

JOSEPH FEWSMITH

---

A QUARTER CENTURY

BX  
9211  
.N57107,  
F48  
1877



BX 9211 .N57107 F48 1877  
Fewsmith, J. 1816-1888.  
A quarter century

*ny*  
*Newark* *2/25*

A QUARTER CENTURY

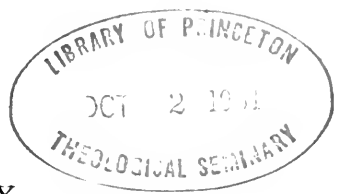
IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

NEWARK, N. J.



G-33.9  
F4368 q



A QUARTER CENTURY.

---

# THE SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

NEWARK, N. J.,

BY THE PASTOR,

JOSEPH FEWSMITH, D. D.,

ON THE

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS INSTALLATION,

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1876.

*PUBLISHED BY THE CONGREGATION.*

NEWARK, N. J. :  
A. STEPHEN HOLBROOK, STEAM PRINTER, 11 MECHANIC STREET.  
1877.



# S E R M O N .

---

DEUT. VIII: 2.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.

ACTS XXVI: 22, 23.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Both gratitude and duty suggest the propriety of reviewing from time to time the years that are past, that we may the more distinctly call to mind the goodness of the Lord, and may praise Him. Such a review also furnishes us sources of encouragement and counsel, as we go forward into the unknown future. It is well for us to pause and think that our lives are not "parceled out" by ourselves, and that the strength by which we have lived and accomplished anything was not simply our own. It was the Lord our God who led us all these years; who appointed to us our discipline; who gave us our prosperity. We continue unto this day because we have obtained help of God.

Such a review, too, will furnish enough to make us humble, and to prevent our hearts saying in their pride: "My power, and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth;" will call us to bow before the Lord with confession, as well as thanksgiving, and with renewed purpose to remember Him, and to "keep His commandments."

And it is a happy thing when one reviewing his life can discern that even amid much weakness and imperfection he has faithfully served God ; a happy thing when he can use Paul's language, when, nearing the close of his ministry, he asserts that he has been faithful in bearing the testimony of the Gospel to all classes of his fellow men, and has preached only the truth as it is contained in the Scriptures, and illustrated in the sufferings and death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in its power to enlighten and save those who receive it.

Five years ago to-day, I preached to you a sermon on the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of my pastorate among you, in which I glanced briefly at some points made prominent in a review of the past twenty years. Now I complete a quarter of a century of service among you. It will be almost impossible entirely to avoid repetition of thoughts and statements then presented ; and the sermon then preached, and in your hands as a printed history, must modify, somewhat, my present review of our relations to each other, and the history of my ministry during the twenty-five years. I hear a voice saying to me, " thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no : that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land—a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, wherein thou



shalt eat bread without scarceness. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant, which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.”

I trust that both you and I have learned some of these lessons; and I think I can say—“Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” What Paul preached I have endeavored to preach; and nothing else. Taking the Bible as the revelation of God, and thus the only authoritative source of religious knowledge, I have endeavored to learn its teachings; and having found the life, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to be its central and life-inspiring truth, I have preached, according to my ability, the gospel of salvation through faith in him—a present salvation, the beginning of a glorious eternal life: Jesus, the light and life of those who believe in Him, now and forever.

I accepted your invitation to be your Pastor in the summer of 1851, while I was occupying a professorship in the Auburn Theological Seminary. Of the committee who conveyed your call to me, one (Jos. A. Bowles) has gone to his home in heaven, one (Silas H. Kitchell) some years ago removed to a dis-

tant western city, the third (Isaac Van Wagenen) is still with us in active service of the Church and his Lord. On the 9th of November of that year, I preached my first sermon as your minister, taking for my text—Coloss. iii: 11—“Christ is all and in all”; and on the 23d of December I was installed as your Pastor. Of those who took part in my installation, two have died: Dr. Richards, who gave the charge to the Pastor, and Dr. Hay, your former Pastor, who gave the charge to the people. Dr. Hickok, who preached the sermon, lives in a green old age at Amherst, Mass., and Mr. Crowell (now Dr. Crowell), who presided as Moderator, is now a Pastor at Odessa, Delaware. How quickly these twenty-five years have passed, and what changes they have witnessed! And yet how gradually and almost imperceptibly have they sped along, making their many changes quietly and without great shocks, like a gentle autumn dropping the leaves upon the sunny ground, and then the bright spring-time returning with fresh breath of life, and new growths and gladness; the bells of time ringing with soft melodies and silvery tones, ringing out the old, ringing in the new.

