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A

CENTENARY SERMON,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE PRESBYTERY OF FAYETTEVILLE,

AT THE

BLUFF CHURCH,

The 18th day of October, 1858.

BY REV. NEILL MCKAY.

FAYETTEVILLE:
PRINTED AT THE PRESBYTERIAN OFFICE.
1858

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SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY XXXII: 7—"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will show thee; thy elders and they will tell thee!"

In the preceding chapter, Moses intimates to the children of Israel, that owing to the infirmities of age, and according to the Divine appointment, on account of his sin at Meribah-Kadesh, he could "no longer go out and come in" before them. Consequently, he resigns his office, as the inspired leader and lawgiver of the chosen of the Lord, and commissions Joshua to lead them forth to victory and to conquest.

He then delivers the written law to the priests, the sons of Levi and to all the elders, to be "kept in the ark of the covenant," to be read every seven years to the men, women, children, and strangers. He also points out to the people the sad consequences of defection from duty, and the heavy curses that would follow their apostacy from God. In "the same day" he wrote this most seraphic valedictory song in the chapter before us, "and taught it the children of Israel." In which he makes a solemn appeal to heaven and earth for his fidelity, and an awful declaration of the greatness of Jehovah, as manifested by the truth of his word—the perfection of his works—the wisdom and the equity of his government. In the face of all which, however, the Jews had continued to be a "perverse and a crooked generation," to whom he addresses the pathetic expostulation, "Do ye thus requite the Lord? O foolish people and unwise! Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee and established thee?" "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will shew

thee: thy elders and they will tell thee." See 12th verse. *To remind* the people of their *obligation* and *duty*, Moses calls upon them to remember the general and the particular instances of God's providential kindness and concern for them. They were under obligations to him, as to a father, who had begotten, nursed and cherished them—who had bought them, having given "men for them and people for their life." Isa. xliii: 4. He refers them to the record of the past, carries them back to "the days of old," to review the history of Divine providence, in connection with their ancestry, and to trace the wonderful series of mercies "through the years of many generations," which were necessary for the working out of present results. For more recent displays of infinite wisdom and love, he refers them to living witnesses: "Ask thy father and he will shew thee, thy elders and they will tell thee." For although Caleb and Joshua alone remained of "all who came out of Egypt by Moses," the fathers and the elders of that generation, in childhood and youth, had witnessed the awful grandeur attending the giving of the law on Sinai, and had heard its proclamation at the foot of the mount. They had been accustomed to follow both as a guide and as a defence, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. The alternate scenes of success and defeat, which marked their pilgrimage in a "desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness," were fresh in their memory. They could not so soon forget the God of Jacob, who had "taught them out of his law," who had "led them forth by the right way," who had "given them his good Spirit to instruct them," and had "kept them as the apple of his eye."

The history of the Israelites in all its leading characteristics, where the *wisdom*, *fidelity* and *love* of God are involved, may be *justly* considered as a fair index of what he has *been*, *is*, and will be to all his covenanted people. It may be *as truly* said of the church now, and at any given period of her history, as it was of "the church in the wilderness," (Acts vii: 38.) "The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." In every age they may be said to be found of him—found in a desert land and in a waste howling wilderness, in a most destitute and helpless condition—in depravity, ignorance and sin, in love with spiritual bondage, lulled in false security and criminal indifference. In this melancholy condition, God is represented as doing for them what the strong affection of the eagle induces her to do for

her young. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings," so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him. So also, says the Apostle, quoting from the mouth of the Prophet, "I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest to them that asked not after me." "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "Whose office it is to convince the world of *sin*, of *righteousness* and of judgment." When the chosen of the Lord are thus gathered in by the word, the Spirit and the providence of God, they are one body in Christ, which manifests its visible existence and unity according to the form given by himself, when he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, "some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," all which offices, excepting that which was extraordinary and temporary, are now recognized by the Presbyterian church and filled by appropriate officers. It is matter of gratitude to the Great Head of the church, as well as just congratulation among ourselves, that this Presbyterian form of ecclesiastical polity has for now these eighteen centuries *successfully* and *triumphantly* withstood every form of opposition, error, ignorance and malice. It could not be extinguished during the long night of spiritual darkness that brooded over Christendom anterior to the Reformation. At the very dawn of that remarkable epoch in the history of the church and of the world, the distinguishing characteristics of the true church of God appeared. "With the apostolic truth, came also, in Switzerland, in France, in Holland, in Bohemia, in Germany, and in Scotland, the apostolic form of ecclesiastical order."

