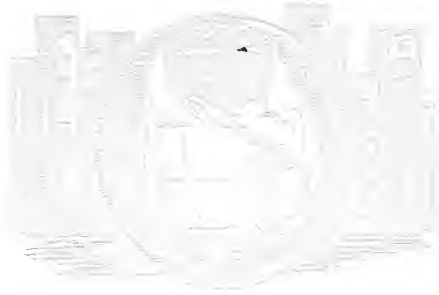


The Life
Story of

Franklin Wilson

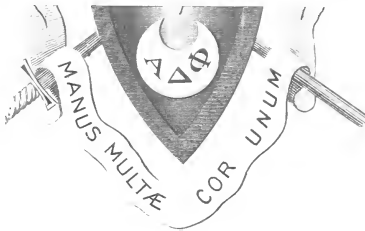
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Franklin Wilson

The Life Story of Franklin Wilson,

AS TOLD BY HIMSELF IN HIS JOURNALS.

"I do desire to be useful in Planting the Standard of the Cross all over our destitute State."—F. W., 1846.

BALTIMORE :
WHARTON & BARRON PUBLISHING CO.
1897.

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DEDICATION.

This life story of one so consecrated to the service of God is given to the world in response to a resolution passed by the Maryland Baptist Union Association, requesting its publication.

As far as possible it is told in his own words, taken from a journal kept by him for many years. We hope that some who read this story may be led to follow him, as he followed Christ, and that thus "He being dead shall yet speak."

To the Baptists of Maryland, whom he loved and served, this simple memorial is affectionately dedicated

BY HIS FAMILY.

“A spirit meek, in self-abasement clad,
Yet here at least, though few have numbered days
That shunned so modestly the light of praise.
His graceful manners, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy, which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve.”

ILLUSTRATIONS.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Portrait of 1880 | Frontispiece. |
| Miniature of 1834 | 13 |
| Portrait of 1848 | 34 |
| Franklin Square Baptist Church | 48 |
| House at "Oakley" | 101 |
| Portrait of 1896 | 109 |

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

| | PAGE. |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Childhood and Youth | 11 |

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Ordination—Marriage | 27 |
|-------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorship—Other Literary Work—Domestic Afflictions | 40 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| The War Period | 53 |
|--------------------------|----|

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

| | |
|--|----|
| Female House of Refuge—Other Charitable Work | 67 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

| | |
|---|----|
| Partial Loss of Sight—Authorship—Increasing and Varied Activities | 78 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

| | |
|---|----|
| Anniversaries—Sickness—Last Years | 98 |
|---|----|

| CHAPTER THE EIGHTH. | | PAGE. |
|---|--|-------|
| Last Days—The Summer of 1896—Failing Strength— The Passing Away—Funeral Services | | 107 |
| CHAPTER THE NINTH. | | |
| Personal Characteristics—Christian Citizenship | | 117 |
| CHAPTER THE TENTH. | | |
| Extracts from Letters | | 124 |

THE LIFE STORY OF FRANKLIN WILSON.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

“The childhood shows the man
As morning shows the day.”

—Milton.

Franklin Wilson was born in Baltimore, December 8, 1822, in the house now numbered 18 E. Lexington street, between Charles and St. Paul. His grandfather, William Wilson, came to this country from Ireland in 1770. He settled in Baltimore and established the shipping house of Wm. Wilson & Sons, which continued over one hundred years, and traded with all parts of the world. They owned a large fleet of ships, and conducted a successful and honorable business, equalled by very few in its duration and extent. After the death of William Wilson the business was carried on by his sons, James, William and Thomas, and their descendants.

Thomas, the father of the subject of this sketch, mar-

ried on May 5, 1815, Mary Cruse, in Alexandria, Va. She was a most beautiful young woman, as well as an earnest, enthusiastic Christian. Franklin was the fourth son and the fifth child of his parents. The untimely death of his lovely young mother, in March, 1824, left him an infant of thirteen months, to the care of a cousin, Miss Priscilla Stansbury, and faithfully did she discharge the trust. His mother's death allowed him no recollection of her that he might cherish in after years, and all through his life he experienced a want that no one, however devoted, could fill.

His infant years were partly spent at his grandfather's in Miss Stansbury's care. She devoted herself to the motherless children until they had homes of their own. She was a thoroughly devout and sincere Christian, most conscientious in her care, and was always spoken of with the warmest affection and gratitude.

His boyhood was spent in the Lexington street house during the winter, and the summers at "Oak Lawn," a beautiful country place at Huntingdon, now Waverly. There, with his many cousins, he spent some of the pleasantest days of his life, roaming over the country, fishing, hunting and taking his part in all the sports peculiar to the boyhood of an active, energetic youth. The memory of these days was so de-



MINIATURE, 1834.

lightful that they stood out as in relief, and he loved to speak of them to his children after the passing of many years. At this time he was the happy possessor of a little waistcoat which had solid silver ball buttons. They had been taken from his mother's riding habit, and were afterward melted and transformed into some article of tableware. One of his greatest childish enjoyments was riding horses made of slender shoots from the trees which grew along the brook in "Oak Lawn." Each horse was named and kept carefully stabled under the large porch which surrounded the house. The races between these steeds, ridden by himself, his brothers and his cousins, were events of great importance in his young imagination.

When ten years of age he was placed at Mount Hope, a boarding school then in the country, but the location of which was near where Park avenue and Wilson street now intersect. The scholars wore a quaint uniform, the coats adorned with huge rolling collars and double rows of brass buttons, with high black "stocks" around the neck. A miniature of Franklin, painted at this time (1834), is given.

This school was proud to number among its professors Dr. Horatio B. Hackett, afterward one of the foremost Greek scholars in the world.

Franklin was a very precocious boy, beginning Latin

when only seven years of age, and going through the Freshman year at Mt. Hope before he was thirteen. He says of himself: "Here I applied myself diligently and stood pretty well on the roll-book of the school. but I cared not for God, and though I repeated my prayers at night, my heart was filled with all unrighteousness. At this time there was a revival in our church, and I was much affected. I did not then know what true religion was, but knew I was not living as I ought. I determined to embrace religion when I was of a sufficient age. I got up what I called a non-swear-ing society, as some of the boys, I am ashamed to say, were in the habit of using profane language. I now resolved to try and reform them. For sometime it went on very well, but at last they made a resolution that if anyone should be detected in using profane words, he should pay the fine in cakes and apples. From this cause it quickly degenerated into a mere eating society, and I in disgust left it. My religious feelings clung to me for about a month, and then gradually wore off."

When considering where to send his sons to complete their education, Mr. Thomas Wilson was influenced by Dr. Hackett, who had become a professor in Brown University, to place his two boys, Wm. Thomas and Franklin, under his care. Accordingly in Sep-

tember, 1836, they were both entered in that institution, Franklin being obliged, on account of his youth, to go over the Freshman year again. During his course at Brown, spent under the fostering care of the president, Dr. Francis Wayland, and with congenial employment and surroundings, his mind grew and expanded, and his views of life broadened. He was, however, as yet untouched by the truths of the gospel, and rather inclined, with some of his classmates, to look lightly upon such matters. As he said in after life: "God mercifully taught me to see my true condition, and the year 1838 was ever memorable to me as the most blessed one of my life. Immediately after the day of prayer for colleges in February, 1838, a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of their friends was kindled among the pious students, and the conversation of one of them with me was blessed to my conviction of the need of a Saviour. I gave up my studies and companions for the time, in the earnest search after the 'one thing needful.' One evening the president, Dr. Wayland, urged the students to make 'one honest effort' to give their hearts to Christ—an address which was blessed to the conversion of Thomas S. Malcolm, and which he has made memorable by his tract with that title, published by the million, in several languages. I resolved to follow his example and make the effort, but my

mind^v was in a whirl of anxiety and distress, 'like the troubled sea that cannot rest.' Just then, to my astonishment, my dear friend, Dodge (Dr. Eben Dodge, afterward president of Colgate University), whom I had not seen for a day or two, called on me to plead with me to believe on Jesus. He said he had been awakened by hearing of my conviction, that he had at once recognized the reasonableness, the mercy and the goodness of the Saviour's demands upon his heart and life, and had yielded joyfully and gratefully to them. He was now a new creature in Christ Jesus, and was unspeakably happy in the change. He asked me to walk with him. It was a beautiful day in March. The sky was clear and blue, the sunlight warm and bright, the birds were singing sweetly, the snow was melting, and all nature was rejoicing in the tokens of spring. Said he, my mind is like this day, all the darkness has gone and light and joy has filled my soul. As he went on telling me of the sweetness and glory of his new found hope in Jesus, it encouraged me in my gloom. I felt that the same Saviour who had blessed my friend had equal power to bless me, and it was not long before I too trusted 'Him who is mighty to save.'"

From this time his purpose in life was changed, his one idea being to advance the kingdom of the Master he loved to serve. On his return to Baltimore in the

spring he was baptized into the fellowship of the First Baptist Church by the pastor, Rev. Stephen P. Hill, in the "Spring Gardens," then a lovely sheet of water. Speaking of it in his journal he says: "I was baptized on April 22, 1838. That day, I think, was one of the happiest of my life. It was a beautiful spring morning, the trees above, just covered with the fresh green leaves, were waving in a mild and delightful breeze, the water was sparkling in the sun, and as I followed my Redeemer into the liquid grave, my heart was filled with joy and peace. Oh, what Christian would wish to omit this most delightful ordinance. They cannot know the happiness of following their Redeemer into His watery tomb, or they would never be willing to annihilate this most sacred pledge of a renewed and sanctified nature. God grant that I may always remember my baptismal vow, and may its remembrance be in the weary course of my life on earth, as the fresh and verdant oasis to the panting traveler in the desert."

The year that followed was one of spiritual growth and of great happiness. Writing in March, 1839, on the anniversary of his conversion, he says: "This is to me a peculiarly interesting season. It was at this time last year that God in His mercy called me from the world into His service, that I obtained a hope of a blessed immortality through the blood of Jesus. Oh,

how grateful I should be to my Father for His kindness. * * * The past year has been the happiest of my life; my only sorrow has been my cold and indifferent heart. * * * Before, I sought pleasure in things of sense, in outward comforts; now I have learned to look within for true peace. * * * Oh, that others may see that I have been with Jesus and learned of Him, that they, through me, might be brought to accept of salvation."

This now seemed to be the spirit that possessed his soul, and again and again we find in his journal expressions such as "Oh, that I may love my Father more for His goodness to me; that I may serve Him faithfully, and recommend by my example that Saviour whom I love, to all my friends." From week to week the Christian students met for prayer and conversation, feeling the need for something more than the regular college prayer-meeting. Of one of these he speaks: "Last Thursday the pious students met, according to custom, to prepare their hearts for the coming day of fasting and prayer (day of prayer for colleges). After several affecting prayers had been offered, dear Brother Dodge arose and feelingly pointed the attention of Christians to the scenes of last year, when from the prayers uttered on that day, he and I and others were brought, as we trust, from the road of sin and

death to the holiness and life of the gospel. * * *
It seemed as if the hearts of all of us were fixed upon one object, the conversion of souls, and we hope to see many turning to God."

The winter of 1839 he spent in Baltimore, partly on account of the weakness of his eyes, and partly because the increasing feebleness of his father seemed to demand that one of his sons should be constantly near him. That he dreaded the change can hardly be surprising, as he felt that he should miss the daily stimulus of association with his fellow-students, and the loving companionship of those who had especially endeared themselves to him. But the year thus spent in comparative retirement was not lost, for while he laments his coldness of heart, in reality it was a most fruitful year, both to himself and to his family. He says: "A few weeks after my return, Rev. Mr. Knapp came to Baltimore; a revival commenced, and is now in active progress. Thus far about one hundred and twenty have been baptized, and the work is still going on." A beloved brother and sister professed conversion at this time, as also many other relatives and friends. His own heart was quickened and revived. Again he writes, on December 2, speaking of Mr. Knapp: "He went away on Monday morning, leaving the city far different in a religious view from what he found it.

Nearly two hundred have joined our church, and many those of other denominations." After speaking of Mr. Knapp's personal appearance he says: "I esteem him very much, and like his preaching, but of course he has his peculiarities. He has gone, God be thanked for his coming."

In January, 1840, when seventeen years old, he organized a Bible class for young ladies, distributed tracts and aided in many ways the work of the church.

In September, 1840, he re-entered Brown University. He says: "I attended with sorrowful heart the commencement of my former and much-loved class." Of this class, the "National Baptist," on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary in 1890, says: "The roll contains the names of men widely known in educational, ministerial and business circles. Among the educators are Dr. Boise, formerly of the Seminary of Morgan Park; Dr. Dodge, president of Colgate University; Dr. Kendrick, acting president of Vassar; Dr. Brantley, of Georgia University; Dr. Lincoln, of Newton, and Dr. Weston, of Crozer, * * * beside men of lasting influence for good, such as Dr. Franklin Wilson, of Baltimore, so well known in that city and State for his life-long beneficence and devotion to all good." Mr. Wilson was a member of the Alpha

Delta Phi, and the Phi Beta Kappa fraternities, and in the fall of 1841 graduated with high honors.

Immediately afterward he was again forced to give up his studies on account of his eyes, suffering much pain and inconvenience for over four months. As soon as his eyes allowed it, however, he again took a class in Sunday-school, and often spoke in the lecture-room, carefully preparing himself beforehand. In October, 1841, he attended, as a delegate from the First Church, the Maryland Baptist Union Association, which met in Washington, and enjoyed the sessions. About this time he says: "About two months ago my eyes became strong enough to enable me to read two or three hours a day, though even yet I cannot read much at night. Since then I have read through Josephus, Buckland's Geology, Whatley's Rhetoric, Todd's Sunday-school Teacher, Chalmers on Man, a good many of Robert Hall's discourses, Skinner's and Kirk's sermons, and various other miscellaneous and religious writings. I am now engaged in reading Horne's Introduction and Bloomfield's Greek Testament, in connection with Barnes' and Ripley's Notes."

On February 23, 1842, when but two months over nineteen years, he preached his first sermon in the First Church, from Mat. IX, 37th and 38th verses. It was on the day of prayer for colleges, and it was an

interesting coincidence that on that day just four years before he had first found peace in believing on Christ. On the following June he resolved to attempt to speak extemporaneously at the Pikesville Church, ten miles from Baltimore, where meetings were being held. After this he spoke wherever he found opportunity, thus beginning what was ever afterward his greatest joy and privilege through life. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to preach to others the gospel, the joys of which he himself possessed. During this month he preached for the first time at Sater's, the oldest Baptist church in Maryland, and also at Huntingdon meeting.