When I came to this Church the number of communicant members was 399. The number of names now on our roll is 587. 871 persons have been received to our membership: 400 on confession, and 471 on letters from other churches. I have baptized 314 infants and 108 adults; have attended 718 funerals, and have performed 290 marriages. Of the dead of these years 234 were members of the Church; among them the nine original members who were living with you when I came. Five elders, Robert

Baldwin, David J. Hays, Morris Stiles, David Doremus, Wm. R. Sayre, and two superintendents of the Sabbath School, one out of office, Mr. George Rohde, who had been its first superintendent, and the other in the active duties of the office, Mr. Wm. R. Sayre, are also included in the number. But I must here remind you again of the fact that it has been my privilege to accompany to the borders of the heavenly land quite a number whose names are not written on our Church register, but are, I feel confident, recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. Every Pastor has such experiences,—and they are often among the most sadly sweet experiences,—when we can bring some souls hitherto estranged, or doubting, or timid, to rest in Christ, and openly and most credibly to manifest faith in Him ere life closes. I think of many such, and speak of them for my comfort, and for the praise of God's grace. At the same time I feel sad to think how they might have served God and enjoyed His service if only they had given themselves to Him long before, and how others, instead of being warned now to seek the Lord, may take advantage of their example to delay. Ah, my friends, the opportunity of repentance in the latter days of life is not vouchsafed to all; the grace of God which leads to repentance is not assured to any who trifle with present mercies; and a deliberate or negligent postponement of known duty to a future time may harden the heart, or prepare for it a terrible retribution.

This Church has borne a part in all the evangelizing efforts of the time; in home and foreign missions, in city missions, in tract and bible distribution, and other forms of Christian activity and benevolence. While

we have undoubtedly come short of the measure of our ability, yet our contributions have advanced, and our expenditures for Church work have become much larger than at the beginning of my pastorate, and we have been characterized by a punctuality and continuity of giving which are important features in Christian work. For the last few years we have adopted the system of regular Sabbath contributions by means of envelopes, with a good degree of success, though in the last two years there has been a diminution in the amounts given.

Our Sunday School, now in its 62d year, and enrolling, officers, teachers and scholars, 422, has had a constant succession of faithful officers and teachers; generation after generation of scholars has grown up in it, and year by year it has furnished many to the membership of the Church and the kingdom of Christ. Its contributions for many successive years to the American Sunday School Union, and to other agencies of benevolence and evangelization, have been liberal, and the educational effects of such habits of well doing and sharing with others have been most happy. This school is dear to our hearts, and God has used it for His glory.

Our Mission School, begun more than 22 years ago in a small room over a stable, transferred after a time to the chapel on Hoyt street built by the Presbyterian City Mission Society and subsequently united with a younger branch, and since taught in the lecture rooms of the Second German Church on Sussex Avenue, has for several years maintained an enrolled membership of over 300,—last year it was 343,—with a corps of indefatigable and earnest teachers. It has been

admirably sustained and is doing great good. We have always been interested in mission work. Members of this congregation bore part in the Sunday School enterprise at Roseville, out of which has grown the vigorous and noble Church there. For some years we sustained in large part a Mission School in the northern part of the city, and in 1853 we built and dedicated a commodious chapel on State street. After several years of service that enterprise was abandoned, and the building was given to the Third German Presbyterian Church, and is still used by them as a house of worship. The Second German Church is the result of missionary efforts, to which we contributed both workers and money, and in sustaining it from year to year this congregation has from the beginning largely aided.

