

Presented by Abbie M. Choate

The Transcendent Value of the Christian Sanctuary.

A SERMON

PREACHED SEPT. 10, 1884,

BY

REV. J. W. WELLMAN, D. D.,

AT THE

Rededication of the Meeting House,

OF

THE FIRST CHURCH,

IN

DERRY, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

SECOND EDITION.

DERRY, N. H. :
CHARLES BARTLETT, PRINTER,
BANK BUILDING, MAIN STREET.

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TO THE REV. J. W. WELLMAN, D. D.,
Malden, Mass.

DEAR SIR,—The First Church in Derry, N. H., and the Society connected with it, have voted an expression of thanks to you for your highly appreciated sermon, delivered Sept. 10, 1884, at the rededication of their house of worship.

The Church and Society also unite in the earnest request that you will grant them the manuscript of your sermon for publication.

With deepest regard,

J. MONTGOMERY,

Clerk of the First Church, Derry, N. H.

Derry, Dec. 23, 1884.

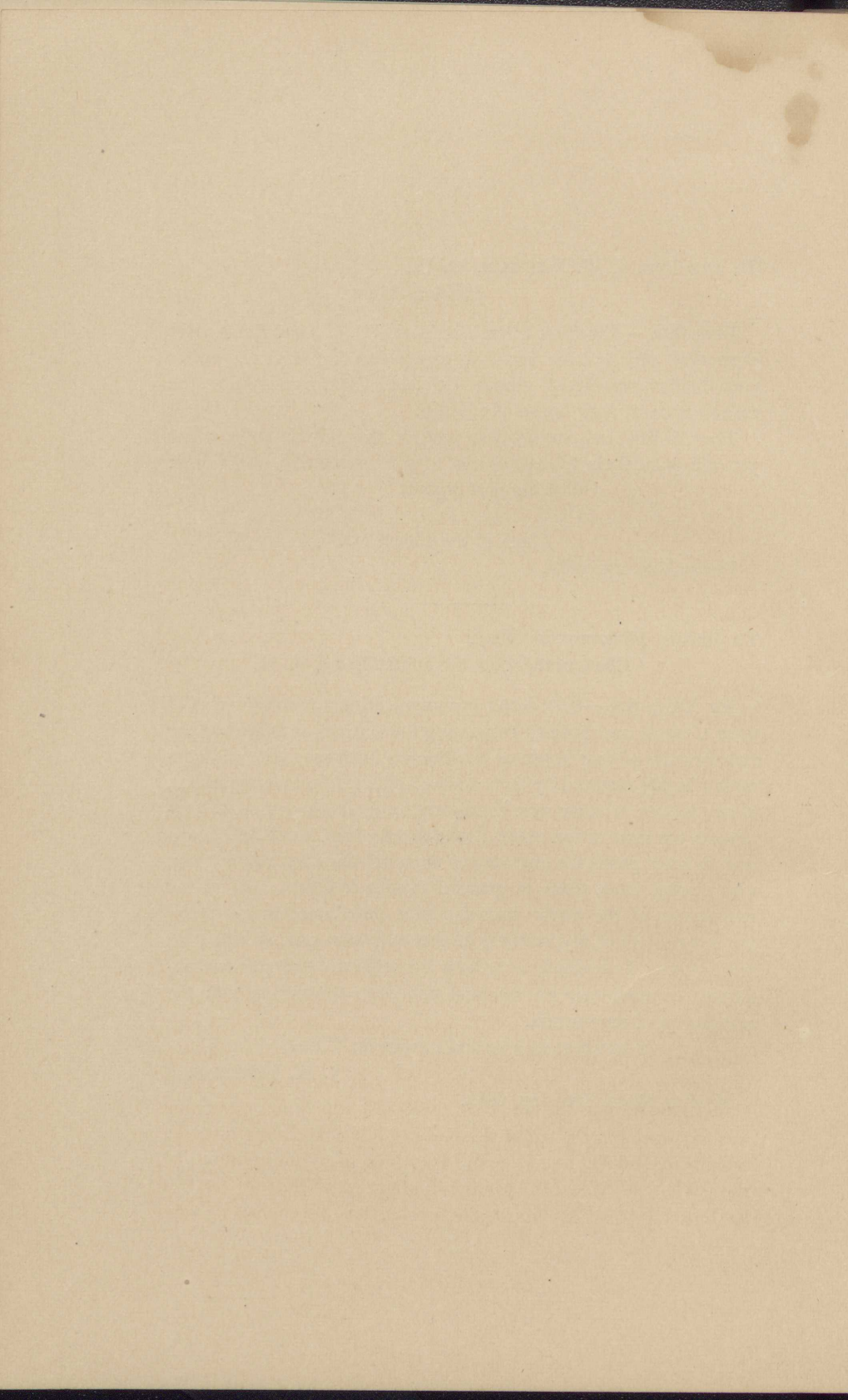
TO JOSEPH MONTGOMERY, ESQ.,
Clerk of the First Church in Derry, N. H.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter communicating to me the votes of your Church and Society respecting the sermon preached at the rededication of your house of worship has been received. I deem myself highly honored by their action, and shall be much gratified, if any service of mine may contribute, in the least degree, to perpetuate the fame of the noble Founders of your Church and Town, and to keep green the memory of some of the men and women, who, during later years, in grateful loyalty to Christ and for the redemption of the world from sin, have maintained in old Derry the house of God, the ministry of reconciliation and all Christian institutions. I cheerfully accede to the request which you so courteously communicate to me, and will soon forward to you the manuscript of my sermon.