For sometime his great desire had been to prepare himself more fully for the Christian ministry, and to this end he entered Newton Theological Seminary in October, 1842, remaining until the following April vacation, when he had the pleasure of attending another series of meetings conducted by Mr. Knapp, and taking quite an active part. At this time he was again occupied in the care of his father and brother, both of whom were dangerously ill. After his return to Newton he remained, with some interruptions, till June, 1844, when he was again called to Baltimore by the illness of his father. At this time he says, November, 1844: "I found I must relinquish all idea of re-

turning to Newton for the present, and concluded to try and make myself useful at home. I have accordingly preached since the ninth of June thirty-three times, more than ever before in my life. On that day I preached at Sater's to a large congregation.* * * I preached very frequently at Huntingdon in the 'bar-racks' (formerly used by United States soldiers, and abandoned), and the attendance was so good that many were obliged to leave without finding seats. On Sunday, October 20, a neat little chapel, built by my Uncle James Wilson, was dedicated there. Messrs. Webster, Aldrich, Ripley, Healey and myself conducting the services. Mr. Hill preached the sermon. In the evening I preached." On February 12, 1845, his father, Mr. Thomas Wilson, died, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. He speaks of this event as follows: "I take up my pen again to record a sad event which has clothed our family in mourning, and has been the heaviest affliction we have been called upon to bear. I have been, since last June, constantly with my dear father, and have had the privilege of ministering to his infirmities, but he has now gone from earth. * * * Our grief was deep, for this sad blow fell suddenly upon us, although we had long been expecting it. I need not record his virtues, or my own feelings at his loss. The one I can never forget, the other is unnecessary.

The funeral took place on February 15, and was largely attended. The flags on the shipping in port were at half-mast all that day, in honor to his memory. May God sanctify this blow to us, and as He has taken away our father on earth, may He lead us to set all our affections on Him as our Father in heaven."

Writing on May 29 he says: "Since my last record my time has been spent in a manner varying from that of any former period of my life, and I have approached more nearly the regular duties of the pastoral office. I have reason to think that my labor has not been in vain. * * * A revival commenced in the Huntingdon Church, where I preach, and several have given their hearts to God." At this time he was much occupied with active labors in connection with the unhappy dissensions in the First Church. He mentions it as follows: "The Lord has laid me under unspeakable obligations to praise Him for using me as an instrument in promoting His cause." And again: "I think all difficulty is over. * * * We have been harassed, broken down, scattered and distressed. God grant that a brighter era may now dawn upon us."

In 1844 we find the name of Franklin Wilson for the first time on the executive board of the Maryland Baptist Union Association of that year, and from that time his name occurs almost constantly in the minutes, indi-

cating the active part he was taking in the work of the denomination.

On July 16, 1845, he sailed, in company with his sister and cousin, for Europe, taking passage for Liverpool from New York in the ship "Fidelia." The voyage of twenty-one days was a great delight to him, and he often spoke of the beauty of the new vessel on her maiden voyage, the snowy sails forming three beautiful arches above the deck, and the entire absence of all disagreeable noise, dirt or confusion: the bounding over the waters, and the joy of the calm while lying motionless as on a sea of glass. On such a day as this, when all nature was in perfect repose, he preached to an attentive congregation, using as his pulpit the capstan, draped with the American flag. The entire trip was enthusiastically enjoyed, his only regret being that its brevity prevented a visit to the Continent, beyond a short stay in France and a few days in Paris. The health of his cousin being delicate, it became imperative for them to return before the coming of cold weather. The homeward voyage of thirteen days in the steamship "Caledonia" was most prosaic beyond a severe storm of several days. He often spoke of the contrast between the creaking, groaning steamer, with its many disagreeable accompaniments, and the beautiful ship "Fidelia." As a result of this voyage his

health was very much improved, and his weight on landing was 135 pounds; more than at any other period of his life.

We have now followed him through the period of childhood, youth and early manhood, and see him standing hopefully looking out upon the future, eager to enter upon the work of the Master with his whole heart and soul. His student life had been so broken in upon by his own sickness and that of his family that he had been able to do very little continuous work. He never seems to chafe at this, but bore it all with the same beautiful Christian spirit which always characterized his after life. He only regretted his own want of ability as he expressed it, and continually prayed for more of the spirit of his Divine Master.

CHAPTER II.

ORDINATION AND MARRIAGE.

“A guardian angel o'er his life presiding,
Doubling his pleasures, and his cares dividing.”
—Rogers.

In January, 1846, Mr. Wilson was ordained, from thenceforth consecrating himself entirely and unceasingly to the work of the Lord. Turning to his journal we find his own account of this most interesting occasion: “On the 18th of January I was solemnly ordained to the work of the Christian ministry. The services were as follows: Reading proceedings of council and scripture lesson, Rev. O. W. Briggs; invocation, Rev. Mr. Healy; sermon by Rev. Stephen P. Hill, from the text, ‘Then He breathed on them and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost, as my Father hath sent Me, so send I you.’ Rev. F. Bacon delivered the charge; Mr. Aldrich made the ordaining prayer; Rev. J. S. Welch, of New Jersey, gave the right hand of fellowship, and J. A. McKean the concluding prayer. The sermon was in Mr. Hill’s best style. The address in giving the hand of fellowship most beautiful and ten-

der; it brought tears into my eyes, and affected many deeply. I felt much impressed with the overwhelming considerations which could not fail to present themselves to my mind on such an occasion. I hardly ever in my life felt so much awed as at the thought of the work to which I thus publicly consecrated my life. Oh that the remembrance of that vow may keep me diligent, active, devoted. Oh that God may strengthen me to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in a manner that He can consistently bless my labors to the advancement of His cause.”

One of the religious papers (probably the Herald), speaking at the time of this event, says: “A most interesting service was held in the First Baptist Church on the occasion of the ordination of Brother Franklin Wilson, a member of said church. * * * For a considerable period past Brother Wilson has preached regularly in the Huntingdon chapel (built by his uncle, Mr. James Wilson, a prominent Baptist), about two miles from the city. His gratuitous labors in this new field and in others are highly appreciated, and have been blessed with encouraging success. As may be known, he is a young brother possessed of property, with which he is disposed to do good, and thus augment his usefulness in the cause of Christian philanthropy.”

The great apostle of Burmah, Rev. Adoniram Judson, had been expected to assist in these services, but arriving too late, he affixed his name to the ordination certificate of the young minister, both in English and Burmese. His visit was a great source of inspiration, and Mr. Wilson often spoke of the pleasure he enjoyed in driving him about the city in his buggy, that he might point out to him some of its attractions.

Again turning to his journal we find in June the following record: "I have reason to erect a new Ebenezer and say 'hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' On the 4th of April I went up to Pikesville and commenced a protracted meeting. With the assistance of Brethren McKean, Hill and Adams, it was continued for several weeks, and quite a number of conversions occurred. On the 10th of May I had the joyful privilege of constituting a church at Huntingdon. * * * I was obliged to preach and give the hand of fellowship alone, but I enjoyed the services highly. Seven persons formed the original number, but on the next Saturday, May 17, I baptized fifteen, and on the 31st three more; the baptisms presented beautiful solemn scenes. On each occasion a large number were present, and on the last it was probably the largest assembly which ever met in the vicinity for religious purposes. I wonder, as I think what God has wrought here. Twenty-

three have been baptized in one year in this little village, and I trust they are all truly the children of God.”

But even at this early period of his life his interest was not confined to the narrow sphere of the village church alone. On November 11, 1846, we find a record of a visit to Cumberland, in company with the Rev. Benj. Griffith, in order to judge of the desirability of establishing a Baptist church there, and in other destitute places in that neighborhood. That he was deeply stirred by what he saw the following entry shows: “This visit has made me more deeply interested than ever in promoting our views of truth in Maryland. *I do desire to be useful in planting the standard of the cross all over our destitute State.*”

On the 5th of March, 1847, he was unanimously chosen pastor of the High Street Baptist Church of Baltimore. Feeling that in this larger field he would have greater opportunity for usefulness, he accepted the call, and entered into his labors there with characteristic earnestness and enthusiasm. The church was at this time in a sad condition, almost overcome by debt, its members scattered and many of them lukewarm in the service of the Master. He says, writing of the installation services: “I felt very solemn, almost overwhelmed—even more than when first ordained. I have indeed taken on myself a great burden. * * *

I have determined to have none but real members. *
* * The interest seems increasing, and I trust the Lord will prosper our efforts. In May he baptized one candidate, the first who had ever been baptized in the meeting-house, and the first in the church for more than two years." At this time he says: "Begun with Brother Wilder to hold services at Woodberry. On two occasions we had large congregations in the woods. It is a noble field, and by the blessing of God I am resolved to prosecute it until we have a Baptist church there." In the minutes of the Maryland Baptist Union Association for November, 1847, we find his first report as Secretary of the Executive Board, an office which he held for forty years, serving the Association faithfully without compensation, save the love and respect ever given to him by his brethren.

At this time he was also much occupied in an unsuccessful attempt to save the Madison street meeting-house to the Baptists. Even then, busy in all directions, willing to do anything and everything, "if by any means he might save some." Before the close of the year he had held protracted meetings both at Cumberland and at Hereford, and the year 1848 found him still at work, looking out for new opportunities for enlarged usefulness. On April 23 was consecrated the Rockdale chapel, a handsome stone building erected near

Woodberry, entirely at his own expense, at a cost of \$5000. He says: "The house was crowded, attention eagerly given, and I felt that God was there. May He accept this offering by giving us a blessing."

In speaking of his work at High Street at this time, he says: "After visiting A. H. and M. J., and finding their evidences of conversion so clear and bright, I was happier than if I had been presented with a kingdom. I received a large instalment of my salary in the conversion of these young ladies, and I think their baptism the most beautiful we have had." Very early in his Christian life he consecrated his all to God's service, and always gave liberally and gladly of his substance. His gifts often amounted to far more than his own yearly expenses, as in this church, he refused all salary, urging them to give it all toward the payment of their indebtedness. At the same time he paid the salary of Rev. Wm. Wilder, who had succeeded him at the Rockdale and Huntingdon chapels.

The year 1848 was destined to be a very eventful one in his life. In July he paid a visit to his dear friend, Rev. Eben Dodge, at New London, N. H., and in company with him, going on to see another college friend in Eastport, Maine, stopping at Portland on the way. Here Mr. Dodge introduced him to his cousins living in that city, and although he does not mention it just

then, he was deeply impressed with one of the young ladies, and shortly afterward speaks of his engagement, August, 1848. "A month never to be forgotten. God has wonderfully blessed me. He has given me wealth, friends, health, influence, a position in the church, above all a hope of heaven, and some feeble desire to be grateful to Him as the giver of all good. * * * Thanks be to His name. During my visit to the East I have met with one who I believe to be a kindred heart, and with whom, should God smile upon our union, I can go forth joyfully upon the voyage of life. * * * I tremble sometimes as I think of this new responsibility I shall assume, * * * but my daily prayers ascend to Him who has so wonderfully guided me thus far, that He will illumine my path daily with His blessed presence. Why should God so bless me, I have asked, and wonder at His love has been the only answer."

Miss Virginia Appleton was born in Bangor, Maine, in 1824. She was the fourth daughter of John W. Appleton, afterward of Portland, and was at this time an active member of the Baptist church in that city. Her mother was Sophia Williams, who was descended from a long line of distinguished ministers—Rev. John Cotton, the noted Puritan divine; Rev. Elisha Williams, president of Yale College, and Rev. Solomon Stod-

dard, the first librarian of Harvard, and whose daughter, Esther, was the mother of Rev. Jonathan Edwards, were among her ancestors in the direct line.

On November 21, 1848, they were united in marriage by the Rev. Jeremiah Eaton, "amid the warmest and most affectionate wishes of all their friends." The union thus consummated proved as happy as ever falls to the lot of mortals, and endured for forty-eight years, growing brighter and happier till the Lord called the loving husband and father to Himself.

Immediately after their return to Baltimore, the young couple spent several weeks with their brother, Mr. James Wilson, whose residence occupied the present site of the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church.

On the 17th of January, 1849, they moved into their own house, No. 34 Pleasant street, near Charles, and began that delightful home life, looked back upon with so much joy by their children, and by all who have had the privilege of remaining under their roof.

In September he speaks of the recognition of the Rockdale Church as follows: "God has graciously made the chapel His dwelling-place, and has crowned His precious gospel with a rich blessing, at least thirty having been baptized there since June last." In November he attended the dedication of the church in Cumberland, in company with Dr. Richard Fuller. He



FRANKLIN WILSON. 1848.

continued faithfully the work at High Street, often making such entries as this in his journal: "I do desire more faith and intense devotion to my Master's cause." Although throughout his life Mr. Wilson was slender, and of delicate physique, he had never been really ill, and was seldom kept away from any duties by sickness.

During the month of October, 1850, he says: "For the first time since I commenced preaching, I have been deprived by sickness for several Sabbaths of the privilege of occupying the pulpit." This was but the commencement of the trouble with his throat, which laid him aside from the active ministry. Beginning with a slight cold, it increased until he was finally forced to give up his pastoral charge. At this time he became very much interested in a young man whom he sent to college, and who afterward became an active, useful minister of the gospel. In November he says: "A misfortune which I have feared since the very commencement of my ministry has at last come upon me." "After preaching three times this month, my cough continued so violent that I applied to Dr. Power, and he told me that I had bronchitis in a very bad form, and advised me to discontinue preaching entirely at present. * * * I cannot bear the thought of giving up the pleasure of such labors. But I leave the matter

with Him, whose are all my ways." At this time, feeling that entire rest from pastoral work was necessary, and yet not wishing to sever all connection with the work of the church, in April, 1851, he suggested that Rev. H. J. Chandler be called as an assistant. That this was a wise move can be seen from the following entry in his journal: "My church has experienced a refreshing from on high under the labors of Brother Chandler. I have ventured out to but few of the night meetings, but they were very solemn and delightful. Thirty have professed conversion. * * * In examining the candidates I hurt my throat very much, and in visits, of which I made nine or ten, I found such pain resulting that I determined to make no more."

But a man of his active, nervous temperament could not remain in idleness, and in spite of the weakness of his eyes he managed to do a vast amount of reading and writing. In March he says: "Mr. Beach, the editor of the 'True Union,' having given up the paper, I have written a good deal for it, and have acted as editor. This, and the many calls which are made on me, business and other, have occupied almost all my time." In May he went to New York to consult Dr. Greene, an eminent specialist in throat diseases. He says: "We started on the 22d for New York; I had thought of leaving on the 21st, but a kind Providence delayed me,

for the boat near Philadelphia on that day was run into and sunk, drowning a number of the passengers. At New York on the 23d Dr. Greene performed an operation on my throat, cutting off part of the uvula and tonsils. It was very sore for a week, and I do not see that I have derived any permanent benefit from the operation. I remained in Dr. Greene's care for a month." Later he writes: "I began to cherish bright hopes of complete restoration, but was disappointed. I had improved a great deal, but took cold and relapsed again." In August he again writes: "My throat was injured this month by over-exertion. I have taken advantage of the fine weather to ride a good deal. I have edited the 'True Union,' have prepared regulations and history of the High Street Church. My throat is still delicate, and I have attempted to speak but once in public."

In October we find this interesting record, coming as a gleam of sunshine across the gloom of these months of pain and renunciation: "On the seventh of this month the Lord gave us a precious immortal gift of a fine little boy. Oh that the goodness of God may lead us to a new consecration to His service, and that we may have grace and wisdom to train this child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." His throat still continuing painful, he says: "I have some-

times thought I should resign my pastorate entirely and devote myself to writing, but I cannot bring my mind to consent to it."

In February, 1852, he went again to New York, and his throat was much benefited, so that when he returned he spoke quite frequently. He writes of this: "When I found that short addresses did not injure me I felt happier on this account, as I had reason to hope that my life was not so useless as before." In October, 1852, feeling that he could never hope for complete restoration, he resigned the care of the High Street Church. He first gave the church \$2000, in addition to all his former benefactions, if they would raise the remainder of the debt themselves. This they nobly did, and he had the satisfaction of leaving them free from debt and in a greatly improved spiritual condition. After this he writes: "I am now no longer a preacher of the gospel by the voice, but I trust I shall not be idle or useless. I have concluded to take the entire editorial care of the 'True Union,' with the hope of placing it on a firm and substantial foundation. It is an experiment, and an occupation for which I have no taste, but I gladly embrace it, as I am denied the pulpit."