For several years past we have employed a Bible Reader to labor among the families in the region about our Mission School. In a quiet way she has been doing much good, relieving the physical as well as spiritual wants of many suffering ones and carrying the light of life to many saddened homes and hearts.

The cause of Temperance has always been encouraged by us, and the activity and usefulness of our Young People's Temperance Society in the last few years has been a feature of special and great interest. In connection with the Bible Reader's work they have done great good in our mission district. Rooms have been hired and meetings held with much success; and for some time past a preaching service on the Sabbath evenings has been sustained there with encouraging results and promise of future en-

largement. Our home Sabbath School and our mission work are two most efficient and all important arms of evangelical usefulness.

God has blessed us in this quarter century with several revivals of religion ; in a few cases resulting in large accessions, but for the most part quietly bringing in little clusters of converted ones to the fold of the Church.

Our relations as people and pastor have been harmonious and pleasant. You have been kind to me and I have sought to be faithful to you. The Session I have always found to be ready and judicious counsellors. Various circumstances have sometimes hindered their carrying out plans of visitation, and other work which they designed to do for the Church, but they have never failed to seek what seemed to them to be for the highest good of the congregation, and for the glory of God. Between the pulpit and the choir, I am happy to say there has been an unbroken harmony, and I have always found them ready to adopt any suggestions which I had to offer, and to aid me in promoting true devotion.

I have said the congregation have always treated me kindly. That kindness has been shown in various ways : in your several spontaneous additions to my salary, until from \$1500 it has reached \$4000, with the parsonage, and in improvements in the parsonage itself, now somewhat venerable, which have greatly contributed to the comfort of my family—and in the granting of prolonged absences on two or three occasions with liberal gifts of money. Especially two years ago, you generously gave me the opportunity of visiting Europe, with part of my family—a privi-

lege which I cannot estimate too highly, and the benefits of which I trust will abide with me always, and perhaps be enjoyed by those who sent me abroad.

During this quarter of a century we have contributed not a few members to new churches which have sprung up in the city. In 1851 the population of Newark was 44,000. It may now be stated in round numbers at 123,000; perhaps it would reach more nearly 125,000. The population has perhaps changed almost as much in social characteristics as in numbers. There has been a great disintegration of the old families which formerly gave tone to society, and the introduction of new elements—with the loss, as some among us feel, of many things desirable, such as the simple friendliness, or the quiet dignity and courtlier manners of the olden time; with compensating advantages, others think, in freedom, and enterprise, and wider diffusion of general enjoyment. How greatly the city has grown in extent—running its streets up on the hills and over towards Orange, and out upon the meadows, towards Elizabeth and Bergen, and compelling the building of a new town on the other side of the river: how it has improved in architecture, in the number and character of its fine residences and stores, and public buildings and churches, and in the condition of its streets, (some of us remember the old “Spring openings” in our public streets, an annoyance and a disgust to pedestrians, and how a scow was drawn with horses through the soft mud of our great thoroughfare—we remember, too, what an advance it was when we could have an omnibus running through Broad street, where we have now four horse car lines—) how its commercial and manufacturing

interests and wealth have advanced, giving it a prominent place among the cities of our nation; of its numerous schools, its well managed excellent public school system, developed within the period of which I speak—of the general enterprise and activity of the people, and a public spirit too slow of growth and manifestation but of late awaking to energy—of these things I cannot take time to speak. I can only thus allude to them.

Twenty-five years ago, the only churches north of us were the Methodist Church on Quarry street, (now Eighth Avenue,) and the House of Prayer then recently built. Indeed to cross the “Stone Bridge,” just above Clay street, was almost to go into the country, and most, nearly all, of the houses there now have been built within this period. Since I came seven Presbyterian Churches have been organized within our present city limits, making the whole number of Churches of our denomination now, 16; to which should, in reality, be added the Bethany Chapel Mission, which is a large and important congregation though not formally organized as a Church. Ten new houses of worship have been built for these Churches, not including the High Street Church which was finished and dedicated soon after my coming. Besides these, three edifices at least have been renovated and greatly improved, and several handsome Chapels have been erected, including our own, which was dedicated in the spring of 1871. Our house of worship has undergone change and improvement, in its interior, and has received an organ. Its exterior still waits for the hoped-for change which may, if possible, make it “a thing of beauty.”