Yours ever in love and service for Christ,

J. W. WELLMAN.

Malden, Mass., Dec. 29, 1884.



SERMON.

“MOREOVER I WILL MAKE A COVENANT OF PEACE WITH THEM ; IT SHALL BE AN EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH THEM : AND I WILL PLACE THEM, AND MULTIPLY THEM, AND WILL SET MY SANCTUARY IN THE MIDST OF THEM FOR EVERMORE.”—*Ezekiel xxxvii. : 26.*

In the month of May, 1719, Rev. James MacGregor was installed the first minister of the first church organized on this territory. It was afterwards called the First Church in Londonderry, and later still, and to this day, the First Church in Derry. A few weeks before this installation service all this region was an unbroken wilderness. Of the human race, only the Indian had roamed here, save that in recent years a few white men had occasionally penetrated the forests to this vicinity on hunting expeditions, or to cut the wild grass that grew on small patches of meadow land.

But now a company of Scotch immigrants from the north of Ireland had selected for their place of settlement the large tract of land now comprised in the towns of Derry, Londonderry, Windham, and portions of Hudson and Manchester. These first settlers were included in sixteen families, and were only one division of a large number of Scotch-Irish immigrants, who, sailing from Londonderry, Ireland, in five ships, had landed at Boston on the fourth of August in the preceding year, 1718. These sixteen families seem to have been drawn together by their common attachment to the Rev. Mr. MacGregor, who had been the pastor of most of them in the old country. This little company, however, had been broken up during the preceding winter—the larger number spending the cold months in much privation and suffering on the shores of Casco Bay, Maine, and on board their ship, which for some time was fast frozen in the ice of the harbor ; others spending the same months in Andover and Dracut, Massachusetts. But in the spring, those who had passed the winter in Maine, “finding no tract of land that pleased them,” again set sail for Massachusetts ; and