From these countries the elements of the Presbyterian church in America were mainly derived. "The strict Presbyterian emigrants, Scotch, Irish, Dutch, and French, laid the foundation of our church in New York, East Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas."* The history of the first regular ordained Presbyterian minister that visited the western continent, is traced to the Presbyterian church in Ireland, which owes its existence to the indefatigable efforts of seven Scotch ministers, who, as chaplains, attended as many regiments sent over from Scotland in the spring of 1642 to quell the Irish rebellion. These ministers

* Dr. Hodge His. Pres. Ch.

not only formed four churches in the different regiments, but actually constituted a regular presbytery in the army itself, in accordance with the doctrines and polity of the Church of Scotland. In the year 1682, just forty years after the constitution of this presbytery in the army, the Presbytery of Lagan, in the North of Ireland, and one of nine presbyteries which had grown out of the increase and division of the original presbytery, licensed and ordained Francis McKemie for the purpose of sending him to America: who, with six other ministers, constituted the first presbytery in this country, all of whom, with a single exception, were either from Scotland or Ireland. By far the greater number of those who formed the first synod on this continent were of the same origin.

It is not remarkable, then, that "American Presbyterianism is essentially the same as that of Scotland."*

According to the information of most, and in fact of all of those consulted by us, who have given to the public, either a general or partial history of the Presbyterian church in this country, the first Presbyterian church was organized in Philadelphia about the year 1698, and four others about the same time on the Eastern shore of Maryland. Dr. Howe shows, however, *from the record*, that a church existed in Charleston as early as 1682, "which in its early records is habitually called the Presbyterian church, but in which Congregationalists, Dissenters and Presbyterians worshipped," which is now perpetuated in the Circular church of that city. He also shows that the French Huguenot church of Charleston, the first that was purely Presbyterian in that State, "was gathered as early as 1686." This Southern wing of the Presbyterian church was quite independent in the formative period of her history in this country, and was not formally connected with the General Assembly until the commencement of the present century. For the lineal history of the American Presbyterian church, we must commence with McKemie and his compeers, who, as already intimated, first visited the country in 1682, gathered and organized the first churches about the time already stated, and constituted the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1705, which was divided in 1716 into four subordinate judicatories, and formed the Synod of Philadelphia, which divided

* Dr. Hodge.

in 1741, making the Synod of New York and the Synod of Philadelphia. In 1758 these Synods reunited and formed the Synod of Philadelphia and New York, which remained the supreme judicatory of the church until 1788, when, by unanimous consent, this body was dissolved, four Synods were formed, and the General Assembly was constituted.*

In 1758 the Presbytery of Hanover was formed. In 1770 the Presbytery of Orange was set off from that of Hanover. In 1812 Orange was divided, and the Presbytery of Fayetteville was formed.†

This brief and partial historical synopsis, culled *mainly* from the documentary history of the church, brings us to a most eligible stand point; the commencement of our existence as a Presbytery, whence we may look back, *four* and *fifty* years, to the organization of Presbyterianism in our bounds, and forward six and forty years—the entire period of our Presbyterial existence—and thus advantageously survey God’s providential dealings with us both as a Church and as a Presbytery *for an entire century*. In recurring to the first establishment of the Presbyterian Church in the bounds of the Presbytery of Fayetteville, and, in fact, in North Carolina, we must go back to the records of the past, to “the days of old,” and review the history “of the years of many generations;” while in reference to our Presbyterial history, we need only ask our father and he will show us; our elders and they will tell us.

According to the historian Bancroft,‡ there was no stationed preacher of any persuasion in North Carolina anterior to 1705. The first Presbyterian Missionary in North Carolina, so far as we are now informed, was William Robinson, from Virginia, who made a short and not very successful tour in a portion of the State, in the winter of 1742 and ’43; of the labors and success of others who followed him we have no definite information until the visit of Hugh McAden in the summer of 1755. In his extensive tour through the State, he visited and preached at many stations, meeting houses, and some few churches; clearly showing that some now unknown pioneer missionaries had pre-

* Records of the Presbyterian Church.

† “Beginning at the mouth of the Neuse River, thence up said river to the mouth of Trent River, thence in a direct line to the junction of Deep and Haw Rivers, thence in a direct line to the mouth of the Uwharee.”