Meanwhile other denominations have equalled, and, in some instances, surpassed ours, in their increase, and in the costliness and beauty of their buildings. The whole number of houses of worship, as reported in our last Directory, is 83, including 10 Roman Catholic, 3 Jewish, 1 Universalist, 1 Swedenborgian. To these must be added 18 Mission Stations, some quite important, making the whole number of places of religious worship 101; besides some Mission Schools not included in this list.

The changes which have taken place in the Ministry of the several Churches are very many. I cannot dwell on them. Of those who were Pastors in this city when I came, only two remain: the Rev. Dr. Stearns of the 1st Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Dr. Fish, of the 1st Baptist Church. Dr. Brinsnade, then Pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Abeel of the Second Reformed (Dutch) Church, are now living in the city without pastoral charge. I can count up forty-two Pastors, besides myself, including those who are now settled here, who have ministered to these Presbyterian Churches during the period under review. But two of our Pastors actually in service died during that time; the Rev. Dr. Rowland, of the Park Church, and the Rev. Mr. Brayton, of Calvary Church. Several others, I recall only five or six, of other denominations have died in their charges here. I have officiated by preaching, and giving charges to Pastors, and people, at between 35 and 40 ordinations and installations, almost all within the bounds of the Newark Presbytery, and have borne my share in the general work of the Church, in the Presbytery and Synod and Assembly and public insti-

tutions. My name is the seventh in the list of Pastors of this Church. The time of my six predecessors, (including the six months' pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Prentiss) extended over just 40 years—my own term of service is more than one-third, about two-fifths, of of the life time of the Church. Of my predecessors, only one is living, the Rev. George L. Prentiss, D. D., who was settled November 6, 1850 and dismissed April 15, 1851, and who is now Professor of Pastoral Theology, Church Polity, and Mission Work, in the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Extending our view a little beyond our city limits, we find great changes in our Presbytery. The field that was occupied by the Newark Presbytery twenty-five years ago, has greatly increased in population, and in the growth and prosperity of Churches. Since the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church, formerly known as the Old and New Schools, our territory has been much restricted, and our Presbytery now numbers but six Churches outside the limits of this city. Of the ministers composing the Newark Presbytery at the time of my installation, only six, including myself, are now living in connection with it. Let me here bear grateful testimony to the very pleasant relations which have always existed between these ministers. Both in the Presbytery and in our Pastoral associations there has been a most happy harmony, and loving respect for each other, and united endeavor to discover and illustrate the teachings of the Bible, and promote each other's prosperity and secure the advance of Christ's kingdom. I doubt whether there will be found in any body of men of the same number and equal standing in scholarship and ministerial ability, a more delightful union.

The Reunion has been one of the most prominent and important events in our recent ecclesiastical history. It was a sad hour when in 1837 the Church was rent asunder: though doubtless God overruled the separation, and the life of the two distinct branches, for good in many respects. But it was a glad hour when, in 1869, at Pittsburgh, Pa., the two sundered portions flowed together into one; and when, in 1870, the one Assembly of the reunited Church met in Philadelphia, and addressed itself with one heart to the common interests of the whole Church, the common work of Christ. It was a grand triumph of Christian principle, of Christian charity and liberality. It was a healing of breaches, a subduing of animosity, an awakening of confidence, whose manifestation was beautiful, whose effect has been most salutary. The event has passed into history, and will adorn the annals of our Church and our country. The Church is putting forth her strength in the Lord's service. Already we are beginning to forget that we were ever two divisions; "like kindred drops," we have been mingled into one and are working together in love. We have a glorious Church organization, with a sound basis of doctrine, and admirable system of government, a wise mingling of law and liberty, of freedom of thought and investigation, with reverence for the carefully digested views of the Confession, and for the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures; a grand field for growth and conquest for Jesus spread before us; a well trained ministry; a constituency comprising sound practical sense, true enterprise and energy, and thorough education, and material resources; with Theological seminaries and colleges and