passing up the Merrimack River, landed at Haverhill, on the second of April (old style). A few days later, an unoccupied portion of country, of which they had heard, then called Nutfield, and lying some fifteen miles west of Haverhill, was examined and deemed a good place for settlement. Word was accordingly sent to their friends in Andover and Dracut. And on the eleventh of April, 1719, Mr. MacGregor with a few of his people came from Dracut on horseback, through the unbroken forests, to the selected territory. On the same day, the men who were at Haverhill came with their families, in the same manner, through the woods to the appointed locality. The two parties met on a small elevation of land which may now be designated as the more easterly of the two little hills on the road between the Upper Village and the Lower, and not far from midway between the two. Separated as they had been during the long winter in a strange land, their meeting was most joyful. They dismounted, hitched their horses to the trees, and instinctively gathered around Mr. MacGregor. And on that spot, ever after called Horse Hill, the good minister, as Rev. Edward L. Parker tells us in his History of Londonderry, "made an affectionate and impressive address, in which he congratulated them upon the propitious termination of their wanderings, their signal preservation as a company while crossing the ocean and since their arrival in this country, and exhorted them to continued confidence in God, planted as they now were in the wilderness, and strangers in a strange land."

On the next day, April 12th, the little company assembled under a large oak on the east side of Beaver Pond, and Mr. MacGregor then and there delivered the first sermon ever preached on the large territory of the original Londonderry. He had addressed them in a memorable discourse on the eve of their departure from Europe; and now, upon their first entrance into the deep solitudes of the primeval forests of America, he opened God's Word and preached to them again. And this sermon, like the last addressed to them on the shores of Ireland, was one they never forgot. The selection of Scripture for his text was most felicitous. Gathering around him the little band of weary pilgrims—men, women and children—on the territory they had just selected for their permanent dwelling place. within hearing of the rippling waves of a lake no less beautiful than that of Galilee, without so much as a log barn for a meeting house, or any thing to shelter them

from a chance tempest while they worshipped, unprotected from even the chill air and rough winds of April save by the budding branches of the huge oak that overshadowed them, the beloved man of God opened his discourse with that beautiful passage of Scripture, taken from the thirty-second chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of "a hiding place from the wind," of "a covert from the tempest," of "rivers of water in a dry place," and of "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The prayers, the tender words of address, and the songs of praise which then for the first time broke upon the still air of those wild forests were all full of divine promise and comfort. With the holy influences of such a service of public worship and heavenly discourse, that band of Christian pilgrims baptized the infancy of their settlement.

Rapidly now the log houses went up. They were bark-roofed, and located near together that the men might more quickly assemble for self-defence in case of attack from savage Indians, or other unfriendly neighbors. This first settlement was along the valley of West-running Brook. Soon the sixteen families were sheltered in their rude dwellings. Equally prompt were they in providing facilities for the observance of religious ordinances. They organized themselves at once into a Christian church, and made out in proper form "a call" to the Rev. James MacGregor to become their pastor and religious teacher. The exact date of his installation we do not know. But the bridal day was in the month of May of that same spring, and therefore could have been but a few weeks after the preaching of that first sermon on the shore of the lake.

It is indicative of the religious character of those people, and of the value they placed upon Christian institutions, that *before* they had secured the incorporation of their town, or had decided what name to give it, or had even obtained a satisfactory title to the land they had selected, and probably within six weeks of the day when the first log house was built, they took effective measures for the permanent establishment of religious ordinances.

In church polity they were Presbyterians. But there was no presbytery at that time in all New England. How then could the pastor elect be installed? But those first settlers were not men who could be easily hampered in the execution of a good purpose. It has been said, that "You may bury a Scotchman in the bowels