‡ Vol 2; p. 164.

ceded him. This inference has recently ripened into fact, by the published statements in reference to "the pioneer and apostle of Western North Carolina, Rev. John Thompson.*

After McAden crossed the Uwharee, and thus entered the bounds of our Presbytery, until he crossed the Neuse and left our borders, in all his incessant travels and labors for two months and a half, he makes no mention of any public place of worship other than the Court House. Among other localities he visited the Scotch settlements on the Cape Fear and its tributaries, became pretty well acquainted with the character, habits and necessities of the people; and it was mainly through his influence on his return to the North, that the Rev. James Campbell, then laboring in Pennsylvania, was induced to visit his countrymen in this section in 1757. The subsequent year he was called to the pastorate, as appears from the records of the County Court of Cumberland.† The call is dated the 18th day of October, 1758, and signed by twelve individuals under covenant, seal, &c. That this call was accepted is clear from documentary evidence: 1st, from the fact that Mr. Campbell subsequently united with the Presbytery of Orange; 2, that he subscribed the test oath, as required by law, *in open court*, as appears from the same record; and, 3rd, that a duplicate of the first call was presented in the year 1763, (30th April.) excepting that part which depended upon the contingency of the acceptance of the same.

At the time this contract was entered into with Mr. Campbell, there were no organized churches in our bounds. He preached at McKay's, on the Long-street; Clark's, on Barbecue; McNeill's, on the west side of the Cape Fear, below the Bluff; at Dushee Shaw's, a few miles above Averasboro', on the east side of the same river and at the mouth of Lower Little River, the former county seat of Cumberland. He also made occasional visits to Cross Creek, the Raft Swamp, and other destitute settlements.

The pastoral charge of Mr. Campbell soon assumed a more definite form, in the organization of Long-street, Barbecue and Bluff churches, which were organized in the year 1758. Dr. Foote's information is, that "Long-street church was built about the year 1765 or '66, the time at which Barbecue was built," and that the "Bluff church was not built until after the death of Mr.

* *N. C. Presbyterian*, Vol. 1 : No. 39.

† Register's Office, Book A, p. 312.

Campbell, about the year 1787." In the first named church the first ruling Elders were Malcolm Smith, Archibald McKay, and Archibald Ray. In the second Gilbert Clark, Duncan Buie, Archibald Buie, and Daniel Cameron. In the third, Hector McNeill, Alexander McAlister, Farquar Campbell, and Duncan McNeill.

To these men and their associates, many of whose names appear on the bonds already referred to, given to Mr. Campbell, *the honor is due* of making the *first formal call* for the pastoral services of a Presbyterian minister in North Carolina; which, under all the circumstances, was no less complimentary to the pastor elect than honorable to themselves. They may also be considered as fair representatives of the then Scotch population within our bounds, and the proper exponents of their religious principles and faith. They were mainly from the Highlands of Scotland. Their first emigration to the country dates far back of that attributed to them by Dr. Caruthers and others, "which resulted (according to his information) from the unfortunate attempt of Prince Charles Edward, grandson of James II., to regain the throne of his ancestors." Scotch families were settled on the Cape Fear anterior to the division of the province into North and South Carolina in 1729. The Clark family, who came to the country in 1736 with a large number of emigrants, found many Scotch families settled along this river, among whom are mentioned Hector McNeill, of the Bluff, and John Smith, with his two children—Malcolm and Jennet.* Neill McNeill, a native of Argyshire, after visiting New York, Philadelphia, Wilmington, and the Cape Fear, as far up as Buck Horn, returned to Scotland in 1748, and the following year landed in Wilmington with his family and a considerable number of his countrymen—variously estimated from three to six hundred: "Who settled, some in Anson, others in Bladen, but most of them in Cumberland."† From this period the tide of emigration increased, until the *Highland Scotch* soon formed the majority of the population, and controlled the civil and ecclesiastical in-

* Dr. Foote, p. 125.

* The celebrated Jenny Bhan, (Van) the fair, who, for beauty, sprightliness and wit, was regarded as second to none in the Scotch settlements, and for energy of character, second only to Flora McDonald herself. She was united in marriage to Archibald McNeill.

† Dr. Caruthers' Life of Caldwell, p. 88.

terests of what is now Cumberland, Bladen, Robeson, Richmond, Montgomery, Moore and Harnett counties.