schools ; and a public opinion that demands spiritual life as essential to a Christian character, and that favors revivals, and reforms, and all healthy progress. A noble history lies behind us. God grant that the future may be worthy of the past, and of our high privileges. May the Presbyterian Church, of which we form a part, be true to her trust, and her opportunities ! May she do her part to make this a righteous nation, as well as to save multitudes of souls here, and in heathen lands, to the Redeemer's glory !

The period covered by my pastorate has been one of intense interest in the history of our country and of the world. The nations have passed through trials of war, and the cause of human liberty and the elevation of men to a higher plane of intelligent citizenship, has made no little advance. Look in what direction you will, and you cannot fail to perceive that man has made progress in these twenty-five years, that the world is not what it was a quarter of a century ago. Some of the most important inventions, some of the greatest improvements in navigation and manufactures, some of the ablest discussions of principles bearing on human freedom and social elevation, have occurred within that period. There has been a wonderful "waking up of nations," a terrible testing of old systems, and in many cases a complete overthrow of them. The accumulations of the past have projected themselves on our time, and made it one of the grandest periods of history. Right in the midst of its movements we cannot estimate them as they will appear in the light of the future. But with the exception of a few great epochs

there has never been a period of such intense interest and importance. Other ages tell on this. Other men labored and we have entered into their labors. But unquestionably we have been living

“In a grand and awful time,  
In an age on ages telling,”

and it may well make us serious, dear friends, to-day, as we reflect on the past, and ask whether we have borne our part, faithfully, manfully, christianly, in the grand movement. The growth of our own country has been remarkable; and we have gone through a great war, which severely tested our national strength, and out of which we have come a Nation still; the weeds of mourning entwining themselves with our garlands of victory, and remnants of animosity embittering some hearts, but more decidedly than ever *one nation*. under one flag, with one constitution, and, spite of all temporary and local excitements, with one undercurrent of patriotic loyalty. And as one of the grand results of the strife, Slavery has been abolished from our country. The negro race among us has been emancipated. Liberty has been won for all the inhabitants of the land. In the history of this quarter century, these two events will be prominent: the war for the Union, and the emancipation of the slaves. And as I look back upon the struggle, and try to review the course and position which your Pastor adopted in his conscientious endeavor to inculcate a Christian patriotism, to uphold Law and Liberty, to stand for the Nation and for God, I am thankful to be able to say, that I find nothing to regret. Besides this great strain and trial, our country has passed through seasons of commer-

cial disaster and distress—notably such a season was that of 1857. But perhaps still more trying is the protracted period of dullness of trade, loss of profits, bankruptcy, and disturbance of labor, and pressure of poverty, through which we are now passing. These are parts of God's discipline of us as a nation. May He give us grace to learn the lesson and make the chastening a blessing to us. The distress of 1857 was followed by a glorious revival of religion, and prepared us for prosperity and also for the trials of the war which came after it. May this distress be succeeded by a gracious work of the Holy Spirit, and a large ingathering into His kingdom—with a return of prosperity guarded by dearly bought righteousness.

And it is a matter of no little interest that the close of my quarter century is coincident with our national Centennial year. The events of this year, which has made us all more studious of past history, more fond of our country, more generous towards all other nations, more self-respectful and considerate of others, are rapidly passing into history. I have sought to improve its lessons as it passed. The Great Exposition, which has been the memorial of our nation's growth and our indebtedness to God, the proclamation of international courtesy, and the symbol of that universal enterprise and outreaching of the active human intellect and skill which characterize our country and our age, has almost disappeared. But its influences remain ; and we trust they will go not a little way to guard us against the evil results of the intense political strife which marks the closing months of the year, the peculiar strain to

which our institutions are now subjected. Surely the loyalty and common sense of the nation will show the world whom we invited to celebrate our Centennial with us, that there is vigor enough in our constitution and legal enactments to lift us out of these difficulties, and to guard against their recurrence; that our nation is more than a party, and that to the great majority of all parties patriotism is more than self-seeking, and Law more than trickery.