Regretting as he did the loss of his voice, and his enforced withdrawal from the active ministry, he did

not realize then, as we who look back upon his life now see, that the Lord was only leading him into far wider fields of usefulness than would have been possible to a pastor. He ever felt that he was in God's hands, to be used for His highest glory, and his entire life was marked by his utter dependence upon God and his humble acquiescence in His leadings. Still his greatest desire was to preach, and on all occasions he would seek opportunities to speak for his Divine Master. Although in early youth he had found it difficult to speak extemporaneously, by constant practice he had so trained himself that few could excel him in this particular. How many in his own church love to recall his earnest, loving words at the prayer-meeting, or at the communion season, and his tender, touching prayers, and how many outside of his own city and State hold him in loving remembrance, treasuring as precious pearls the words that fell from his lips.

CHAPTER III.

EDITORSHIP.—OTHER LITERARY WORK.—DOMESTIC AFFLICTIONS.

“All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.”

—Lamb.

“For blessings ever wait in virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.”

—Congrieve.

During Mr. Wilson's second visit to New York to be treated for his ever-recurring throat trouble, we find that among other ways of employing his time, he attempted an essay on the “Duties of Churches to Their Pastors,” for which a prize of \$100 was offered by the Southern Baptist Publication Society. Shortly afterward he was gratified by learning that his essay had won the prize over many competitors.

He now entered fully into the life of an editor, with all the earnestness of his nature. That it was always rather distasteful to him can be seen by the following entry: “I have not much taste for the work of an editor, so many papers have to be looked over that I find time for very little solid reading, and the habit of

merely glancing over such a vast variety of articles is very injurious to the memory. I love the work of a preacher far more, but if God shuts me out from the pulpit, I ought to rejoice that I can still do anything for His cause."

During this spring his time and thoughts were much occupied by the alarming illness and death of his beloved brother, William Thomas, in the thirty-second year of his age. "June, 1852. This is a terrible shock to me, but as I know that he has gone to a peaceful home, where no pain or sickness can ever come, I mourn not for him. He was a firm believer in the great doctrines of the Cross. Much of his time was spent in prayer, and his greatest desire was to glorify God. He did a great deal of good, and said nothing about it. He loved to meditate on the sublime things of religion, and is now enjoying the contemplation of God without a veil to dim the enraptured vision."

During this summer, while absent from home, Mr. Wilson's heart was again saddened by the death of a beloved cousin.

"December 13, 1852. Dr. Power died during my absence—a most lovely example of the triumph of faith over death. This death, with that of my dear brother, made a deep impression on me. I never felt before so strongly the nearness of the tomb, or the im-

portance of living earnestly while life is granted me. May I never forget the lessons I have learned."

"I have recently been much engaged in forming a Young Men's Christian Association for Baltimore. I first wrote an article on the subject, then had a resolution adopted in its favor by the Maryland Baptist Union Association, then called a public meeting, and was there appointed chairman of a committee to prepare the constitution, and it is now adopted, and the Association has met with gratifying favor. I trust that this step will result in incalculable good."

In April, 1853, he was once more called upon to mourn the death of another member of his family. His oldest and only surviving brother, James Wilson, was suddenly stricken down, and after days of unconsciousness passed to another world. As he writes in his journal April 15: "I have just passed through the deep and bitter waters of affliction. * * * I have seen my brother die, * * * and now I am the only one of my mother's sons left in this world. On Wednesday, April 13, his thirty-seventh birthday, he was buried. This is the severest affliction I have experienced. * * * since he was my only brother, now I have none. Oh that I may never forget the deeply solemn convictions which have been impressed upon my mind by the melancholy events of the past

eleven months. Life is short; let me make the most of it. Let me live to the glory of God and all will be well."

"November 13, 1853. Since I last wrote I have enjoyed many delightful hours with my family. I spent the summer in visiting the Virginia Springs, Natural Bridge, Wyer's Cave, etc., and while the waters were, if anything, injurious to my throat, the natural scenery was beautiful and sublime. The view from Warm Spring Mountain, Harper's Ferry, the Bridge and the Cave can never fade from my memory, as among the most grand and lovely exhibitions of the Creator's power I have ever witnessed. Since my return my eyes have much improved, so that in addition to editorial work, I have been enabled to read a great deal. Various reviews, Mapleton, Malcolm's Travels and Judson's Life. The last, particularly, deeply impressed me, and I feel rebuked for my comparative uselessness. Within a short time past I have felt a more earnest desire to be devoted to God. I have especially felt anxious for the extension of the Master's cause. In my afternoon walks I have selected three locations for new Baptist churches—one near Franklin Square, one in the vicinity of Madison avenue, and one near the corner of Eden and Eager streets. I hope, if I live five years longer, to see each of these

spots occupied with a church. I am now making arrangements to secure the first lot."

"1854. We formed about the first of January a 'Church Extension Society,' for the purpose of concentrating our efforts to plant new churches in Baltimore. Brother Kelly and I have leased the lot near Franklin Square, and I have on my own responsibility taken two additional lots, one on Chase street, opposite the square, and the other on the northwest corner of Dolphin and Madison streets. * * * We have altogether \$8000 subscribed toward the Franklin Square Church, but need \$15,000. * * * February, 1854. I have been much perplexed in selecting suitable locations for churches, and have passed many sleepless nights thinking of various plans, etc. Still I hope I have not been useless, and I have rejoiced at the indications of Providence in laying me aside from the pulpit that I might devise and execute plans for extending and perpetuating for future ages His church on earth. My great desire is to be and do that which will most promote His glory, and if it is His will not to permit me to preach, may I have grace to say, 'even so Father, for so it seems good in Thy sight.' "

Mr. Wilson was very far-sighted, and as he often said, "twenty years in advance of his times." Many of the enterprises begun by him, which proved failures at

the time, have since been carried into effect with marked success. Such was the failure to start a Baptist Book Depository, by which he incurred a loss of three hundred dollars.

On the 9th of July, 1854, the chapel at Madison Square, built by Mr. Wilson, was dedicated to the worship of God. He writes: "A fine congregation was present, and my heart was overwhelmed with emotions of gratitude to God, that He had enabled me to erect this temple to His glory. My prayer is, that it may be the means of saving many souls from the darkness of sin and error. It is one of the neatest, most airy and beautiful lecture-rooms in the city."

In the eyes of many, the short life of this chapel seemed to show but little success, but Mr. Wilson always considered that the conversion of one young man, afterward a protégé and largely educated by him, well rewarded him for the trouble and money involved. This young man is now a very successful pastor. A letter from him fully confirms Mr. Wilson's estimate of the good done by this enterprise:

"May 13, 1894.

"My Dear Brother—Thirty-three years ago I was ordained. The names of Williams, Cole, Nice, Thomas and yourself are on the ordination paper. You preached the sermon from Psalms XXVI, 5th and 6th.

The sermon has ever been an ideal to me of work in the ministry.

“It seems fitting, in view of the relation which you sustained to me, that at this time you should have at least a synopsis of my work in the ministry, leaving you to decide as to whether your investment in me has paid at least a small margin. My main purpose is simply to tell you what in part has been accomplished by the churches of which I have been pastor.

About \$60,000 have been raised to pay debts on churches, and for repairs, etc., one among them saved from the sheriff's clutches. Three missions have been established, three chapels built, three churches organized out of these missions; three churches organized directly out of my churches, exclusive of those mentioned in the number above. The churches during my pastorate have received by baptism nearly eleven hundred. I have never had an evangelist.

“With one single exception I have lived in most delightful fellowship with all of my brethren in the ministry. Nothing comforts my soul more than this, save the grace of God. While I have not done much literary work yet, I hope in the next five years to do something in that line.

“The cares of different pastorates, in addition to those of a large family, have been obstacles in my way

to such work. Had I been a genius these would have been overcome.

"I have attempted to keep somewhat abreast of our modern thinking, and up to this time I have seen no sufficient reason to change a hair's breadth from the essential things which have been believed by us as a people. On the contrary, reasons multiply rapidly to anchor me more firmly if possible to the old faith 'once delivered,' and delivered for all time, and subject to no material modifications. Revelation is not progressive. There may come more illumination, and especially do I wish to bear testimony to the increasing sweetness of the gospel to my soul, the truths of which have sustained me in the past, as I believe they will in the future, and shall be my great joy when I lay down my work to look my Master in the face. I have no fear, but all hope, so far as the future is concerned.

"And now, after these years of toil—some of them have been very hard years, years full of trial, anxiety, burdens heavy, as I look back upon them I have not the slightest regret, but the greatest joy, that God counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, and to you more than anyone else, almost wholly to you, am I deeply grateful for making it possible for me to do the little I have done to exalt the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom I do most fully believe.

"I may add that I have at the present time one of the largest and noblest churches in this State. I have been here nearly five years, and up to this time not the slightest jar has occurred to disturb my relations with this church.

"Yours most fraternally, —————."

"October, 1854. On Tuesday last I joined, with my dear wife, in constituting a new church, to occupy the building now being erected at Franklin Square," and in March the lecture-room was publicly opened with a sermon by Dr. J. W. M. Williams. "I enjoyed the services much, and pictured to myself the future scenes of holy joy which I hope to witness in that room. There I trust my child will be taught 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' There I hope my family will receive rich spiritual blessings, and I myself hope to be better prepared for 'a House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'"

About this time another son, Franklin Hamilton, was born, and in July, 1855, the family took possession of the new home built by Mr. Wilson in the western part of the city. This was the beautiful "Oakley," the cherished home for over thirty-seven years, hereafter indissolubly connected with his personality by all who knew him intimately. The broad halls, the bright rooms, are ever dear to the memory of his children. The



FRANKLIN SQUARE BAPTIST CHURCH.

charming library, never complete without the slender figure in the revolving chair, will always be thought of as one of the most sacred spots on earth.

The first pastor of the Franklin Square Church, Dr. George B. Taylor, was a cousin of Mrs. Wilson, and lived at their home. As the first winter was very severe, the streets not being cut through, or well paved in that part of the city, many amusing stories are told of their floundering about in the snow, in their eagerness to attend every service.

Again in July, 1856, Mr. Wilson was called upon to mourn the death of his youngest sister, Mary (Mrs. J. McKim Marriott). The early decease of so many of his loved ones led him to realize more and more the necessity of working "while it is called today; knowing that the night cometh, when no man can work."

"November, 1856. Since my return from Portland I have been principally occupied with the 'True Union' and the Association, having to prepare two reports. I have, however, read the memoirs of Lyman and Channing, and Bledsoe on Slavery and many small books. Two series originally written by me for the paper have since been published as tracts by the Southern Baptist Publication Society, one on 'The Training of Children,' the other on 'Amusements.' I have another nearly ready on 'Church Discipline, or Keep the Church

Pure.' My throat has improved since my removal to this part of the city, so that I have preached ten or twelve times this year. I have also become superintendent of the Franklin Square Sabbath-school." Again on December 5: "Since my last record I have made an important change in my plans for the future. I have concluded to drop the 'True Union,' which I have edited for the past six years, and have purchased the 'Christian Review,' * * * which I intend to conduct, with the aid of Brother George Taylor. 'Tis an experiment I know, but I have worked six years for less than nothing, and I can afford, if necessary, to do it again."

After conducting this magazine for two years he sold it in 1859 to Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., of New York. The Rev. James B. Taylor, Sr., writing for the "Religious Herald" shortly afterward, speaks of these editorial ventures as follows:

"Among the notable things connected with the Baptists of Baltimore was the establishment, several years ago, of a valuable weekly paper, entitled 'The True Union.' It was under the editorial conduct of Rev. Franklin Wilson, D. D. It is not saying too much to speak of this paper as one of the most judiciously edited in our whole country. For want of sufficient patronage it failed, and another took its place, being smaller

and a monthly, entitled 'The Maryland Baptist.' I regret to learn that this also is suspended. Of the editor I may be permitted to speak as one of our most gifted preachers, but he has been prevented from the full occupancy of his talents by a tendency to bronchial affections. I remember more than twenty years ago witnessing his baptism. He was then quite a youth, and a student at Brown University. Gladly did I afterwards recognize him as a proclaimer of the everlasting gospel. His talents and spirit eminently fit him for the conductor of a religious journal."

This year also witnessed the sale of the Rockdale Church and the lot on Madison avenue and Dolphin street. Speaking of the latter he says: "I sold it, as I could not perceive the faintest probability of a church being erected there." Yet in a foot-note added in pencil we find: 1871. "This month the Eutaw Place Church was dedicated. It is located only one square from the lot I purchased in 1854, in the vain hope that the Baptists would then occupy the ground."

"January, 1859. My health has been greatly restored, so that during the last two years I have preached fifty-five times, and made a number of addresses. I am now preaching for Lee Street every Sabbath morning. The Church Extension Society has become involved in a crushing debt of \$11,000.

Fearing that the Society would be overwhelmed, I made an offer in a public meeting last June to pay one-half the debt if the denomination would pay the other half, but they failed to meet the condition. I have at times been seriously discouraged. May the Lord smile upon our feeble efforts to advance His cause. My motto shall still be, 'faint yet pursuing.'"

CHAPTER IV.

THE WAR PERIOD.

“Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease,
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, Peace.”
—Longfellow.

February, 1860, he says: “I have for the first time spent a year without any regular business. Yet my time has been pretty well occupied with attending to my own business, the affairs of the association, the Church Extension Society, and the House of Refuge, of which I am a manager. The Church Extension Society at last paid its debt on June 6, I having to pay \$620 more, or \$6120 in all. I took a trip to Salisbury to ordain Brother Flippo, and also attended the Association at Newtown.”

March, 1860. On Wednesday morning, March 14, a dear little daughter was sent to cheer our hearts.
* * * How thankful we ought to be to our Heavenly Father. He has granted the earnest desire of our hearts, and has added to our family a dear daughter.

Oh that she may be spared to bless her brothers, * * and to comfort our hearts. May we be enabled, in view of this goodness, to dedicate ourselves anew to His service, and to be more useful in His cause.

A striking entry is that of December 8: "My birthday! I am thirty-eight years old. My hair is rapidly turning gray, and I am reminded by frequent weakness that I am no longer young. I have decided to take the editorship of 'The True Union' again on January 1. Brother Berg could not live upon its meagre income, and I consented to take it as the only hope of saving it. It will involve considerable labor and trouble, but on the whole I think I shall be happier with regular work to do. The state of the times, however, is such as to make it a risky enterprise. I fear disunion is inevitable. South Carolina is on the point of secession, and the demands of the South are such, and the temper of the North, that, in my judgment, these demands will not be met, and we must separate. Secession will, I think, only increase the evils the South complains of. I have done what I can to promote union, in having fraternal appeals sent forth by our association, to all Baptists to seek for peace and union. May God direct. He is now our only hope. Man utterly fails in this terrible crisis."