In 1759, the Rev. Hugh McAden returned to the State and settled as pastor of the congregations in Duplin and New Hanover, the former probably the oldest large settlement of Presbyterians in the State, to which the Grove congregation trace their origin.

These, with the three churches already referred to, constituted the organized force of the Presbyterian church in what is now the geographical limits of the Presbytery of Fayetteville anterior to the American Revolution. Campbell and McAden are justly entitled to the appellation of the patriarchs and fathers of Presbyterianism in our bounds, if not in the State. They labored almost alone in the extensive field, which in the providence of God we are called to cultivate, for almost ten years. McAden was occasionally assisted in the lower country by the Rev. James Tate, a native of Ireland, and located as a teacher in Wilmington, while Campbell was entirely alone until 1770, when the Rev. John McLeod, from the island of Sky, came to his help, and labored but a few years, when all previous plans for meeting the spiritual destitutions of this section of our State were entirely broken up by the incipient steps to the war of the Revolution. McAden had already gone to Caswell—Tate found it prudent to retire to the interior—Bethune, who labored in our western borders and organized Mount Carmel church, had fled to Canada—and even Campbell himself was driven from the people he had so faithfully served for fifteen years, by the influence of adverse political sentiments—while McLeod was confined as a prisoner in Halifax jail. So far as our information goes, our denomination, at this period of our history, was without a single minister in all our bounds. The defeat of McDonald at Moore's Creek allayed the zeal and diminished the number of loyalists, and soon after this event, without any apparent concert, there was a simultaneous move upon the part of Mr. Campbell and his former charge for the reëstablishment of that relation which had so long existed, and in the fulfillment of the duties of which, pastor and people had been so signally honored and blessed by God. Consequently he set out from Guilford, the place of his temporary exilement, and was met by a messenger with a request from his former charge, that he would return and again minister to

them in holy things. Like Peter and the church at Cesarea, all obstacles in the way of their mutual spiritual improvement and happiness had been removed. He could say to them, "Therefore came I unto you, without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for"—and they on the other hand could respond, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." This relation, so *marked* by the special interposition of Divine providence, was dissolved only by death, when, having served his countrymen in a new and destitute region for more than twenty years, this good man fell asleep in Jesus in 1780 and in the fifty-first year of his ministry.

At the death of Mr. Campbell, our Presbyterian population in this section was again without a representative among the clergy of the State and the church.

To the close of the last century, the Presbyterian church made slow progress in this part of the Master's vineyard. In 1799 the Presbytery of Orange, with others, presented to the Synod of the Carolinas a report of her ministers and their places of preaching, showing the following as located in the bounds of what is now the Presbytery of Fayetteville, viz: "Colin Lindsay, without charge; Samuel Stanford, Black River and Brown Marsh; Angus McDiarmid, Barbeene, Bluff and McKay's; John Gillespie, Centre, Laurel Hill and Raft Swamp; Robert Tate, South Washington and Rockfish."*

In all only five and one without charge. It is known, however, that the late Dr. John Robinson succeeded McAden about 1793, and remained in that field until his removal to Fayetteville in 1800. Dougald Crawford, a Scotch divine, succeeded Campbell; he organized the Raft Swamp church, the first in Robeson county, about the year 1789. The Rev. Wm. Bingham, from Ireland, was located in Wilmington as teacher in 1785. The Rev. W. D. Paisley, after laboring in our bounds about three years, removed to Guilford in 1800. Tradition reports a Rev. Mr. McCaasa to have labored both in Cumberland and Richmond. And the Rev. John Anderson, father of Wm. C. Anderson, D. D., of San Francisco, was the pioneer missionary in Moore county, and preached at Archibald Clark's, about one mile north of Buffalo church. The two last named ministers we

* Foote's Sketches of North Carolina, p. 301.

have not seen mentioned among the early laborers in this part of our church. Making the most of our working and efficient men for more than forty years after the organization of our first churches, and we cannot now number more than twelve or fifteen, some of whom remained a short time. At the close of the last century, our entire ministry did not exceed five or six in number.

With the commencement of the present century, a new era dawned upon our churches. A native ministry, of no ordinary character, was added to our strength. On the 17th of March, 1801, at Barbeene church, Malcolm McNair, Murdock Murphy, Murdock McMillan, and Duncan Brown, were licensed to preach the Gospel. Their friend and fellow-student, Daniel Brown, was licensed the year previous. In a few years the zealous and indefatigable McIntyre was added to their number, and not long afterwards John M. Fox, John Murphy and Neill McMillan.