We must also notice among the events of this period, the large and numerous revivals of religion with which the Church has been favored, the development of lay preaching in connection with the revival movements of the last few years, and the special efforts to reach great masses of the people in our large cities; also the new forms of the Temperance Reformation and woman's work in it, as well as in Missions, Home and Foreign; and the increased interest in the Sunday School cause, and the study of the Bible. There has also been a large development of the spirit of Christian unity, different denominations working harmoniously together, and a tendency to unite organizations that are similar in their general outlines of doctrine and polity and history.

It has been a period of remarkable mental activity and research. Increased light has been thrown upon the Bible, by the advance of science in various departments—the discovery of manuscripts, researches in Archæology and Philology, in Geography and Geology and History; and the creeds and customs of the Church have been subjected to rigid scrutiny. No one fails to observe that the Christian preaching

and teaching of the day differ from those of the past : and there has arisen the fear that we have departed, or are departing, from “ the faith once delivered to the saints.” The fear is not unreasonable : but a careful examination will show that while the thing feared has come to pass to some extent, still in the main the change is in form rather than in substance ; in the modes of presenting truth, rather than in the truth which is presented as fundamental and vital : perhaps also in the philosophy of religion, the methods of viewing and explaining certain doctrines, rather than in the doctrines themselves. In some quarters there may be a disposition to substitute sentiment for sound doctrine, and a gospel of manhood for the religion which abases human pride and exalts the grace of God : but these are exceptions not more numerous nor larger, in proportion to the increased population of Christendom, than they have ever been ; and not at all wonderful in view of the waking up of the human mind that characterizes our time—the freedom of the press, the independence and earnestness of inquiry, the increase and equalizing influence of intelligence. If the pulpit seems to have less power than formerly, it is only because other agencies in enlightening men and teaching religious truths have come into prominence and extensive use : yet they, without the pulpit, would be shorn of their moral power, and they can never supplant it as a spiritual, renovating, and saving agency. I think there has been a gain in breadth of views and catholicity of feeling, in the greater prominence given to what affects the practical life, and in directing attention to the person and work of Christ as the centre



of Christianity. We have attained to some wiser, because more correct, interpretations of the Scriptures. We have, perhaps, in our preaching less philosophy, and more Bible—not merely more quotations from the Bible, but more of the Bible truth and Spirit. Just now there is a healthful reaction from the vapid sensationalism which threatened to submerge the pulpit and dilute Christianity, and a call for sensible, instructive preaching and teaching, based on the clearly perceived meaning of the Bible. The gospel of mere sentiment, the gospel of humanity, is at a discount. Men feel that they need something more substantial for the uplifting of their fallen nature, the saving of their souls. They must have bread from heaven to eat. There is probably less preaching of the law, less holding up of the terrors of the Lord, less also of abstruse metaphysics, and of the “dry bones” of theology, less positive demand of absolute acceptance of all the minutiae of the Confessions and their explanations as held by any particular school; but the old truths of human sinfulness, of personal guilt, of righteous condemnation, of God’s mercy, of Christ’s vicarious suffering, of sovereign grace ready to save—the living theology of the Bible—still maintain their ground, and form the staple of teaching not only in our Presbyterian churches, but in the great body of Christendom. Creeds may be modified, and theologians die; but Christ lives, the same yesterday and to-day and forever.

“Our little systems have their day;  
 They have their day, and cease to be:  
 They are but broken lights of Thee,  
 And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

Philosophies, scepticisms, disbeliefs have run their course—old ones and new ones are now dashing themselves against the rock of Christian truth—but they will die, while the word of the Lord abideth forever. The things “which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles,” these things which we have learned from our fathers and from the word of God, and which have been taught all these years in this pulpit—these things stand fast.