September 10, 1861, he says: "I never expected, in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, to witness the scenes and to hear the sad news which I have seen and heard since I last wrote. * * * Every effort in Congress, and in a peace convention called by Virginia, to adopt some compromise, failed, and two attempts to negotiate a peaceable separation with the United States government were sternly repulsed. * * * The Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, passing through Baltimore April 19, was attacked by a vast mob, whom they fired on. Several soldiers and citizens were killed, and intense excitement created. The citizens resolved that no more soldiers should go through Baltimore, and our streets for a few days swarmed with men in uniform and with guns and cannon. For a time I thought Baltimore was doomed, and the threats of the infuriated North were fearful. After a time, however, a calm succeeded, and thousands of soldiers have not only passed through, but have encamped here. Some of the camps are in full view of my house, and the sounds of the drum and brass band are daily, almost hourly, heard. The affairs of the country have gradually progressed from bad to worse." * * * He then mentions the battles of Bull Run and others, and says: "The contending parties have exhibited a most unchristian and fiendish spirit. Every tie that

bound us together is broken, and hate and mutual slaughter have taken the place of friendship and kind intercourse. * * * I have always admired and loved our Union. I have believed it to be the best government on earth. * * * I have dreaded and deprecated as a fatal calamity all tendencies to disunion, and have always regarded the Abolitionists of the North as fanatics, who in their zeal for the overthrow of a comparatively light evil, would inflict the heaviest injuries upon the whole country, as well as upon the poor blacks they affected to befriend. I have looked upon slavery as an evil, * * * as best removed by the progress of the gospel, both among masters and slaves. * * * I have no doubt that the Southerners as a whole are the truest friends of the blacks, and that the race in our South are far more elevated in every respect than anywhere else on earth."

"In the 'True Union' I have written a number of articles, pleading for a constitutional convention, a peaceful separation, the recognition of the Southern Confederacy, compensated emancipation—anything rather than a war. * * * For this I have been denounced as a rabid Secessionist, and one paper of the North has pointed out the 'True Union' as worthy of suppression by the government. * * * My course as editor has been generally approved in this section,

though some have deserted and denounced me. * * * I have not, I think, given undue prominence to the question; I have not changed my paper from a religious to a political sheet, but have endeavored as a Christian to plead for peaceful separation or settlement, because as a lover of my country, and of the souls of men, I can see nothing but sorrow and ruin in such a war. In any case, I think the destiny of Baltimore is sealed. As a border city * * * her business will dwindle, * * * and she will inevitably sink to a low rank. My property is pretty much all here, and I shall probably lose heavily, but if it will give peace to the country I shall rejoice at the sacrifice. The future is, to human view, very dark, but God reigns; that is my consolation. * * * I know He will overrule it all for His glory and the ultimate advancement of His kingdom."

September 18 he says: "At the Association in Washington November 15, 1860, I requested it, to have prepared an address to the Baptists of the United States in behalf of calmness, moderation and union. * * * I was appointed chairman of the committee to prepare it, but as Dr. Fuller was much more widely known, and more capable of writing a suitable address than myself, I requested him to prepare it.

December 19 he was shocked to hear of the sudden

death of Mrs. Teackle, his only living sister. She dropped dead on reaching her home, after having made some purchases for the approaching Christmas. On December 21 he attended her funeral, and says: "I was very much overcome at the grave. There were buried my father, mother, sister Mary and little brother, while in the adjoining vault are my brother William Thomas and his wife and child. On the way we passed the grave of brother James. I am the last survivor of the family. * * All have died in the very prime of life."

"December 30. I have published the last number of the 'True Union,' and it is now suspended indefinitely, after an existence of twelve years. I came to this determination with great reluctance. The war caused many subscribers to discontinue. * * * One-third residing in Virginia, were prevented from taking the paper, and the advertising patronage was almost wholly cut off. * * * Last year the deficiency was not much more than \$200, which was met by myself and others. I did not feel it my duty to do all the work, and pay all the money besides. Another reason which influenced me is, that I do not consider the press free now. Several papers in this city have been suppressed, and the editors imprisoned. * * * I can-

not edit a paper in peace or comfort with a sword or a prison over my head, and I prefer to be quiet."

He continues his journal, noting all the important battles as they occurred, as well as any event of interest. As these are matters of history, we pass them by.

"March 27, 1862. Again has our house become a house of mourning. My wife's father, John W. Appleton, * * * passed away today. * * * He was in the habit of thinking much of death, and the summons found him 'ready to depart and be with Christ.' * * * We feel his loss greatly. He has been one of our household altogether nearly five years, and we esteemed it a precious privilege to have so venerable and lovely a servant of God with us. * * * He was one of the most tender-hearted and affectionate, one of the most unselfish and compassionate men I ever knew. * * * He was eminently devotional, spending much time in prayer and reading the Bible; sometimes he would read no other book for a whole day."

The entry for April 14 reads: "I have been looking over my account books today, and find that in the last fifteen years I have given away \$58,000, principally for building churches in Baltimore and Maryland, for domestic and foreign missions, for the High Street and Franklin Square Churches, and for educating young

men for the ministry. * * * I am inclined to believe that it has proved bad policy to expend so much money as I have done in bricks and mortar, in building meeting-houses. This ought to be done to a larger extent by those who are to occupy the house, as it will lead them to value it more highly. The best results have come from the employment of men to labor. The young men whom I have aided have turned out well. * * * If the Lord spares my life and gives me means to do so, I hope to aid others in the same way in future. It is the most powerful means of doing good."

"I have for about eighteen months felt a deep interest in Italy. * * * In October, 1860, I wrote an article on the subject, which was copied in the London 'Freeman.' I have since published all I could find bearing on the subject, and have written to our mission and publication boards. If the Lord will open the way, I think of trying to organize an Italian Baptist Missionary Society here, or to support a missionary or two there myself. A great and effectual door is now open there,* * * which it would be criminal to neglect." A note appended to this entry and dated 1864, says: "Brother Berg became interested in Italy from my directing his attention to it, and wrote to the 'Freeman,' which caught the eye of two English Baptist preachers, Clark and Wall. They issued an appeal

to the British public and a mission has been commenced. Mr. Wall has gone as a missionary to Italy. Thank God for putting it into my heart!"

In July, 1862, he writes: "Brother Adams was imprisoned for a month at Fortress Monroe. Brother Stevenson, a deacon of our church, was arrested last week on the charge of going South as a mail agent. Brother S. Sindall, a member of our church, joined the Confederate army about fourteen months ago, and was killed by a wound in the face at Harrisonburg on June 10. Our church has suffered much. Many young men from Maryland have gone South, among them W. J. B., W. G. and N. S. D., from our Sunday-school. No human mind can predict what will be the end of all this, but God reigns; that is my only hope."

On September 22, writing of the Confederate invasion of Maryland, he says: "There was much excitement here. Many sent away their valuables, and a number went themselves. * * * I was much perplexed for a few days as to the proper course, but finally concluded to remain. The Union authorities have determined to destroy the city before it shall be taken by the Confederates. I did not care to be in the neighborhood in such an event."

After Antietam. "It seems strange that such awful slaughter has occurred within seventy miles of our

peaceful home. We have even heard the distant thunder of the artillery. God grant that this dreadful war may soon cease, and the gospel of peace and love may prevail all over the land." On December 16: "The President has recommended 'compensated emancipation' as an amendment to the constitution. I think it is too late by nearly two years."

I preached on Thanksgiving Day at Dr. Fuller's church. Subject, "Songs in the Night;" also twice at night at Lee Street during the same week, more than I have done for twelve years, thanks be to God! Our church still continues in a sad state. * * * We shall be unable to support a pastor next year, and I know not what we shall do."

"May 20, 1863. On the 12th of April I commenced preaching regularly once a fortnight at the 'Rosine' Asylum, and have become deeply interested in devising some plan for redeeming more of these lost souls from ruin, or preventing the fall of so many into the awful gulf of woe. I have called upon Marshall Van Nostrand, who entered warmly into the matter."

"Cousin Locke (Mrs. Thomas M. Locke, née Stansbury) was removed to my house on the 15th of April, very sick. * * On May 31 she died, and June 2 she was buried from the First Church, of which she has been a member for forty-seven years. * * * Many gath-

ered to take a last farewell of one who had been so faithful and devoted a friend and servant of Jesus Christ. Dr. Fuller prayed at the grave. Of all the family that once gathered around my father's fireside, I alone am left on earth. The last link is now broken, and all but myself, I trust, are in heaven. The dear departed one has supplied a mother's place to me and my brothers and sisters, and has exhibited in her sacrifices of her own pleasures and prospects for others, a most rare example of unselfish devotion. When quite young she postponed her marriage to take care of her uncle, my grandfather. She promised my mother on her death bed to watch over her motherless children; nobly did she fulfil her promise. Never did a mother more faithfully and tenderly care for her own little ones. From her lips we first learned the name of Jesus, and when at last we grew to maturity, she was married, having postponed the wedding nearly twenty years. * * * She was largely instrumental in founding and carrying on the Union Protestant Infirmary. One of the rooms in the building was entirely furnished by herself."

"June 27. For more than a week there has been great excitement here, on account of the advance of Lee's army into Maryland and Pennsylvania. Last Saturday our streets were barricaded with tobacco

hogsheads, and earthworks were commenced around the city. That evening they began digging a huge rifle pit, 550 yards long, on my place. A large number of colored men were impressed and forced to work all day Sunday, the 21st. They made much noise, and my place became a thoroughfare." In the evening the place was illuminated by huge bon-fires, made from the rails of the fences, and by their weird light the dusky forms of the thousands of blacks could be seen working on and singing plantation and camp-meeting songs, the splendid volume of melody rising and falling as they worked, the whole making a picture rarely seen, and never to be forgotten.

"On Wednesday four companies of the Second Maryland Regiment occupied the earth works. In the event of an attack, the works near me would invite the balls and shells of the enemy, and my house would probably be destroyed. We have kept remarkably calm all this time, and trust that God will deliver us from evil."

"On Monday night, 29th, the alarms bells of the city rang at midnight, and the cry, to arms, resounded through the streets. We heard the bells, but kept quiet."

"December 19. I have been preaching for our church on Sunday mornings and at the 'Rosine' every

alternate Sunday afternoon, preaching more frequently in the past three months than at any similar period during the last thirteen years. My throat has been unusually well and strong."

"March, 1864. I still preach regularly at the 'Rosine,' and enjoy it greatly. Petitions which I prepared, backed by an appeal which I wrote, and of which 1000 copies were printed, were presented to the city council, which has granted \$1000, and to the legislature, which has granted \$5000 to the institution."

"July. Our rifle pit has been guarded for two weeks past by a company of Eastern Shore soldiers."

"The Lee Street Church has just completed a very neat and even elegant house, at a cost of a little more than \$13,000. It was dedicated June 29. I preached in the evening on 'God is a Spirit.' I have given the Madison Square lot and chapel to this enterprise."

"July 12. The past few days have been days of unprecedented excitement on account of another Confederate invasion. On Saturday evening as we tried to enter the park we were stopped by a guard, and found all the roads similarly guarded. On returning we found the battery on the adjoining place filled with artillery, and two cannon planted on the hill in front of my house. A company of 'Turners' have taken possession of our rifle pit. They have not been very

agreeable company. Last night I set fire to a hornet's nest, making a little light, when I perceived a great commotion among the Germans, and I was soon surrounded and carried to the captain. I explained my act, but he said he should have to put a guard around the house. This morning it was removed."

"November 1, 1864. I resigned the superintendency of the Franklin Square Sunday-school last Sunday. I love to preach better, and could not do both. I have preached once a fortnight at Sater's all summer, and we have a good congregation there."

"December 28. I have been somewhat interested in preparing the first number of the 'Maryland Baptist,' a monthly paper to be issued by the executive board. It is published as a specimen. If enough subscribe to sustain it, I will edit it throughout the year."

"April 10. General Lee surrendered yesterday to General Grant, with his whole army. The end of the war must be at hand."

"May 3. I feel unspeakably thankful that the war is over, and that we in Maryland have, by the good Providence of God, been like a bush in the midst of the fire, unconsumed. I shudder to think how near we came to destruction several times. To God be all the praise for our safety."

CHAPTER V.

FEMALE HOUSE OF REFUGE.—OTHER CHARITABLE WORK.

“A man he seems, of cheerful yesterdays
And confident tomorrows.”

—Wordsworth.

“March 26, 1866. Brother T. G. Jones left us for Norfolk the last week in December. I have been preaching ever since, with occasional help. The congregations have improved, and the church seems revived. The Sunday-school has elected Brother Hamer superintendent, and has collected \$100 for the new library, and now God has blessed us in the conversion of five scholars. I have been wonderfully strengthened for work, having already preached twenty-six times since January 1. It has made me much happier, and has, I trust, led me much nearer to God. January, 1867. During the past year I preached fifty-eight times, more than in any year since I was attacked with bronchitis, and have baptized ten persons. Thanks be to God!

“April 2. Rev. Wm. E. Hatcher was publicly rec-

ognized as pastor of the Franklin Square Church. Dr. Fuller preached a grand sermon from 'Behold the Lamb of God.' Bro. H. is a powerful preacher and a live man. The congregations have already increased, and the prospects of the church are better than they have been for several years. I am now relieved from its pastoral care, but I still have plenty to do."

Looking back a few pages in the journal, we find: "January 10, 1865. This evening was held at the 'Home of the Children's Aid Society' a very important meeting. About a year ago Joseph Patterson, Esq., of this city, offered the 'Rosine Association' a lot near Patterson Park and \$5000 for the erection of a building. The lady managers declined his offer. I thought it a pity that so much money should be lost to the cause of benevolence, and being convinced by my experience at the House of Refuge and the 'Rosine' of the need of an institution for the restraint and reformation of female minors, I applied to Mr. Patterson, who made his offer to me if I could organize such an institution."

"I first endeavored to interest the managers of the 'House of Refuge,' but after discussing the subject fully, they too declined to undertake it. I then applied to the managers of the 'Children's Aid Society,' who took it up with great zeal, elected me on their board, and appointed a committee to report on the subject.

Their report was presented last night, recommending an effort to raise \$25,000, including Mr. Patterson's offer, to buy a farm of about 100 acres and to look to the City and State to support the institution on the family system. I trust the Lord has put it into my heart. So far as I know there is no such institution in the world."

Not until March, 1866, we find the following: " 'The Maryland Industrial School for Girls' is at last chartered by the legislature, but it is a bad time to collect money, as prices are falling. April 2, 1867. At the regular meeting of the 'Industrial School' board yesterday it was found that the subscriptions received amounted to \$15,660, thus securing Mr. Patterson's donation of \$5000 U. S. stock and a lot worth \$8000. The 'Rosine' has agreed to transfer its property to us, worth about \$17,000, so that our whole property will be not less than \$36,000. This insures the commencement of the enterprise."

"I feel very thankful to God for the success with which He has crowned it thus far. I have prayed earnestly for His blessing and He has granted it. That large sum of money has been raised very easily. Comparatively few have refused to give, and many have given liberally and cheerfully. My experience proves that there are many noble and generous hearts in Balti-

more. I have been more than gratified by the prompt and kind manner in which they have responded to our appeal."

"September 20. We have this day received the deed of a farm for our 'Industrial School.' After having looked at about fifty farms during ten months, in which I spent over thirty days in actual visiting and examining places and about \$50 in railroad fare, we have taken 'Mt. Zephyr,' on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, eleven miles from Baltimore. A beautiful spot and entirely suitable for the purpose designed.