These all entered the wide and destitute field that opened up before them, with a zeal and fidelity worthy of their high vocation, and God crowned their labors with abundant success, both at home and abroad. For notwithstanding home destitutions were so great, McNair and Daniel Brown were commissioned by Synod as missionaries to the Natchez country. From a letter of the latter, to his congregation in Robeson, dated Natchez, February 15th, 1805, we have the following concise but clear representation of the country and its population :

“Of this territory, I *cannot* give you a satisfactory account at present. There are lands here as fertile as need be, but very broken. Society is a medley of all characters. Men of *letters*, of *science*, of polite reading, and the reverse—men of property, of family and of no family, thieves and murderers, honest men and some Christians, but these are the fewest.”

Dr. Hall, in his missionary report to Synod in 1810, two years before the constitution of our Presbytery, referring to the condition of the churches and the state of religion in our bounds, says of “the young Scotch ministers,” of whom he had already spoken :

“It appears to have been a wise and happy dispensation of Providence for that part of the State, that such a set of young men were raised up and qualified to preach the Gospel immediately before the commencement of the revival, especially as they were able to preach in both the English and Gaelic languages. Wherever they have been placed the revival has predominated under their ministry. And notwithstanding the many thousands of miles your missionary has travelled during the last ten

years, he has not been in any place where religion has flourished more, nor the power of it kept up with more energy, than under their ministrations.”*

Under the influence of such a ministry, our church organization had increased up to 1812, the date of the commencement of our presbyterial existence, to about thirty in number, while our ministerial strength was only nine all told.

The next twenty years added a few churches and only seven ministers to the original number. Since that period, about twenty-six years, our church organizations have gone up in number to fifty-eight and the ministers to twenty-four. During the last quarter of a century, the entire ministry in the State has increased in numbers from sixty-five to eighty-eight, while the ministerial strength of our sister State, South Carolina, for the same time, has increased from about forty-five to about one hundred in number.

When the Presbytery of Hanover was constituted, about the time McAden first visited our State, it consisted of only seven members, with the whole of Virginia and the indefinite South as its field of labor. When the Presbytery of Orange was set off from that of Hanover, fifteen years afterwards, covering the country south of Virginia and west of the Mississippi, it consisted of six members. In the same bounds there are now seven Synods, thirty-one Presbyteries, seven hundred and eighty-eight churches, four hundred and eighty-nine ministers, and fifty-two thousand four hundred and twenty-nine communicants.

Our church, as a whole, since the formation of the first Presbytery on the American continent, one hundred and fifty-one years ago, has extended her borders from *sea* to *sea*, reached forth her arms to the perishing nations of the earth, distributed the bread of life in the four quarters of the globe, and successfully established her organization in the dark domains of paganism. If we include the Missionary Synod of Northern India, she now numbers 33 synods, 159 presbyteries, 2,468 ministers, 3,324 churches, 256 licentiates, and 259,335 communicants, the sum total of whose contributions, for the last year, amounts to more than two millions and a half of dollars, (§2,544,692.)

From a careful consideration of facts and figures, it is painfully evident that whether we compare ourselves with our neighbors, or with the church in general, we have not come up to the

* Foote's Sketches, &c., p. 170.

full measure of duty among the allied hosts of the God of Jacob.

The main cause of this *only partial* success existed before our organization as a Presbytery, and it *still* exists to a greater or less extent. Facts and arguments might be adduced *to prove* that our population *are not*, and *never have* been truly alive to their own resources—physical, intellectual, and moral: consequently home talent and capacity has never been fully appreciated nor adequately developed.

Our native ministry has been driven from our midst without the presentation of motives adequate to induce a foreign supply. Of the promising young men already mentioned, who entered the ministry early in the present century, more than half had left our bounds before the commencement of our Presbyterial existence in 1812, and only two ended their ministerial work in the State. *All* the rest went forth to bless other portions of our Zion, to be loved and honored by strangers, and to reflect imperishable glory and renown upon the *very people* among whom they were bred and born, and upon the very State whence they were driven out. Of the sixteen ministers that constituted our Presbytery twenty-six years ago, seven left the State. Taking up the record as it comes to hand, we find that of the twenty two ministers and four licentiates that belonged to our Presbytery in 1844, ten have left the State, and all except two native born.