The world is in commotion. Great changes are going on in States, and in society, and even in the visible Church. But Christ is gaining dominion. The gospel has made wonderful progress. The mission work has had large success. The leavening influence of Christianity is potent, and silently working out vast results. An intelligent and careful writer (Dr. Clark, *Missionary Herald*, November, 1876,) has recently said, “the number of evangelical believing church members in this country at the present time is far greater than the entire number in Christendom in 1776; and it is not too much to say that there is more real aggressive power for the promotion of the cause of Christ put forth to-day, at home and abroad by the Christians of Scotland or New England than by all Protestantism a century ago.” “We are come to an age of intellectual revolt against the errors and the superstitions of the past. It is not confined to the realm of Christendom, but embraces large sections of the heathen world, and soon must embrace them all. The light of modern

civilization is shining in on the dark places of the earth, and men are waking from the stupor of ages.”

The river of holy water which Ezekiel (xlvii: 1-12) saw in vision pouring forth from the Sanctuary is spreading its deep flood over the earth, carrying healing to all the nations. Jesus shall reign everywhere.

Our history, my brethren, shows that this Church has not been in vain. For sixty-five years it has been holding forth the truth, and working for God. The original 93 are now represented by 587. The whole number that have been connected with it, is 2204. Here very many souls have been born into Christ's kingdom. Very many have been trained in Christian intelligence, character and usefulness, and this Church has been in this community a power for good, and a fountain of benefactions and of healing influences to wider and distant regions.

I trust that our work together in the past twenty-five years has not been fruitless. We have our deficiencies and faults to lament. None of you are more sensible of these than is your Pastor of his own. But we have abundant reason to thank God for good accomplished. Sadness mingles with the feelings with which we review the past. That is always so. Time brings many changes of sorrow and of joy. How many who were here when I was installed are here no longer! Nay, how few of the older persons are here to-day, who were here then! There is not a family into which during this period death has not come! Those 718 funerals; over how wide a space have they spread their sorrows! In how many hearts

have they engraved the ineffaceable grief ! The graves of our departed, what treasures they contain ! All down these twenty-five years they have been leaving us one after another, father, mother, husband, wife, child, sister, brother ! To some of us it is but as yesterday that they were here with us. Ah, yes ! the review of the past brings them all before us.

“The youth in life’s green spring, and he who goes  
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,  
And the sweet babe, and the gray headed man.”

It repeoples our homes, puts back the little babe in the empty cradle, and fills again the vacant chair. But the changes are not all sorrowful, and even many of the sorrows are beautiful. Seen now through our tears, they are surrounded with a heavenly radiance, like the rainbow that comes when the last drops of the passing shower catch and reflect and refract the rays of the returning sun.

And the children have grown up to be men and women, and other children have been born ; and the new generation steps into the places of the old. Thank God for our joys ; thank Him for our sanctified sorrows ; thank Him for sweet memories of the departed ; thank Him for the enlightening and softening power of experience and faith, which enables us to look back and see that the sorrow which was so great and at the time so strange, was a divine benediction.

But we have done with the past, except as we may carry its marks and its memories, and profit by its teachings in the future. We have our present responsibilities and privileges. No Church, as no nation, can live on its history. We must live in the present.

A Church must be a living Church, seizing upon present opportunities, adapting its modes of working to present emergencies, to the characteristics of its own time, fighting the sins of to-day, meeting the questions and problems of to-day, telling "the old, old story" in the language of to-day and so as to save the souls that are dying to-day; a living Church, not fossilized, and resting on its fine history, or its orthodoxy, or its social position; a living, working Church.