"December 8. I have spent much time in drawing plans and preparing contracts for the erection of an addition at 'Mt. Zephyr;' we shall not be able to open the school until spring."

"June 8, 1868. I have just returned from the dedication of the 'Maryland Industrial School.' I have had to attend to nearly all the arrangements for the occasion, at not a little expense and trouble. I have been repaid for all, by the enjoyments of this day. It was a most lovely afternoon, and the place looked very charming. After partaking of an excellent lunch, the public services were held in a grove near the house.
* * * I found that all were delighted with the place and house and all the arrangements. I thank God that

He has permitted me, after years of labor, thought and anxiety, to see this day."

This country home soon held within its sheltering walls many unfortunate girls taken from their evil city lives, who were here given at least a chance to return to the paths of rectitude and to become useful Christian women.

Dr. Wilson's youngest son, Frank, met with a terrible accident about this time, and lay for weeks almost at the point of death. This was a most trying experience and most harrowing to a parent's soul.

Writing in his journal, he says: "Some of the sweetest seasons of prayer and meditation I ever had in my life were about the dawn of day, sitting by the bedside of my dear boy. May God raise him up to be His child." His recovery was very slow, but God was good. In time he again became strong and well, and lived to be a great comfort to his father's heart.

Soon after this Dr. Wilson became very much interested in developing that part of the city in which he lived, and founded the "West Baltimore Improvement Association," to encourage the planting of trees and other measures to protect and beautify the property in that vicinity."

"May, 1868. I have long felt that we, as Baptists, were not doing enough for the colored population of

this city." In an article published at this time he urged the people to take more interest in their colored brethren. He says: "There is no place in the United States where the colored people are more in need of Baptist teaching; in no place are they more accessible, more intelligent, industrious, moral or more highly educated, thus better prepared to exert a powerful influence in hastening the elevation of their less favored brethren." As they had only two dilapidated chapels and a building erected by Mr. William Crane in 1854 for their use, and then in danger of being lost to the denomination, Dr. Wilson, uniting with Messrs. Hiram Woods and Henry Taylor, purchased a house on North street for the Union Colored Church.

Previous to this time Dr. Wilson had given largely to build a house for the first colored church, and had preached the sermon at its dedication. In January, 1869, he says: "I assisted in dedicating the meeting house on North street. * * * I enjoyed the service very much, and rejoice to think I had been instrumental in securing it for the colored people. How thankful I am to God for enabling me to see the completion of so many enterprises in which I was interested—the two colored meeting houses, the Georgetown church and the 'Industrial School.' May God help me to be more

devoted to His service and to be very useful during the coming year!"

Hereafter he often speaks of this work so dear to his heart, and throughout his life nothing so delighted him as to talk of the wonderful growth of our colored churches. He was always ready to assist them in every way, either by his contributions or by his wise and loving counsel. He often said that he never preached better sermons, or spoke with more freedom than to them; and times without number he visited their churches, baptizing candidates, holding meetings and doing anything in his power that might help them in their spiritual life and Christian activity.

We are again called upon to record a chain of events which, under the providence of God, brought about great results. In 1862, as before mentioned, Dr. Wilson had become deeply interested in Italy and the wonderful occurrences taking place there. He continued to agitate the subject, and in 1870 he was invited to speak before the American Baptist Publication Society during their anniversary in Philadelphia. We quote the following from one of the papers: "Rev. F. Wilson urged in a speech of great eloquence and power the importance of this society entering more largely upon providing Baptist literature for European countries, especially the Italian, Spanish and French." This ad-

dress was listened to by Dr. James B. Taylor, secretary of the Southern Board of Foreign Missions, and it made such a deep impression upon his mind that he soon wrote to Dr. Wilson, "The board is now ready to begin mission work in Italy if they can find a man to send."

In June, Dr. Wilson writes: "Dr. W. Cote called to see me and spent a day. I sent him to Dr. Taylor. He is the son of a former missionary at Grand Ligne. I hope now the Lord is about to fulfil my long-cherished desire of a mission to these papal countries." The hope speedily became a reality, and in 1871 Dr. Wilson had the joy of knowing that in Rome, that great centre of Catholicism, a Baptist church had been formed, under the leadership of Dr. Cote, the first missionary.

"July, 1870. With my wife, I returned yesterday from one of the most delightful trips I ever had. We started Thursday, June 22, for Newport, arriving in one of the most splendid boats at 2.30 A. M. I cannot describe the exquisite beauty of the villas and grounds, the views of land, ocean and sky, except to say that they are the most lovely I ever beheld. On Saturday we took the afternoon steamer to Providence, and spent Sunday and Monday in a most delightful manner. On Tuesday morning I went to a Phi Beta Kappa meeting. At 11, heard a grand address before the alumni by Prof.

Angell. At 4, attended a meeting of the alumni, and at 9 heard a good sermon by Rev. A. J. Gordon, on missions. Afterward had a meeting of the class of 1840.

"There were present, beside myself, A. Payne, Herman Lincoln, Coggeshall, Wood, Cook, Morse, Gaston, Holmes and Dexter. We sat around the table loaded with good things until 2 in the morning, telling our respective histories and reminiscences of the past. 'Twas a delightful meeting, only marred by the presence of claret, champagne, etc.

"April, 1871. To prevent me from setting my heart on earthly things, 'where thieves break through and steal,' on Saturday morning at 1.45 a desperate attempt was made by burglars to enter my house. They cut a large hole in the front door, then opened the library bay-window and tried to open a dining-room window. They then cut two holes four inches in diameter in the side door, setting off the alarm bells. I went down, fired a revolver twice out of the broken door, and soon had the police here. No other damage was done. I felt thankful for our escape."

Always a worshipper of the beauties of nature, and enjoying the companionship of God's people, he conceived the idea of purchasing Parramore's Island, off the Virginia coast, and making it an ideal summer resort for the Baptist denomination. This, however, he

decided to abandon, although with the greatest reluctance, as he had little time to devote to such a project.

He had become a director in several land companies, always eager to advance the interests of the city. He says, however, "I sometimes fear I may become secularized by so much business, but I watch and strive against it. I have preached several times lately on Italy and on Maryland, with a map of the State." His heart was at this time rejoiced by the conversion of one of his children and a beloved nephew. He says: "I cannot be too thankful for this greatest of all blessings. A true faith in Christ is indeed 'the one thing needful,' the surest guarantee of a happy, useful life, of a peaceful death and a glorious immortality.

"December 8, 1872. I am fifty years old today! It seems almost impossible. Oh how long my life has been spared, and yet how little comparatively have I done for Jesus! May my remaining years be more completely filled with usefulness than those which have passed away!

"For several months I have been interested in two important enterprises, the building of a meeting-house for the colored people in Leadenhall street, and of the new Huntingdon chapel. I laid the corner-stone of the first in July, and made an address at the other in August last. * * * I have been chairman of the

building committee of the latter, and have had a good deal of trouble, especially in getting enough money. I have preached there a good deal, and on November 24 at Longwood, at the constitution of a church there. I have received many blessings this year; have preached fifty-two times, held one protracted meeting in Cumberland, laid three corner-stones. I have given away more than usual this year—to the Baptist church in Rome, the Y. M. C. A. and the churches at Waverly and Leadenhall street, beside many other objects.”

May, 1873, he records the death and burial of the Rev. John Berg. He says of him: “He was my successor in three positions—as pastor at High Street and Waverly and as editor of the ‘True Union.’ He was ready to depart, having remarked the day before he passed away, ‘Sudden death, sudden glory.’ Thus are my cotemporaries passing away. May God help me to be ready when the summons shall come for me.”

CHAPTER VI.

PARTIAL LOSS OF SIGHT.—AUTHORSHIP.—IN-
CREASING AND VARIED ACTIVITIES.

“And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God * * * he did it with all his heart. * * *”—II Chron. xxxi, 21.

“September 7, 1873. Since my last record, I have been in poor health for a longer time than ever before. I lost flesh and strength, until I weighed only 107 pounds. On Thursday, July 27, I suddenly lost the sight of my left eye. Dr. Chisolm said it was the rupture of a blood-vessel behind the eyeball. At first I could not see my hand before me, but it has gradually improved, until now it seems like a mist shrouding all objects. On July 29 we went to the Jordan Alum Springs in Virginia. It was a delightful place, and the air sparkling, cool and bracing, but I was sick in bed several days. Since my return I have recovered, though still weak. This has deeply impressed on me the lesson of my frailty, and made me think much about death. I have preached only eighteen times since January 1, twice

on the endowment of Columbian University. I also was the principal agent in getting up a meeting of Baltimore Baptists in behalf of the same object. I preached on January 15 at the dedication of a colored church in Bladensburg."

Dr. Wilson was a most ardent advocate of the cause of temperance. Many articles on this subject were written for the religious and secular press, one of the most striking, "What Can Christian Young Men Do for Temperance, by Example, by Influence in Their Business Relations."

"September 7. A few remarks I made at a Sunday-school meeting on temperance led to the formation of a temperance society in the Lee Street Sunday-school. I have offered an amendment to our church regulations, forbidding membership to liquor-sellers. It will provoke discussion, but I am convinced that we ought to adopt it for self-protection, as our testimony against the giant evil of the age."

"I have also been prominent in forming a 'Social Union' of the Baltimore Baptists. The constitution was prepared by me from others I procured, but it has not yet gone into operation." Not until 1884 do we find this record: "The 'Social Union,' which I attempted to start in 1873, has at last become a success. We have had three pleasant and useful meetings, and I rejoice."

For some time Dr. Wilson had been busily engaged in writing a book, giving some of his experiences in business life, hoping that he might in this way be the means of saving others from many of the unpleasant occurrences which he had encountered. "March 13, 1874. I have this day finished rewriting my book on 'Wealth, or Individual Economy,' 207 pages. It has been a hard task on account of my weak eyes." "April 13. I have offered it to the American Baptist Publication Society, and they have this day approved of it, and I am glad. I pray God it may do much good." "June 17. I have just returned from a very pleasant trip with my two sons, visiting Pittsburg, Toledo, Cleveland and many other Western cities. Chicago is the most wonderful place I ever saw. They are preparing for a grand future. It is a wicked city, however. Sunday seemed a gala day; cars and omnibusses all crowded, lager beer saloons in full blast, many stores open, etc. I attended a meeting of the Y. M. C. A. at night, and never heard a clearer or more earnest presentation of the pure gospel. The trip was of great service to my health, and I feel much refreshed and invigorated by it."

"August 5. I returned on Thursday from a delightful journey of five weeks' duration, two weeks of which we spent in Portland very pleasantly. The views of the ocean and islands are among the most beautiful in the

world. On the way home we stopped a few days in Groton, Conn., where I enjoyed myself very much. One excursion to Fisher's Island was peculiarly pleasant. After a delightful sail, in which the bounding motion of the boat was only exhilarating to me, we landed, and walked about half a mile to the ocean shore, where the most magnificent surf came thundering in long rollers upon the beach, glittering in the sunlight and sending the white foam and spray high into the air. We could not resist the temptation, and soon were bathing in the dashing breakers. We afterward took a nice lunch and a siesta under a shady tree. During my trip I preached in Vineland and Groton, and spoke in several prayer-meetings in Portland.²⁵ The journey was of much service to us all, and especially to me. My health has been far better than it was last summer, or, in fact, for several summers."

In 1875, Dr. Wilson urged that a great effort be made to pay off the debt of \$14,000 on the mission churches and work in Maryland. It was resolved to attempt to raise the amount by individual subscrip-
tions. He enforced his words by his works. He says: "I have subscribed \$500 toward a centennial movement to pay off our debt, and have spent a great deal of time and labor for that object. I have had a beautiful certificate prepared, with pictures of the churches upon

it." While engaged in all this general work for the advancement of the denomination, he turned with delight to the more direct work of preaching the gospel, and we find him constantly helping in meetings in his own church and in others throughout the State, counting it his highest joy when permitted to win souls for his Master.

Especially marked in his journal we find the following: "Last Tuesday, February 22, I went to the 'Industrial School,' and read to the girls passages of scripture illustrating 'the way of salvation.' I was very quiet and calm, but the Holy Spirit blessed the Word. At the close every girl asked for prayers, and thirteen came forward and gave me their hands in token of having believed on Jesus and being resolved to serve Him."

From March, 1876, after the resignation of Rev. G. W. Sanderlin as pastor of the Franklin Square Church, Dr. Wilson again stood in the breach, and preached constantly until the coming of Dr. Bitting in the latter part of September. The entry at this time is most interesting: "Last Thursday evening our church had a 'sociable' to welcome Dr. Bitting. * * * After singing, etc., he presented me, in behalf of the church, with Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, in four elegantly bound volumes. * * * I was much gratified at this expression of appreciation of my work for the church."

December 25, 1876, he says: "Dr. Fuller died October 20. We have lost a burning and a shining light." Again, in April: "Last Monday Rev. Geo. F. Adams died. I have known and loved him since I was a lad of fourteen. He was a good and useful man, and the Baptists of Maryland owe him a debt of gratitude for his valuable labors. The Baptists have lost two of the brightest lights and most beloved ministers of Christ in the recent death of these two brethren."

In August, 1877, it having been decided to move the First Church into a new situation, services were held for the last time in the old "Round Top," as it was affectionately called. This was in many respects a sad day to Dr. Wilson. His family had been connected with that church from its formation, his grandfather, William Wilson, being one of its founders, giving liberally of his means and active in all departments of its work, while his uncle, James Wilson, following in the footsteps of his father, was always prominent in every "good word and work" connected with the church.

Dr. Wilson, writing of this, says: "I attended the closing services of the old house, dear to me from the associations of my childhood and youth, and made two addresses on that day. There my parents and relatives attended, there I received the hand of fellowship and was ordained, there I witnessed many thrilling scenes

during the great revival and many painful ones during the great disruption in 1843. I was, under God, the chief instrument in rescuing it and saving it for the church to whom it belonged. When I returned from Newton I found the church driven out and quietly accepting the situation. I aroused them to demand their rights. I conducted all the correspondence, prepared the case by more than a month's close study, for the lawyers, and had the joy of seeing it brought to a triumphant issue. But the old tabernacle has gone from earth forever, as we all who worshipped in it must soon go."

At this time, owing to the continual shrinkage in the value of real estate, Dr. Wilson's income was greatly lessened, and he was obliged to reduce all his expenses, curtailing as well, much against his will, his contributions to religious work. He says: "My greatest distress arises from the fact that I can no longer give to benevolent objects as I used to do. I daily pray for wisdom to guide me in these troublous times. I have preached a good deal since my last record, frequently for the 'Macedonian' Colored Church, where I have baptized twenty-four converts. I have endeavored to enlist our Baptist Sunday-schools in city mission work at Fuller Memorial Chapel, having read an essay on the subject. I have read two essays before the Ministers' Confer-

ence, one on 'Preparation of Sermons,' the other on the 'Golden Rule.' "

"I especially enjoyed preaching on 'Fellow-Helpers to the Truth' at the ordination of Rev. Charles Lawson to the pastorship of the Macedonian Church."

October 27, Dr. Wilson commenced regular services in Fuller Memorial Chapel, writing of it as follows: "They have been anxious for regular preaching, but being unable to secure a man, and my health being greatly improved, I consented to try it." In March, finding that his throat could not stand the strain put upon it, this regular work was suspended. He felt that he could accomplish more by preaching occasionally to larger congregations, than by talking to the small audiences in the new chapel.