No association of men, with such a draft upon its working force, in the ordinary Providence of God, can possibly meet the ends of their society, discharge fully the duties incident to their organization, and thus secure to God the greatest revenue of glory, and to themselves and the race the highest degree of happiness here and hereafter.

Nor is the evil of which we complain confined to the Presbytery of Fayetteville; its withering, blighting influence, on the Presbyterian Church may be seen and felt, throughout the State. If we compare her history and condition with that of the same church in the adjacent States, North and South, we find that while the Synod of North Carolina reports to the General Assembly forty-four churches and about two thousand (1948) communicants more than the Synod of South Carolina, yet the latter has nine ministers more than the former; and while the Synod of North Carolina reports twenty-four churches and over three

thousand communicants (3563) more than the Synod of Virginia, yet Virginia has twenty-one ministers more than North Carolina. The most remarkable fact is, that North Carolina furnishes more candidates for the ministry than either of her sister States. While she reports seventeen candidates, South Carolina reports sixteen and Virginia twelve. Nor is this majority accidental; from the record we learn that in 1844 North Carolina reported twenty-two candidates, Virginia twenty; in 1848 North Carolina reported fourteen candidates, Virginia eight; in 1851 North Carolina reported twenty-one candidates, Virginia eleven; and in 1858, as stated, North Carolina reported seventeen candidates, Virginia twelve.

Why should the Presbyterian church in North Carolina for a long series of years, furnish much the largest number of candidates for the ministry, and with much the largest number of churches and communicants, still have a much smaller number of ministers than either of her sister States? Did time permit, this interrogatory might be answered by facts and figures which would drive us to some very humiliating conclusions.

While, however, we lament the main evil that has already existed among our people, an evil which they only can correct, which they ought to correct, and which ultimately they will correct, and the consequent partial success that has marked the history of the church in North Carolina, we have much to cheer our hearts and beckon us on to duty. All things considered, *as a Presbytery*, we maintain our relative position in a Synod, that in point of numerical standing on the roll of the Presbyterian church, ranks only the eleventh as to her ministry, while in reference to her church organization, she stands as the fourth, and as to her membership as the fifth. And while no presbytery in the land can point to fewer titled men, sure we are that none can boast of a membership so universally devoted to the practical duties of their high vocation.

Thus, my brethren, we have recurred to the days of old, and considered the history of the years of many generations; we have gone to our fathers, many of whom, though now dead, still speak to us by their indefatigable labors, their self-consuming zeal and amazing success. We have gone to the living—the fathers and the elders who are still with us, they have told us; and the statistics we have presented show what God has done for us as a

church in the hundred years that have passed, and what he has accomplished *by us*, as a presbytery, in the forty-six years of our presbyterial existence.

Next to the Great Head of the church, to whom all the honor and glory is due for that measure of success which has crowned our efforts and labors, both as a church and as a ministry, we should honor most the fathers and the elders, who in troublous times laid the broad foundation of our present ecclesiastical organization. We, their descendants, are here assembled to express a just appreciation of their labors, and to raise a monument, not *merely* to perpetuate the memory of the man, who in the providence of God preceded all others in this great and glorious work, but to mark an important epoch in the history of the Presbyterian church in North Carolina.

Finally, it is not permitted to man to pry into the secret purpose of God. No tongue can tell, no finite intelligence can conceive what a century more will bring forth. The work still before the church is immense: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." This solemn injunction, uttered more than eighteen hundred years ago, has lost none of its force; and although by far the greater part of the land to be possessed *lies still beyond*, yet we are greatly encouraged by the retrospect of the past. When we recur to the ante-American history of the Presbyterian church, and "remember the days of old," and follow her record "through the years of many generations," especially from the introduction of Christianity into Scotland, down through the bloody persecution that reigned more than a quarter of a century, in which more than 20,000 of the noblest and purest of Scotland's sons suffered by death, imprisonment or exile, and which signaled its close in 1688 by the martyrdom of the sainted Renwick; and if we consider that history through the alternate scenes of success and suffering in the persecutions of Ireland and Scotland, towards the middle of the last century, which did so much to plant Presbyterianism in America, and especially in North Carolina; and if we still consider the history of the same church in this country to the present time, we will be obliged to discover the very striking analogy that exists between God's providential dealings with us as a people and with his ancient covenanted church, and sure we are that there is no more special providence in the one case than in

the other, for "for the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

But never, until the establishment of our national independence, since the earliest and brightest centuries of the church, has Presbyterianism had an open field for the full development of her principles, and a fair opportunity to exhibit to mankind the practical operation of her republican government.