And so the ministry must be a living not a dead ministry: not a ministry going through a routine, and preaching and working just as it would years ago, without inquiring whether there is need of new processes and new thoughts. We believe in a permanent as contrasted with a temporary and changing ministry. Each system has its advantages. The Churches of Newark are becoming noted for retaining their Pastors many years. In general it speaks well for the Churches and the ministers. When a minister loses his interest in his work, or in his parish, when he becomes indolent or indifferent, or unable to discharge the duties of his position, then his ministry should close. Much is said about Churches desiring young ministers. There is no fault to be found with that if it be not carried to a foolish extreme: then it punishes itself. Many of our most influential, active and laborious ministers, held fast in the hearts of the people, are men considerably past middle life. The minister must take care not to grow old too fast. He must keep himself fresh and young, by unremitting study, by sympathy with the young, by a wide awake interest in passing events, by familiarity with

the sources of information, of amusement, of occupation, of perplexities, that are open to him, by a ready attention to occurring events and calls upon him, by a warm heart, and largely by forgetting himself in the stirring life of his people and his time, and by drinking continually at the well of salvation. I hardly know whether I am growing old or not. I should not think so at all were it not that I know that twenty-five years added even to a young man's life carry him forward, and that I see others growing old around me : and that I am called sometimes to marry those whom I baptized as children, and even to baptize their children. But no matter about the years, if there only be vigor, and heart, and aptness enough for my work. Having obtained help of God who has led me through all these years, I continue unto this day ; and by His help I shall continue to preach among you the glorious gospel of the grace of God, as long as He gives me strength to do so ; or until His Providence shall indicate that my ministry shall cease.

Let us, beloved friends, go into the future, with a bright and cheery confidence. Let us "go in this our might." May God grant that the future may be even brighter than the past. Oh that these swift passing weeks may witness the ingathering into the Church of dear friends to whom these many years I have preached, for whom I have prayed. The past records its accumulated responsibilities. A faithful ministry however feeble must witness against those who neglect it. A quarter century hence where shall we be ? How many of us will be living then ? Many doubtless of those who hear me, and myself

probably with them, will have passed away from the earth ; but many of you will be living here, and with your families around you will be carrying forward the work of the Church. Many of the children and youth here to-day, will then be the active men and women, upholding and guiding the energies and life of the congregation. In the growth and prosperity of the city during these coming years may you bear your part and enjoy your share, and be able at the end to say, "Bless the Lord for all His benefits towards us ; for these harvest sheaves which we are permitted to pile upon His altar."

A grand field is spread before us. Let us work on cheerily, people and pastor, elders and trustees, parents and children, teachers and scholars, work on, sowing in faith, with love and prayerfulness, confident that a harvest will come in the future as it has in the past.

" Sow ye beside all waters,  
 Where the dews of heaven may fall ;  
 Ye shall reap if ye be not weary,  
 For the Spirit breathes o'er all.  
 Sow, though the thorns may wound thee ;  
 One wore the thorns for thee—  
 And though the cold world scorn thee,  
 Patient and hopeful be.  
 Sow ye beside all waters  
 With a blessing and a prayer ;  
 Name Him whose hand upholds us,  
 And sow thou everywhere.

Sow, though the rock repel thee  
 In its cold and sterile pride ;  
 Some cleft there may be riven,  
 Where the little seed may hide.

Fear not, for some may flourish,  
 And, though the tares abound,  
 Like the willows by the waters,  
 Will the scattered grain be found.  
 Work while the daylight lasteth,  
 Ere the shades of night come on ;  
 Ere the Lord of the vineyard cometh,  
 And the laborer's work is done.

Work ! in the wild waste places,  
 Though none thy love may own :  
 God guides the down of the thistle  
 The wandering wind hath sown.  
 Will Jesus chide thy weakness,  
 Or call thy labor vain ?  
 The word that for Him thou bearest,  
 Shall return to Him again.  
 On ! with thine heart in heaven,  
 Thy strength in thy Master's might,  
 Till the wild waste places blossom  
 In the warmth of a Saviour's light.

Watch not the clouds above thee,  
 Let the whirlwind round thee sweep :  
 God may the seed-time give thee,  
 But another's hand may reap.  
 Have faith, though ne'er beholding  
 The seed burst from its tomb ;  
 Thou knowest not which may perish,  
 Or what be spared to bloom.  
 Room on the narrowest ridges  
 The ripened grain will find,  
 That the Lord of the harvest coming  
 In the harvest sheaves may bind."





Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01251 8082