In June, 1880, the Franklin Square Church was reopened, after extensive repairs and alterations, at a cost of \$5000. The historical sketch delivered at this time by Dr. Wilson was afterwards printed, and remains a valuable contribution to local Baptist history, going into the organization and past work of this church with great clearness and thoroughness.

For some time he had been very much interested in fireproof construction, and had endeavored in various ways to interest the prominent citizens. After a thorough investigation of the subject, he organized the

"Fire Proof Building Company," for manufacturing blocks for floors and partitions. He had the satisfaction of seeing them placed in the buildings of the Hopkins Hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, the Peabody Institute, Pratt Library and many other prominent buildings.

"December 21. About ten days ago I visited Wayland Seminary, at Washington, and lectured to about sixty colored students for the ministry on the 'Preparation of Sermons.' I was listened to with great attention. I have preached thirty times this year."

In August, 1881, his heart was made glad by the birth of a granddaughter, in the old home at "Oakley." He writes: "I pray that she may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and be a great comfort and blessing to her family and to the world." In the same month he was busily engaged in selecting a place in the city for the "Industrial School," or, as it was now called, "The Female House of Refuge." It had been found advisable to move from the country home, and the legislature had appropriated \$10,000 for a new building. After examining many places, the lot corner of Carey and Baker streets was finally decided upon and the building erected. By this change of location the usefulness of the institution was much

increased. The school often, since then, has had over seventy inmates.

In March he was much affected by the sudden death of Dr. W. T. Brantly, a loved classmate and life-long friend. He writes: "His death greatly startled our community, especially his Baptist brethren, who greatly loved him for his perfect, gentlemanly and genial manners, and admired him for his talents, piety, and scholarship. I gave a brief biographical sketch at his funeral, and preached in his pulpit on the following Sunday; theme, 'Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.' It was a solemn occasion; there was much weeping in the congregation."

Ever on the watch to enlarge the denominational borders, he visited Cambridge in July, with a view of establishing a Baptist church there. He longed to see the day, when our State should be dotted with self-sustaining Baptist churches, and never lost courage, or became disheartened, by the slow growth and repeated failure of mission stations.

"December, 1882. On the 8th of this month I was sixty years old. I never expected to live so long. My mother died at half that age, and all my brothers and sisters before forty-three. I was always considered one of the most delicate of the family, but God has spared me to be an old man. I have had many reflections as I

thus feel life slipping away beneath me. My only hope is on the Eternal Rock which God has laid in Zion, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.' I have been able to preach quite frequently. I greatly enjoyed the day at Sater's, at the annual 'June meeting,' where I preached twice to large congregations."

"May 28, 1883. I have just returned from one of the most important and interesting meetings I ever attended, the Bible Convention at Saratoga. I have been much interested in the question, wrote an essay advocating a separate Bible Society, which was published in the 'Baptist Nation' and highly commended. The Convention had four hundred and fifty-one delegates, from twenty-five States. I was asked to open one session with reading and prayer. I spoke twice and offered some resolutions, two of which were adopted. * * *

"The Convention adopted the grand and only true principle, called it divine, namely, that of exact and faithful translation, first stated in 1833, and applied it to all languages throughout the world, and yet left room for Christian liberty in circulating any version that might be demanded, and money furnished for the purpose. The vote was four hundred ayes to thirty-six noes, and the voters in the negative asked to change to the affirmative and make it unanimous. I have never wit-

nessed such a scene as followed—prolonged and continuous cheering, the wildest tumult of joy, with many grateful tears. We sang ‘Blest Be the Tie That Binds’ amid a general and warm hand-shaking. A glorious union is begun, which I hope is the commencement of a more blessed union for all the land, North and South.”

In 1884, Dr. A. J. Rowland was called to the pastorate of the Franklin Square Church, and entered on his labors March 2. July 16th Dr. Wilson writes: “He is an instructive preacher, has good, solid thought, methodically arranged and expressed in choice language. He is earnest and impressive in his delivery and very winning. He is a devoted and laborious pastor, and a man of lovely spirit and great tact. He has paid especial attention to interesting the young people, and has baptized twenty-five, mostly young persons. I have great hope from his ministry among us.”

One by one the loved ones and early acquaintances of Dr. Wilson were being called from the scene of their earthly labors, and we notice this record: “On Sept. 13, Rev. Stephen P. Hill died in Washington. He baptized me in 1838, ordained me in 1846, and was much loved by many members of our family. He was a man of blameless life, poetical genius and cultivated and refined intellect.” It is surely true that after one reaches the sixtieth year much of sadness steals into the daily

life from the inevitable changes, as well as from the realization that now the majority of life lies behind, finished and unchangeable. Dr. Wilson, while never forgetting the past and ready at any moment to recall his own experiences for the good of others, always looked into the future with hopeful interest. He was as ready to embark in new enterprises as many younger men, and even during the last days of his life, was constantly planning new movements and new schemes, for the advancement of the Kingdom.

On February, 1885, is this record: "I was privileged to preach a historical sermon at the centennial of the First Baptist Church, January 11. The examination of the records and history brought up many sacred and solemn associations, and I trust did me good. I also spoke at the funerals of Mr. Lawrence P. Bayne, A. Fuller Crane and Mrs. Hiram Woods, Sr., all persons with whom I have been long acquainted and associated in church work or reformatory labors. 'The workman dies, but the work goes on.'"

In the spring of 1885 Dr. Wilson, with his wife and daughter, enjoyed a most delightful trip to Florida. He says: "We were charmed with the walk on the river bank, at Green Cove Springs; it is embowered in lofty pines, magnolias, live oaks and other noble trees, all festooned and draped with long feathery moss and car-

peted with a great variety of shrubs and trailing plants, with frequent palmettoes, prickly pear, aloes, Spanish bayonets and other tropical plants. The sun shining through the trees, lighted all up with 'golden glory,' and on the other side, was a broad blue and silver river,' sparkling and dancing in the evening light and adorned at intervals with white sails, or passing steamers. I have rarely seen anything more lovely.

"On the 14th I took a plunge and swim in the Green Cove bath. It springs up at the rate of 3000 gallons per minute, and forms a beautiful sight, clear, bright, and coloring the cavern out of which it rushes a lovely green, like malachite. * * *

"The schoolhouse here and the colored Baptist church, each has for a bell an old circular saw fastened to a post. I went into the courthouse, a primitive affair, with the floor covered with sawdust, and also saw the jail, a wooden building enclosing a steel cage. On Monday we went to De Land, a new city, cut out of the pine forest in the last seven years. The soil looks like pure white sand, but it will bear noble pines and orange trees. The sidewalks are made of plank or sawdust, and the deep, sandy roads are greatly improved by coarse sawdust thickly strewed on them. * * *

"We had a delightful prayer-meeting at De Land, brethren from Ohio, Brooklyn, Illinois, Maryland,

Florida and England taking part. It was suggestive of heaven. On the whole I was very much pleased with the trip. We escaped severe weather at home, had walks and drives every day, and will doubtless derive much benefit to health from it."

"February, 1886. During September and October I was much interested in preparing a 'Jubilee Paper,' a history of the Maryland Baptist Union Association for the past forty-nine years. As I have been a member of the Board since 1844 and secretary for thirty-eight years, I was more familiar with the subject than any other person. We have grown from four churches and 345 members, to fifty-six churches, with 11,484 members. I was presented with a handsome arm-chair and a portrait of myself. Since then I have worked a good deal over a paper on the 'Sabbath,' which I read at two consecutive meetings of the Ministers' Conference. Several have asked for its publication, but I cannot think it worthy."

In October, 1887, his failing eyesight compelled him to resign his position as Secretary of the Board. His own account is as follows: "My resignation as Secretary was accepted. I have served forty years gratuitously, and the Association has grown from fourteen churches to fifty-seven, and the annual contributions from \$800 to above \$8000. Only Dr. Tyler, Joseph Mettam and

F. Helm are living, besides myself, of the twenty-six members of the Board which, in 1847, elected me. The Association passed some very kind resolutions about me, and voted to make me Honorary Secretary for life." The resolutions to which he so modestly referred are as follows:

"Whereas, our brother, Dr. Franklin Wilson, for forty years Secretary of this Board, has deemed it necessary, on account of failing eyesight, to present his resignation of his official position; and, whereas, the Board, after repeated endeavors to have him reconsider his decision, and at his urgent solicitation, finally accepted his resignation, to take effect October 1, 1887, therefore, resolved,

"1. That we hereby bear our testimony to the invaluable services so long rendered by Dr. Wilson to this Board and the Baptist cause of Maryland. These services have been given without cost to the denomination, and have been not only great and faithful, but have registered themselves in the continued harmony and growth of our churches. In all the history of our denomination in this State no man has equaled Dr. Wilson in unselfish devotion and earnest toil. To him Maryland Baptists owe the largest possible debt of gratitude.

"2. That we have accepted his resignation only because the necessities of the case seem to require it. Had it been deemed possible by Dr. Wilson we should much have preferred that he retain the position of Sec-

retary, with such assistance as he might require to attend to its duties. As this was not felt by him to be the best course to pursue, we have with the greatest regret acceded to his wishes.

“3. That we return our sincerest thanks to Dr. Wilson for the invaluable services he has rendered, pledging him as we do so our best wishes and our fervent affection, and hoping that we may long enjoy his presence and counsels in our Board and associational meetings.

“4. That in token of our appreciation of his past services and of our confidence in and affection for him we recommend the Board that shall be appointed by the present Association, and all succeeding Boards so long as Dr. Wilson shall live, to appoint him, and insert his name in their report to the Association, as Honorary Secretary, it being understood that this title shall carry with it none of the duties or responsibilities of the Secretary’s office.

A. C. BARRON,
A. J. ROWLAND,
O. F. GREGORY.”

His college friends were always dear to his heart, and it was with great sadness that he wrote the following: “My dear friend for fifty-one years, Rev. Heman Lincoln, died October 18. He was a whole-hearted, genial man, of extensive scholarship and true piety. He was one of the most vigorous and healthy of all my classmates. We little thought he would go first.”

In July, 1890, Dr. Wilson had a very serious attack of prostration, and although he recovered to a certain extent, after a long stay at Dr. Walters's Sanitarium at Wernersville, Pa., he never regained his former vigor, and lost that elasticity of step and energy of movement, which had formerly characterized him. We read in his journal at this period: "In October I presented my resignation as president of the 'Female House of Refuge,' after serving as the first and only President for twenty-three years. I felt unable to bear the anxiety and responsibility of the position, and knew I could not do it justice any longer."

This was a sad year. Added to his own failing health, several of his old friends were called into eternity. In January he writes: "And now my dear friend, Dr. Eben Dodge, has gone. He was the noblest man I have ever known, and, under God, I owe to him my introduction to the dear wife, who has been such a blessing to me for forty-two years. May the Lord prepare me to follow him, and meet him in that future life, where together we may adore and love the glorious Redeemer."

"September 5, 1890. During our absence from home dear Brother West died. He was eminently a good man, full of faith and benevolence, kind and judi-

cious, a real pillar of our church. His loss is a most severe one in every way."

"August, 1891. Last week I enjoyed one of the most delightful little trips I ever had. On August 4 I went with my eldest son to Harper's Ferry, thence to a hotel on Maryland Heights. In the afternoon we went to the top of the mountain, I on horseback, and we had grand views of the Potomac and Shenandoah valleys. The next morning we drove up Pleasant Valley to Brownsville and Crampton's Gap, through a succession of lovely views on either side. * * * We also visited Antietam battlefield and the National Cemetery. There are no walks, but the softest, thickest and most velvety turf I ever trod upon; the view from it is charming beyond description. * * * We also drove through Boonesborough to Turner's and Fox's gaps, the scenes of famous battles in 1862. We had splendid views of the valleys and of the distant village of Middletown, where we finished our day's journey. We attended the Methodist prayer-meeting at night. Next day we were driven to 'High Knob,' where we had a most extensive view of the Middletown Valley toward the west, and on the east an equally wide view of Monocacy Valley, with Frederick City and other towns, with the dark green hills as foreground. We closed our trip with a walk around Frederick. * * * This

trip is one which I have wished to take for forty-three years—ever since 1848, when I preached at Frederick and rode thence to Hagerstown on a stage. Western Maryland is fully as beautiful as Berkshire county, Massachusetts, but most of our citizens either do not know it, or fail to appreciate it.”

CHAPTER VII.

ANNIVERSARIES.—SICKNESS.—LAST YEARS.

“One in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition.”

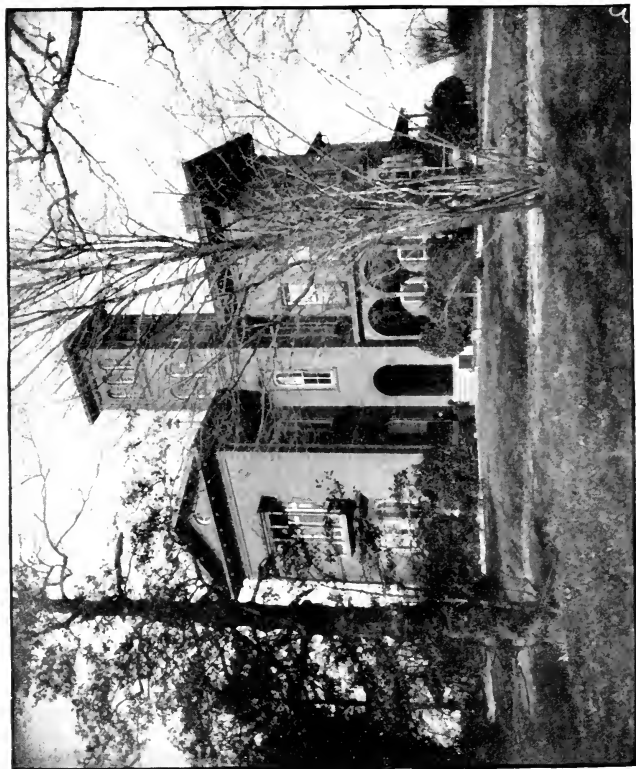
—Wordsworth.

While old age brings much inevitable sadness and suffering, still there are many compensations, which, under certain conditions, may even over-balance the shadows and throw much sunshine across the path of later years. The following interesting account gives one of the many gleams which came into the later life of this devoted disciple of Christ. “June 24 (1891) I returned from a most delightful trip to Providence. I went there with my dear wife to attend the fiftieth anniversary of my graduation in 1841. But eleven members of my class survive, while only five were present at the supper on June 16—Kendall Brooks, Elbridge Smith, A. M. Gammel, Dr. A. J. Greely and myself. We went over the class record, and had many sad and pleasing reminiscences. There are many thrilling and sacred associations connected with Brown University.

I called on Miss Mary Smith, with whom I boarded in 1836, and she remembered me as 'one of the little Wilsons' (my brother was with me then). There my entire life was directed. I was converted there in 1838, was deeply influenced by my friends, Clarence Hall, Dodge, Lincoln, Malcolm and others. All these things, and many more were brought into my mind during this visit. 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.' God has wonderfully spared and blessed me. May my few remaining days be spent to His glory."