"The most careless observer cannot fail to be struck with the remarkable resemblance which exists between the model of our church government and that of our civil institutions; and it is not unworthy of being kept in mind, that some of the distinguished men who aided in forming the constitution of the United States, were at the same time engaged in digesting the form of government of the Presbyterian church in this country. This close resemblance, it is obvious, must always give our system a powerful hold on the affections of our countrymen, and quicken in the bosoms of our people the sentiment of patriotism by a coincidence, at one *so striking and so grateful*."*

And what if we should be allowed to refer to the progress of religion in the United States, and to the combined influence of evangelical Christians upon our common country since our national independence, which covers a period greater only by thirty-six years than our presbyterial existence, lo! what hath God wrought—what a change has come over our land—to say nothing of our physical and civil advancement. Instead of a population of three millions and a half, we now number more than 20,000,000 of immortal souls: Instead of one minister to 2,000, we now have one to every one thousand. Instead of 2,000 churches, we now have more than 40,000. Instead of 1,400 ministers, we now have more than 20,000. Instead of contending for State patronage and the miserable pittance extracted from our citizens for the support of religion, we now have a church property amounting in value to not less than \$90,000,000. And by the free and unrestrained influence of religious liberty, American Christians, for the last few years, have contributed *annually* for benevolent and pious purposes, at home and abroad, not less than \$12,000,000.

Nor is this all. To say nothing of our educational operations, as conducted by our common, primary and classical schools, there are more than one hundred and sixty colleges in the Union, all of which, except some ten or twelve, are under the religious influence and patronage of some religious denomination. Nor

* Dr. R. J. Breckinridge.

is this all. No minister of the Gospel, no friend of religion, no enlightened statesman or patriot will gainsay the position, that the American church as a whole, and every branch of that church, and the Presbyterian family especially, can more than double or even quadruple its contributions, and thus secure annually to the cause of piety and benevolence \$24,000,000 or \$48,000,000, and still realize more fully than ever before the truth of the divine declaration, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth," and "he that watereth shall be watered again."

If we can set no bounds to the prosperity of a county like *ours*, so distinguished and blessed in this goodly heritage which God has given us, "with its extended territory, its virgin soil, its lakes and majestic rivers, its subterranean stores, and all its boundless sources of prosperity, looking forth, as it does, upon two oceans, touching the wealth of Europe with its right hand and Asia with its left, covering every sea with its commerce, and destined in its midway station to be the thoroughfare of nations,"* then surely we should set no bounds to our religious charities, our Christian benevolence and philanthropic efforts.

We feel, my brethren, that we have a *right*, under the circumstances, thus to speak of the American church and of the combined influence of her religious denominations upon our common country and the world, when we review the religious history of the nation for the last twelve months, the character and results of the revival that has been felt in a greater or less degree in every part of the land, confined to no particular denomination in its spiritual life-giving influence, unlike every other great work of grace in the history of Christendom, not only *not* associated with the name of any mortal man as the honored instrument in the hands of God in bringing it about and continuing its power, but no denomination, no religious sect can lay claim to such honor and distinction. There is no Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Whitfield or Edwards connected with this amazing work of Divine grace. It is emphatically a new era in the religious history of the nation. It is the revival of the American churches, and on an occasion like the present, which signalizes the introduction and establishment of an important branch of the church of Christ in this section of the country. it is not only allowable but it is

* Dr. Howe.

highly proper that we should chronicle a year like the past—a year that has witnessed the bringing from nature's darkness to the marvellous light of the glory of the Son of God, more of our people than any previous year of our national history.

Let us not rely upon any *one*, or upon all the means and agencies combined, which have been mentioned, for ultimate success. They are only means to an end, and are so by the appointment of God: "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," who alone can make the appointed means of grace, the power and the wisdom of God, in the salvation of our apostate world; and when by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, the four quarters of the globe, Europe, Asia, Africa and America, will have been brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, *then* and not till then will the church have finished her work, and be presented to the Lord without blemish, not having spot, wrinkle or any such thing. Then, too, will the earth pay her highest tribute to the temporal happiness of man: "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." Then the pious sentiment of the devout Psalmist will be heard from every tongue, "Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee."

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