of Vesuvius, and he will find a way out." Upon facing the fact that there was no presbytery to install their chosen minister over them in the regular way, those Scotch immigrants said, then we will be a presbytery ourselves and install our own minister. And without scruple, taking the matter in their own hands, they appointed a day for the solemn service. When the day came they all assembled, perhaps in some log house or barn on West-running Brook, or more likely under the grand old forest trees that with their towering and overarching branches were God's first temple here—a temple which in true majesty and living beauty surpassed any English cathedral—in some such place they assembled, and there solemnly, in God's presence, amidst services of prayer, praise and thanksgiving, *they* took the Rev. James MacGregor to be their minister and pastor, and *he* took them to be his people. Mr. MacGregor himself conducted the services, offering the installing prayer and preaching the installation sermon. He seems to have been always happy in the selection of texts. The one he chose for this occasion was especially fitting. Standing before that company of Christian people in the midst of a dense wilderness, far away from their native land, with no sanctuary of man's building, no school house even, to shelter them, the little log huts designed for their own dwellings scarcely completed, looking forward anxiously but bravely to the unknown experiences that awaited them in the years to come, wondering whether God would be with them, protect them and permit them to establish their homes in this wild region, to build the house of God, to educate their children, and live to see all these hills covered with a happy and thriving population, or would give them up to sickness and hostile invasion, to various troubles and disasters, and so suffer them to perish defenceless strangers in a strange land—standing before such a people at such a time, Mr. MacGregor announced as his text these words of Jehovah, spoken through his prophet Ezekiel: "MOREOVER, I WILL MAKE A COVENANT OF PEACE WITH THEM: IT SHALL BE AN EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH THEM: AND I WILL PLACE THEM, AND MULTIPLY THEM: AND I WILL SET MY SANCTUARY IN THE MIDST OF THEM FOR EVERMORE." And equally pertinent to the occasion, and still more comforting and inspiring, if possible, to that defenceless band of pilgrims, must have been the words of divine promise that follow: "MY TABERNACLE ALSO SHALL BE WITH THEM: YEA, I WILL

BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. AND THE HEATHEN SHALL KNOW THAT I, THE LORD, DO SANCTIFY ISRAEL, WHEN MY SANCTUARY SHALL BE IN THE MIDST OF THEM FOR EVERMORE."

This Scripture is a Messianic prophecy, and may properly be regarded as God's announcement of what he had determined to do, not only for his people in general in the coming Christian era, but also for each local brotherhood. His promise is that he will enter into a covenant of peace with them, and will give them a place and a home in the world; that he will increase their number, and bless them with prosperity; will be their God, and they shall be his people; that he will also give them, as the symbol of his spiritual and abiding presence with them, his *sanctuary*; and that the very heathen around them shall know that God's protecting and sanctifying blessing is upon them, when they shall see his *sanctuary* set up in the midst of them.

It has seemed to me, therefore, my brethren, not inappropriate to bring to you to day this same Scripture, not only on account of the blessed service it rendered to this church in its feeble infancy, but also because it is suggestive of the theme upon which I wish to speak to you; THE TRANSCENDENT VALUE OF THE CHRISTIAN SANCTUARY.

First it needs to be more generally understood, than I fear it is, that the Lord's house contributes immeasurably to even the *secular prosperity* of a community. Suppose those first settlers on this territory had been a people who cared nothing for the sanctuary, and had never erected one, and that their children and children's children had grown up without the restraining and moulding influences of the preached gospel and of the institutions that go with it, what would have been the value of real estate here? How much industry, thrift and wealth would there have been in Derry? How desirable a place would this town have been for a permanent home? In fact, those first proprietors were themselves people of intelligence and strict integrity, yet without God's house, by the time the third or fourth generation had come into possession, there would have been here a well nigh heathen community, with all the indolence and shiftlessness, the extreme poverty and moral degradation that are characteristic of a semi-barbarous people.

The truth is, there is not a square foot of cultivated or timbered land in this region that is not worth more to-day, than otherwise it would have been, because temples of praise to God have been erected here. Every house, every barn, every farm in this town is of augmented value to its present owner by reason of its being in the vicinity of the Lord's house. The buildings and machinery of the manufacturer, the shop and tools of the mechanic, the stores and goods of your merchants command a readier sale, because these Christian sanctuaries have been built here. *Pecuniarily* even it is of vast advantage to you, that these church spires in your town are ever pointing the people heavenward, and that these Sabbath bells so often call this entire population to worship God in his holy temple, and listen to his blessed gospel.