February 29, 1892, just fifty years from the time of his first sermon, Dr. Wilson, at the request of his pastor, Dr. A. J. Rowland, prepared some reminiscences of the half-century, and spoke from the Franklin Square pulpit for nearly fifty minutes. He did not seem fatigued, but after taking his seat, was seized with a violent pain about the heart, and almost immediately lost consciousness. He recovered sufficiently in about an hour to be removed to his home, but continued feeble for sometime, and never again enjoyed the same freedom in preaching. After some reflections on the uncertainty of life, and his sure hope in Christ, he says: "May God help me ever to cling to the Cross as 'the anchor of my soul,' both sure and steadfast. I have received many loving letters and assurances of interest

and sympathy from friends far and near. This has deeply touched me, for I feel unworthy of so much affection." After this trying period, his family endeavored to keep him from all excitement of every description. He made no engagements to take part in any public service, and relied more and more on his sons, who watched him with tender solicitude. But love could not keep away the angel of death, which in May entered into the household so long unbroken, and took away its strongest and most vigorous member. As the journal states: "The strong staff, and the beautiful rod, on which I had hoped to lean in my old age, is broken." Many fears were entertained that the death of this dear son and namesake away from his family; the long journey, only to arrive too late, the painful return to the desolate home, would all prove too great a shock to the already weakened frame. But the Lord, in whom he always trusted for strength, gave him support in these trying hours, and it is wonderful to read his own words, written during this most bitter experience: "It was a sudden, most unexpected blow. But I love to turn away from all gloomy thoughts, and to cherish the sweet memory of what he was, and the glorious truth of what he is, and to bow with resignation to the inscrutable will of Him 'who gave and who has taken away.' His last words to me were 'Father,



Front View of House at "Oakley," Baltimore, December, 1890.

take care of yourself,' and I am glad that mine to him were, 'Frank, wherever you go, be sure of one thing, that I have perfect confidence in you, that you will always do right.' 'Blessed confidence.' The life thus ended was ever strong and true, and the words put upon his tomb by his sorrowing father epitomize thus his beautiful character."

"A faithful son, a loving brother, a self-sacrificing friend,
He sleeps in Jesus."

After this great affliction Dr. Wilson, feeling the necessity of having his only remaining son near to him, and fearing to pass the winter in such isolation from his friends and relatives, resolved to sell the much loved "Oakley" and move into the centre of the city. In September, 1892, we note this record in the journal, so soon to be laid aside: "A memorable day. I have this day signed a deed conveying all my property at Oakley, including my residence, where for more than thirty-seven years we have had a lovely and beautiful home. My children enjoyed the benefit of much outdoor life, and for many years it was indeed a charming place for them and our friends. Many happy hours have been spent here, and many delightful family reunions have taken place within its walls. The sunshine on every side of the house, was but a symbol of

the sweeter life within, of love and peace. But some sad scenes have also been witnessed. The funerals of Cousin Locke, Mr. and Mrs. Appleton, and especially of our dear Frank, have brought dark shadows over it. We shall leave it with reluctance and sorrow, but its isolation from our dearest relatives, its loneliness, its distance from the centre of the city and other considerations led me, after much thought and prayer, to accept an offer for the whole place in one transaction.

“I have for the first time in my life rented a house, and expect to move next week. I do not look forward to it with any high expectations. We are both feeble, as well as aged, and ought to think more about the ‘House not made with hands’ than any earthly residence.” This change of scene gave increased opportunities for walking, permitted more frequent visits from friends, all of which tended to stimulate the sluggish faculties and bring renewal of strength. His eyesight, however, continued to fail, and although a great amount of writing and reading were still accomplished, the much loved journal was sadly neglected, and we find only yearly entries, telling of the quiet, uneventful life in the new home. One little glimpse into the home life at this period is given by a cousin in some charming reminiscences. “In my mind there is a beautiful picture which I shall never lose, of the white-haired

father sitting reading at his desk. I think I never saw him without a book in his hand during my visit. The large study, where you and he and your mother worked and read, has many times recurred to me as one of the pleasantest of all the rooms I have ever entered." Of this room another cousin has gracefully written, speaking of the two who had lived in such loving companionship for so many years: "Over the mantel of the library should be written in golden letters, 'Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'"

After the removal to the city house, the summers were generally spent in the country near Baltimore. For two years a pleasant house near Towson was very much enjoyed, and the delightful drives in that beautiful neighborhood, are graphically described in letters written at that period. The little Baptist church was also a great pleasure, and he attended every service as far as possible, and often spoke words of loving counsel and encouragement.

He says: "I bought a pony for A——, and with my splendid mare, 'Empress,' we had many beautiful drives. No place in Baltimore county will compare with it in the number of excellent roads and the charming scenery. I was very glad, too, to be able to attend the 'June meeting' at Sater's church, where I had the rare privilege of saying that fifty years before, I had

preached in that house. The Towson Baptist Church was very near our house, and I enjoyed attending its services, especially the prayer-meetings, where I always made short addresses. Twice I led the meeting in the absence of the pastor, Rev. W. E. Robinson. I gave them a communion table as a memorial of my visit."

The summer of 1895 was spent near Ellicott City, the hills and charming views of that locality appealing especially to his love of beauty and delight in natural scenery. Nothing seemed to so elevate his spirit as a magnificent view. He would climb the highest steps, feeling amply repaid by the beauty of the scene spread before him. His children can recall, even from earliest childhood, his appeal to them to "look at the beautiful view," and the almost inspired way in which he would straighten his slender form and repeat some appropriate lines from one of his favorite poets, or when looking at some radiant sunset, he would reverently quote: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

During the second year spent at Towson he was much saddened by the death of the Rev. J. W. M. Williams, so long his co-laborer and associate in all his Christian work. Although still weak, and greatly overcome by deep emotion, he attended the funeral ser-

vices and paid an eloquent tribute to his friend and brother. We quote the following:

“Though a little my senior, he was so strong, so full of life and cheer, that I thought he would long outlive me, but he has been sent for, and Jesus called him home. * * * We have known and loved each other for forty-four years; we have stood side by side and labored together, and prayed together, and sorrowed together. * * * Well might I feel, then, that in his death I have lost a beloved brother, who has toiled with me in the work of our Lord Jesus. Our dear brother was one of the last links that binds me to the past, but the chain will be broken only for a short time. I will soon join him, the chain is now forming, never more to be broken, in our Father’s home above.”

Thus the current of his life glided away until we come to the last entry, written just one year before the Lord called him to his reward. “October 11, 1895. My health has been better usually, but my eyes are gradually failing. One is nearly blind, and the other growing daily more and more dim and near-sighted.”

After speaking of his pleasure in driving “Empress” in the picturesque vicinity of Ellicott City, he says: “I have preached three times for the Presbyterians, once for the Methodists, and addressed a Sunday-school convention. Once during the year I preached

for the Antioch Baptist Church, Waverly, and made a good many short talks at various meetings. I rejoice that I am not entirely laid aside, but that *I can still do a little for the Master.*" Thus ends his own account of that busy life. Even to the end his greatest desire was to serve that Master, to whom he had given himself in early youth, and to whom all his fullest manhood had been consecrated.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAST DAYS.—THE SUMMER OF 1896.—FAILING STRENGTH.—THE PASSING AWAY.—FUNERAL SERVICES.

“There is no death! what seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian
Whose portal we call death.”

—Longfellow.

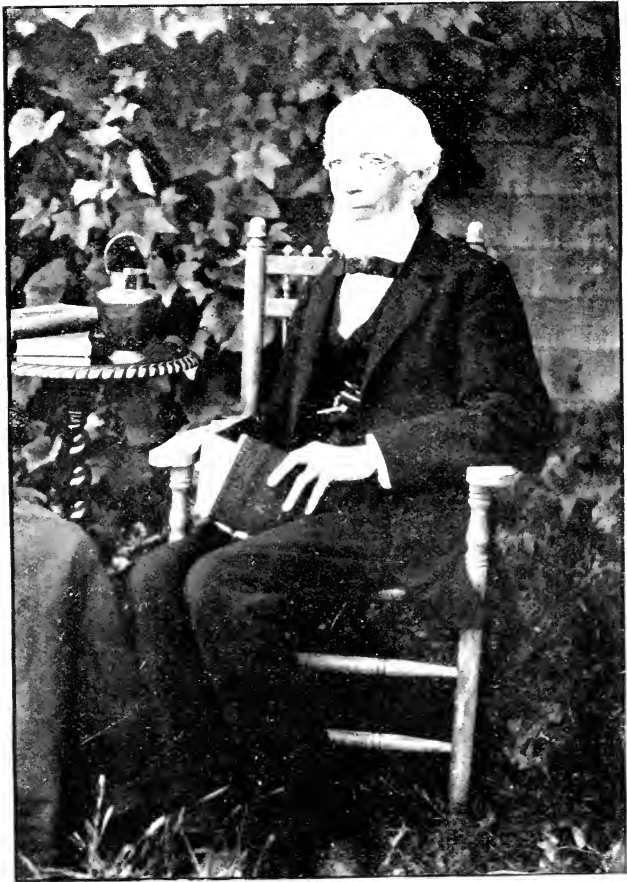
The winter of 1895-96 was marked by increased activity in many directions. Although for sometime Dr. Wilson had been putting his affairs in order, and had gradually withdrawn from the various positions of trust and responsibility occupied by him, never since his illness in 1872, had he enjoyed more freedom in speaking and preaching, and he responded readily to many calls in that direction. He very much regretted his inability to attend more of the meetings of his church, and often sighed for more religious privileges and more contact with the people of God. His spirit was as strong and willing as ever, but the flesh was weak.

In the spring of this year he enjoyed speaking at the

Waverly Church on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, and recalled many delightful reminiscences of his family and friends. How little those assembled there that Sabbath day, thought that before another winter whitened the ground with its snows, both Dr. Wilson and Dr. Harris, the first and last pastors of the church, would be called from the scenes of their earthly labors.

In June, Dr. Wilson and his family went to New Castle, N. H., on the seacoast, a few miles from Portsmouth. Here some cherished relatives had taken a beautiful home for the season, and the combined families enjoyed one of the pleasantest summers of their lives. The beauty of situation between the rapid river and the sea, the freshness of the air, the charm of the neighborhood, together with the delightful society of so many of his loved ones, made it altogether an ideal spot.

For the first month Dr. Wilson seemed to have renewed his youth, and the long daily walks in the bright air acted as a tonic on his flagging energies. Discovering a little Baptist church in an almost dying condition, he preached there for several Sundays, attended the prayer-meetings, and in every way sought to keep the little life it still held. His love of nature, always an unfailing source of enjoyment to him, seemed to deepen as the years went on, and as the vigor of his



FRANKLIN WILSON, New Castle, 1896.

physical powers declined, appeared to yield him more and more exquisite enjoyment. Soon prevented, by growing bodily weakness, from active participation in the outdoor life he so keenly enjoyed, he many times, after an hour or two of silent contemplation of the beautiful landscape before him, has said to one who knew him well: "Oh, I have had such a beautiful morning, such perfect happiness!" And this with so rapt an exaltation of tone and manner, as to convey to the mind of the listener an ineffable sense that he had indeed been on the "Delectable Mountains," and that beyond the transient beauties of earth and sky and sea, so lavishly displayed before him, he had caught a vision of the imperishable glory of the Celestial City.

As he daily grew weaker he never complained, though the desire to live was strong within him, and his love for the beautiful never seemed to fail. One of his nieces, writing after his death, says: "The patient, lovely man; I shall never forget how sweet he was this summer; how grateful for the smallest attention. * *"

Again, a stranger who met him for the first time writes: "I am so glad I had the opportunity of making his acquaintance, being able to recall vividly his sweet and gentle bearing." It seemed strange to see him moving so languidly, stopping often to recover the needed breath. He who had always been so active, so ner-

vously athletic, bounding up stairs, often two steps at a time. It soon became apparent that some change was necessary, and although his physician did not anticipate any immediate danger, it was thought best to return to Baltimore.

On the 7th of September a last good-bye was said to beautiful New Castle, and the long journey homeward begun. Everything was made as easy as possible, and Baltimore was reached at 9 o'clock P. M. the next day. For a short time he seemed to revive somewhat, and enjoyed "the being at home" and the daily drives with his loved horse "Empress." But the shadows soon began to steal back again, and the weakness and shortness of breath continued with renewed intensity, in spite of the loving watch care of friends and physicians. On the 17th of September it was decided to leave his own house, and remove for the winter to the residence of his son, on St. Paul street, feeling that in such a crisis the few that were left should cling together. The daily drives were continued, even though the days were cool and dark. They seemed to be the only solace—the bright spots amid the gathering gloom.

He asked to be driven to all the well-known scenes of his past life—to Waverly, where was spent his happy boyhood; to the site of "Oakley," the dear home for so many years, now, alas, entirely destroyed; by the dif-

ferent Baptist churches and the localities where he had labored from time to time. Living over thus again days that were past, recalling incidents and the loved ones of the long ago. Precious memories will these autumn drives ever remain to those who had the great and inestimable privilege of being with him.

Only once, on communion Sunday, did he attend church after his return, and how he enjoyed it. But it was a great effort, and the week that followed was one of great prostration. He struggled hard to keep on as usual, but in vain. Sunday and Monday, October 11 and 12, he was forced to stay in his room, although sitting in his chair, and still planning and making arrangements for the numberless things he wished attended to. As someone said: "The dear man lived just as long as his body would hold him." His spirit was ever strong, and to the end he wanted to *do*, as he had always done.

At this time the Ministers' Conference sent to ask if they might call upon him together, and express the sympathy and love they entertained toward one who had labored so long and so faithfully in the vineyard, and present resolutions they had prepared on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. This pleasure he was obliged to deny himself, though he received a number of the ministers individually, and greatly enjoyed

his conversations with them. The resolutions were received only the day before his death, when he was too weak to hear them. A few extracts may be given here:

“He has been an active leader in all plans for philanthropic and reform work in Baltimore, and in all those union efforts where we have united with other denominations for a common cause. His presence in our pastors’ conference has been a constant source of pleasure and profit to those associated with him, and we desire to express to our beloved and honored brother our hearty congratulations that the God whom he loves and serves should have spared him to this jubilee anniversary of his ordination. * * * In presenting this slight testimonial of our loving esteem, we would earnestly desire to be found ourselves in the same line of self-sacrificing devotion to the work of the denomination and the cause of Christ, as he has ever exemplified in his life, and to assure him that although he has seen the friends and fellow-laborers of his youth and riper years pass away, that we who have the privilege of being pastors of Baptist churches in Baltimore will strive to push forward the interests that were always so dear to his heart, and to continue the work upon the broad foundations he has laid. * * * Desiring to celebrate this anniversary by some appropriate token, we present him with this simple expression of our love, signed by every member of the Baptist Conference, as a token that, * * * we who, by God’s grace, are per-

mitted to be in the thick of the fray, will endeavor, God being our helper, to maintain the purity of the Baptist churches of Maryland and the doctrine and discipline * * until the gospel of Christ is preached in every county of our State."

During these last days he had many conversations with his dear ones, and on Sunday afternoon one of them wrote down the words as they fell from his lips in somewhat disconnected sentences. On being asked what was his favorite text he immediately replied, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." * * "The whole gospel is found in the third chapter of Romans, especially in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses. * * all in a nut-shell. I stake my salvation on that text. I want you all to understand that it is my only hope. Nothing that I have done, or could do, would entitle me to heaven. * * Jesus only, He is all and in all. * * Mercy, that is all I ask. Onesiphorous was a good man, but Paul said he needed mercy: * * For this is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. He came to give His life a ransom for many. * * Paul knew; he said, 'Not having my own righteousness,' etc. * * It is my only hope; what I have preached, and what I have

believed, nothing but the mercy of God; without that, all is dark."

