation of four different Religious Societies. In the first forty years of his pastorate, he admitted to the communion of the church nine hundred and seventy-four persons, making an average of twenty-five a year. During the same period he was privileged to witness, in connection with his labours, five revivals of religion, the first of which introduced into the church ninety-seven, and the third one hundred. But the results of his labours are to be looked for much beyond his immediate charge. As he had great executive talent, his brethren and the public did not suffer it to remain inactive; but it was constantly kept in exercise in aid of most of the benevolent institutions of the day. How much he has done in quickening the tone of benevolent feeling and effort; in enlisting

new and efficient auxiliaries in the great cause of truth, of humanity, of God; in circulating Bibles and tracts, and multiplying ministers and missionaries; in short, in carrying out the great purpose for which both the Church and the Ministry are constituted; we must wait for the Great Day of Revelation to tell us. But we need not wait for any future day to assure us that his ministry has been eminently owned and blessed of the Master whom He served; that he has left many monuments of his usefulness on earth, and has gone to meet many more in Heaven.

I bless God that, though, in his holy providence, he has called me to stand here amidst a scene of deep mourning, I am not straitened for material with which to meet the exigencies of these sorrowing hearts. Indeed, the sad and reverent aspect of this vast assembly suggests precious consolation, like light beaming through a cloud; for the simple meaning of what is passing is, that a man of true intellectual and moral nobility, an earnest friend to all that is good, has finished his course. Let those then who are bowed under the rod,—the weeping widow whose house is left



unto her desolate, the children and children's children whom the presence and blessing of a father and grandfather will no longer cheer,—all be comforted by the reflection that the same event which has set their hearts to bleeding has furnished just occasion for mourning to this whole community—in other words, let them compose their spirits not merely to a submissive but thankful tone by the thought that their revered domestic head was a benefactor, not to his family alone, nor yet merely to the flock to which he ministered, but, through various channels, to the world. I will not say that the current of grief, in view of such a breach in your household circle, may not legitimately flow deep and strong; but surely the tears of gratitude must commingle with the tears of sorrow; and, however mournfully you may look towards the grave, you cannot, as the disciples of Christ, look around you, or backward, or upward, without feeling that the language of praise becomes you. For is it not a privilege to mourn for one, whose memory men of different characters, and different creeds, and different positions in society, all delight to honour? Is it not a privilege to mourn for

one, who, through a long life of intense devotion to his Master's work, has been unconsciously building monuments that will bear witness of his usefulness to coming generations? Is it not a privilege to mourn for one, whose graces and virtues were so evidently matured and elevated with advancing years; whose hoary head was, by universal consent, a crown of glory? And finally, is it not a privilege to mourn for one, who, you have the fullest confidence, has finished his course with joy, and gone up to be a minister around the throne? Yes, my friends, ye are indeed privileged mourners. May God help you to learn all the lessons He is dispensing in this school of sorrow, so that you shall find here a blessed auxiliary to your own preparation for the eternal rest.

Here are Ministers of the Gospel who have been associated, some of them, it may be, for many years, with our lamented friend; but I look in vain to-day for one surviving member of the old Hampden Association, as it was when I became connected with it, in 1819. But the places of those who are gone have been filled by other honoured and beloved

brethren, whose relations to the now departed Pastor have been such as to inspire them with veneration for his character, and deep sorrow for his death. And now, what better wish can I express for these dear brethren, fellow labourers in this fairest portion of the Lord's vineyard, than that the removal of this revered father from the midst of them may be a token of blessing to their respective charges, by impressing them more deeply with the solemnity of their ministerial vows, and bringing them into more intimate communion with the Lord their strength? Especially, what better can I ask for my dear brother whom this dispensation has deprived at once of a colleague in the ministry and a most considerate and devoted friend, than that the word of God from his lips, being seconded now by a fresh and endeared voice from the grave, may fall with yet mightier power upon the hearts of those to whom he ministers? Brethren, let us labour diligently, faithfully, dependently; for our time is short. Let these funeral solemnities quicken us in our high calling. May each tender and grateful remembrance be a channel

of rich spiritual blessing to us, and through us to a multitude of souls.

I am sure that those who are accustomed to worship here, must be oppressed by a sense of bereavement,—however it may be qualified by the grateful reflection that they have a beloved Pastor still spared to them, in the vigour of health and usefulness. There are some present, nearly the whole of whose lives have been spent under the ministry that now closes; some whose silver locks and rigid limbs point unmistakably to the grave, as being only a little way in the distance. To such, to all of you indeed to whom that venerable man in his coffin has ever sustained the relation of a Pastor, I would address an earnest exhortation to let the benefits of his living ministry be confirmed, or renewed, or, as the case may be, first secured to you, through the solemn recollections awakened by his death. Let your hearts, I pray you, be filled with the impressive teachings of the hour. Hold communion with the past until its precious privileges shall be reproduced to your mind, as matter for sober retrospect, for deep humiliation, for joyful thankfulness. Remember that your Pas-



tor, though dead, yet speaketh; and, so long as his grave remains for you to visit, we trust that he may still be exercising a silent, yet effective, ministry here, while he is engaged in that higher ministry that makes him a companion of the holy angels.