Again during the afternoon he said several times: "My anchor holds," and asked for the hymn in which the lines occur. When it was read to him he said: "Yes, that is true." On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand." He then spoke of his last sermon, from the text: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He seemed to rejoice that he had preached from that text, and gave a slight outline of what he had said. "The central idea was life, and the different heads formed an acrostic, which could be easily remembered.

"Like Christ,
In Christ,
For Christ,
Eternal life."

Although he said little about dying, he was perfectly ready and willing to go. He would rather have lived longer, and worked more, for his beloved Master, but when the summons came, he as ever yielded to God's will with beautiful resignation. In speaking about heaven he said: "All I want to know is in the fourteenth chapter of John: 'I go to prepare a place for you. * * I will come again and receive you unto Myself.' Jesus prepared the place, Jesus there, that

makes heaven." "My Father's House * * better things for us, * * I have lived a long life, I am content."

After a night of great suffering and weariness, he sank into a semi-conscious state that lasted throughout Tuesday. At intervals he roused somewhat, but never spoke connectedly on any subject, the drowsiness ever deepening until at ten minutes after twelve Wednesday morning, October 14, his spirit passed into everlasting light and his earthly home was left desolate.

As soon as the sad news became known telegrams and letters came from all over the country, and loving friends, themselves stricken with grief, flocked to the house of mourning. The simple funeral services at the house, reading of the scriptures and prayer by his pastor, Rev. S. W. Melton, were followed by the more extended service at the Franklin Square Church, where the different city ministers took part and the congregation was permitted to look once more upon the face of him they so loved and revered. Among the many beautiful floral tributes was one sent by the girls of the Female House of Refuge, "who received the news of his death with much emotion, and gave of their own little store to procure this token of their love and esteem."

At the closing of this beautiful October day the mor-

tal remains of the beloved minister of Christ, were laid to rest with those of his father and mother, and of his dearly beloved son, in the vault at Greenmount.

“The memory of the just is blessed.”

*

CHAPTER IX.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”—Psalm xxxvii.

This simple life story would be incomplete were there no mention of those personal characteristics, known only to his family and to those near relatives and friends who shared with them the privilege of his close companionship. In his home he was ever a delightful companion. His children looked upon him as their dearest friend, and came to him with the greatest freedom, telling him all their little troubles and joys, always sure of finding perfect sympathy and understanding.

Many delightful hours has he spent with them, and “to go with father” was always considered a high privilege, for did he not anticipate all the childish desire for information, pointing out all the objects of interest and patiently explaining the many whys and wherefores that so constantly come into the brain of an active child.

With his skilful pencil he would entertain the little group by the wonderful sketches and scenes that so easily grew into being under his practiced fingers, often illustrating continued stories, that were ever a delight to the trio. Again, making the Bible lessons more vivid with his graphic pictures. As his children grew older he still remained their cherished companion and confidante, his sons never outgrowing their childish habit of telling him everything of interest that occurred in their daily lives.

As the years passed, bringing old age with steps so slow and gentle, that its approach was hardly perceptible, he cared less and less for general society, but was entirely content with his own little circle. "What can I want more," he would often say, "when I have with me those whom I love best on earth?" While preserving to the last a vivid, almost youthful interest in the every-day life of those around him, nothing annoyed him more than any form of gossip, and his instant and continued silence when the conversation assumed a personal turn was always a more eloquent rebuke than the severest censure in words would have been.

Few besides that inner circle knew that with his intense devotion to the cause of Christ, which always commanded his most earnest and loving service, there was also a poetic quality, a passionate love of the beau-

tiful in nature and in art. From his facile pen there flowed many delightful verses, most of them of too intimate and personal a nature to be recorded here. The following lines, written when little more than a boy, indicate the youthful promise and the poetic temperament:

LINES ON THE DEATH OF REV. WM. H. BOTT,
NOVEMBER 26, 1841.

“Let Zion shroud her beauteous head
And weep, in mourning clad,
For one is numbered with the dead
Who made her children glad.
To weary mortals sick of earth,
Welcome the monster’s sting;
His hopes had just bloomed into birth,
His life was in its spring.

“His heart a sacred altar burned
With pure devotion’s fire;
Oft to the place of prayer he turned
With Jesus to retire.
In virtue’s cause he might have stood,
A glorious beacon light,
To guide the footsteps of the good,
And cheer death’s gloomy night.

“What though erect his manly form,
And bright his youthful eye,
As falls the strong oak ’neath the storm,
So was he called to die.

Death's iron hand is on that brow
Which spoke the noble heart;
That voice is hushed in silence now
Which made the tear-drops start.

“Clouds may obscure the queen of night
And veil her silver bow,
Yet still she shines serenely bright,
Though hid from all below.
So does his ransomed spirit burn
Before the throne of God;
Let Zion from her mourning turn,
And meekly kiss the rod.”

No one ever loved the services of the Lord's house with more devotion. Wherever he went he would seek out the little church, and make glad the hearts of the faithful few by his words of encouragement and cheer. The prayer-meeting was very dear to him, and throughout his life he esteemed it one of his highest joys, and felt his enforced absence in the last few years of his life as a personal loss.

He was always interested in everything that affected those he knew, however slightly, and by his ready sympathy endeared himself to people in every station in life. The most humble and uneducated never felt embarrassed in his presence, but were sure of a ready hearing, of counsel, and, if needed, of material aid when it was within his power. It seemed as if his deep and absorbing sense of the Fatherhood of God and the

brotherhood of man, ennobled in his eyes the humblest and most obscure of those with whom he came in contact.

He was naturally of a sanguine, hopeful temperament, and although in times of physical weakness he would occasionally falter and become depressed, he never lost heart, nor ever for a moment ceased effort with word and deed alike to do good to mankind. Deeply interested in any movement affecting the welfare of humanity, his influence and powers were always found arrayed in the front rank of any cause which had for its motive the betterment of humanity, the advancement of his fellow-man. So we find him one of the first to recognize the great truth, that in the young lies the hope of the nation.

For thirty-six years president of the Board of Trustees of the Baltimore Orphan Asylum, he never lost his interest in its progress and welfare, and was profoundly convinced that the rescue of children from vicious lives was the best guarantee of a nation's safety. He was a Trustee of Columbian University at Washington from 1847 to 1872, and overseer from 1872 to his death. He was given the degree of D. D. by this institution in 1865.

He was also the promoter and agitator of the movement here against the Romanists, who were, even during

his youth, seeking to control our public schools. He planned and arranged for a great meeting to express abhorrence at the action of the Tuscan government in persecuting the Madiai and others for "conscience sake." Unlike many deeply religious natures, his sense of the eternal and infinite reality of the divine universe, never obscured his clear vision of his duty as a citizen, and with the best interests of the city at heart he practically exemplified the truth, that "He best serves God who serves his fellow-men."

Firmly adhering all his life to the Baptist principles, of liberty of conscience and separation of "Church and State," he was entirely opposed to the exemption of church property from taxation, and prepared and read before the Taxpayers' Association an elaborate paper in support of his position. He also wrote articles opposing as unconstitutional the taxation of mortgages and ground rents, and had them circulated among members of the legislature.

In person he was very slender, and of ruddy complexion. His hair, that in early youth had been black and glossy, soon began to whiten, so that his children scarcely remember when there was not a touch of frost in that thick hair, which in his later life became a most beautiful silvery white. That gentle, benign presence, watched for with such loving devotion during the ses-

sions of the Association, or other like assemblies, where he always took a prominent part; that venerable countenance, with its silvery crown, ever breathing out benedictions of peace, will be sorely missed from among his brethren, while the sight of his vacant chair in the family circle, the daily burden of a life without his loving companionship, can only be borne by the ever-growing realization of his present glory, that for him "To depart and be with Christ is far better."

CHAPTER X.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

“The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust.”

—Tate and Brady.

From Dr. George B. Taylor, Rome, Italy:

“Yesterday I heard with a shock of pain, followed by depression, of the death of Dr. Franklin Wilson. My cry was, ‘Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, the faithful fail from the children of men.’

“Since then I have been thinking much of you, and commending you all to the God of all comfort. Ah, how great is your loss! For nearly half a century you have walked by the side of one of the best men God ever made. Few, if any, outside of your home know as well as I the goodness and sweetness and deep piety of Dr. Wilson, and by so much as he was, beyond most, worthy of love and esteem, is your affliction great in a sense not to be expressed in words. My own loss is great, for he was ever kind to me, a wise, helpful friend—aye, more than a friend, an affectionate elder brother. He has been a part of my life for forty years, so that I

feel as if a pillar was gone, one next to my own father and mother. For him death is but a translation to the world of perfect blessedness. We must just try to follow him as he followed Christ. * * *

Dr. Charles Taylor, Wake Forrest College, N. C.:

"He could say with truth, as his Master said, 'It is finished.' After a long life, crowded with usefulness and crowned with victory, Brother Wilson has gone home to heaven.

"I do not know that I have ever been brought into contact with a man who impressed me as being more Christlike. Along with deep convictions, there was a peculiar gentleness of manner which characterized him. By his example and by his beautiful spirit he preached more eloquently and effectively than many to whom more of utterance had not been denied. It was with him as some one said of Baxter, '*His life was a finger always pointing to heaven.*'"

Dr. A. E. Dickinson, of the "Religious Herald:"

"He was one of the best of men. My own heart was bound to him from the first day I made his acquaintance."

Dr. A. J. Rowland, his pastor for eleven years:

"No man I ever know was dearer to me than Dr.

Wilson, and there never was a man whose friendship I valued more. I could not have loved him more if he had been my own father or brother. Some of the sweetest memories of my life will be connected with him. He was my right hand in the pastorate, my counsel in hours of doubt and my constant inspiration. I do not like to think that I will see his kindly face no more on earth. His departure makes a void in my heart and life that nothing can fill. * * * And again, with all his attainments, he was as humble as a child, and had attained as nearly perfect a character as men are likely to secure in this world."

Rev. E. Y. Mullins, Newton, Mass.:

"Few of the many noble men I have known have impressed me and benefited me as did Dr. Wilson. For manliness of the highest type, strength combined with gentleness, for purity and elevation of character, for clear judgment and practical wisdom, for unswerving loyalty to Christ and truth, and withal for winningness and loveliness of spirit, I have rarely seen his equal. Grand, noble man; he has gone to his own place; with Christ. * * *"

Rev. W. E. Robertson, Towson:

"I often think with pleasure of the two summers he spent in Towson, and always felt that he was

such a help to me in my work. I was ever glad to avail myself of an opportunity to hear his words of wisdom and his wise counsels. I felt towards him as a son to a father. * * * Our entire church loved him and appreciated the help he has frequently given in various ways."

Huntingdon Baptist Church, Waverly:

"It is with deepest, heartfelt regret that we learn of the death of one who we looked upon as the father of our flock and the first pastor of this church; who so tenderly and faithfully cared for and watched over this part of the Lord's cause here in its infancy, and through whose efforts we now enjoy the full benefits of a prosperous church which has been the instrument of directing many a sin-tossed soul to that eternal haven of rest, who will greet him on those shores. Truly a good man has fallen asleep in Jesus; thereby we as a church, and our denomination in this city have sustained a great loss."

Superintendent of the "Female House of Refuge:"

"I sincerely loved him. He was one of the best earthly friends to me and mine I ever had. He was a man of splendid executive ability, a wise counselor and a true friend. In his death earth has lost one of its brightest jewels."

From former members of High Street Church:

“We loved and revered our dear Brother Wilson beyond the power of words to express. Such a noble, godly, Christlike man—who could do otherwise that knew him? His beautiful life, so full of faith and good works, his ministry in the gospel, influence and example, wide and far-reaching, will all be missed. But what unspeakable happiness is his now, in the presence of that Saviour whom he loved, honored and served so faithfully!

“‘Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’”

From young members of Franklin Square Church:

“In the death of Dr. Wilson each one of us is conscious of a personal loss. We cannot but miss the example of that consecrated Christian life.”

From some who have been helped by him in various ways:

“It was a sermon preached by him that was, under God, the immediate cause of my conversion, and I have always found him, as I always regarded him, my father in the gospel. To me it is a personal loss.* * * In my great trouble no one of all my friends gave me more soothing comfort than Dr. Wilson. His letter has been a stay and a balm many times when my heart was overwhelmed with grief. * * *”

“What joy it is to look back upon his pure and spotless life, his untiring efforts in behalf of poor lost sinners, his kind and sympathetic heart! Surely his crown is even now resplendent with stars.”

“Never have I known a man who so thoroughly impressed me with his unselfish Christianity. He exemplified in his daily life all those principles of religion in which he was such an earnest believer, and for which he sacrificed so much. Many there are who will miss his kindly voice, and gentle teachings. For myself, I can only say, that his kindness to me in an hour of sore trouble will never be forgotten while I live.”

“He was one of the few almost perfect men whom I had the pleasure of knowing. * * Such gentleness of spirit and pure Christian character are rarely found.”

From dear friends and relatives:

“Since the news came I have been thinking of my association with him, of the weeks spent under his roof, when he treated me with the affection as of a father, and as a companion. Many kind words of advice, of explanation of the Bible, etc., come back to me now. Above all, there was his courteous Christian spirit, gentle and attractive.

“I can testify to his unvarying kindness to all whose

lives touched his, and I look back lovingly at his devotion to me, when I was in sore need of a friend."

"Your father always seemed to me quite different from anyone else in his exquisite gentleness and justice of spirit, and I loved and admired him much more than I can tell you."

"I loved him dearly, and I have always considered him the best man in all this world of sin and sorrow."

"I don't think I ever knew such a Christian man as he was, nor so humble and noble a one."

"His was a beautiful and noble life."

"He was very near my heart, and all the memories of childhood are associated with his loving, gentle influence."

"All our family owe him a lasting remembrance. His great kindness can never be forgotten—how generous to all."

"He was the best man that ever lived, and I always felt he was like Enoch, he walked with God. I feel as if heaven were richer for his coming."

"In all my long observation, I have never known one

who better filled out the picture of a perfect man, and who may be held up as a model of noble manhood, and as a pattern Christian gentleman."

From a prominent lawyer of Baltimore:

"I have known your father for many years, and, while I have not seen much of him in recent years, and the difference in age has forbidden anything like intimacy, yet my relations with him have always been so kindly and pleasant that I have always regarded him as a friend, and learned to appreciate his high sense of duty, his noble nature and amiable qualities. I have always thought he was one of the best of men in all his relations, both as respects his family and as a citizen, with a distinguishing sense of what was just and right that governed him in all his acts, and I only regret that I did not know him intimately. You should be proud of the reputation he has left behind him, as I believe no one who lives, can truthfully say a word that can reflect upon his good name in any relation of life."

Dr. John Pollard, from an article in the "Religious Herald":

"He was a man of highest character. He lived for the good he could do. His time, his wealth, his voice, his pen, were all at the service of the cause for which Jesus stained with His blood the rugged cross. He

was modest, but courageous, charitable, but true as steel to every conviction."

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy!

"The pains of death are past,
Labor and sorrow cease,
And, life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.

"Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy now employ;
And, while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."

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