Moreover, the Lord's house is invaluable considered simply as *an economical means of protecting life and property*. The more powerful the influence of the sanctuary in any town or state, the less need there is of sheriffs and constables, of policemen and lock-ups, of judges and courts, of reform schools and poor houses, of jails and prisons, and of military organizations. The thorough administration of human law in a wicked city or community is enormously expensive. A little seasonable and inexpensive gospel not unfrequently will be far more effective, than the execution of law, in preserving the public peace. An incident illustrative of this occurred in the early history of this town. Soon after the colony had established itself in its rustic dwellings, a party of rough fellows from Haverhill, "headed by one Herriman," appeared upon the scene. They were well armed, and announced themselves as determined upon a fight unless the Scotchmen would instantly break up their settlement and leave the region. They did not, however, understand with whom they were dealing. Some, perhaps most of these Scotchmen, including their minister, had fought and suffered in defence of Londonderry in Ireland during the memorable seige inflicted upon that Protestant city by the forces of the Roman Catholic King, James the Second. They knew what war was, and were not the men to be frightened by a few powder-horns and guns. It happened to be the day on which the colonists were to hold a public religious service in preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The men of the settlement listened to the imperious command of the armed invaders,

looked them over, quietly measuring their temper and capabilities, and then coolly replied, for substance, that as for themselves it was their first business to attend to their appointed religious service ; when that was through, they would attend to the fighting business. To this arrangement the Haverhill men assented. Then, as we are told,* “the little company of settlers gathered around the trunk of a large tree, which was used by Mr. MacGregor as his pulpit. The assailants retired at a short distance, observed the religious exercises, and, struck with the firm, resolute and undaunted appearance of the people, with their solemnity and devotion, and particularly with the eloquent and impressing *discourse* delivered on the occasion, they relinquished their hostile design, Herriman remarking to his company, ‘It is in vain to attempt to disturb these people ; we shall not succeed ; for God is evidently among them.’”

Now that simple, religious service calmed angry passions, prevented crime, maintained good order, guarded the rights, and very likely saved the homes, the property and the lives of the people. Perhaps a fight would have done the same ; but, I submit, the service of public worship was the most *economical*. And so it will always be. The worship of God in his house costs something, and yet is the most inexpensive, and at the same time most effective means ever employed to preserve the public peace, and to protect the people in their rights, their homes, in their possessions and business. If the Christian sanctuary accomplished nothing more than this, it would pay for itself a thousand times over. No man ever parts with a dollar from which he receives larger returns than from that which he expends in maintaining the house of God.

True, this is not the highest plea that can be made for the sanctuary. There are those, however, who complain of the *cost* of gospel institutions, and declare that they cannot afford to support them. But can they afford *not* to support them? The argument we are considering, if not the grandest, is yet, to not a few people in all our communities, *ad hominem*. It is a question of no little moment, how can society be made permanently such that it will be safe and tolerable to live in it? And with this comes another question ; shall we secure this protection of life, home and business solely by such means as are the most extravagant and the least

* Century Sermon, by Rev. Edward L. Parker.

trustworthy, or chiefly by such as are the most economical and at the same time most effective? No honorable citizen can refuse to face these questions.

The first inhabitants of this town, at times, lived in constant apprehension of attack from savages. They kept their flint-locks within hand-reach by day and night, in the house and in the field. They built two huge stone "garrisons" to which all the families resorted for protection during the night. On the Lord's day "all able-bodied men" went to church well armed, and the minister himself "marched into the pulpit with his gun well loaded and primed." At the same time these colonists had not the least fear of harm from any of their own number. When they were in no peril from the Indians, they slept with unfastened doors and windows; nor did they ever dream of locking up their houses when leaving them to attend church, or when called away from home on business. Now this perfect security was obtained largely through the preaching of the gospel of Christ one day in the week; that other precarious security was obtained by preaching the gospel of gunpowder and bullets every hour and minute, on every day and night of the week. Which then is the wisest and most business-like, to procure for ourselves and every body near us, at some little cost of money and personal service, that splendid and most enjoyable protection which comes of Christian civilization, or to live half protected, at far greater cost, in a community of untamed savages? And what is to be thought of the man, who, living under the gospel and enjoying all the security of life and home, estate and business, which the gospel gives, yet refuses to pay his just proportion of the comparatively trifling expense?

Another aspect of the value of the sanctuary is discerned in its *educational influence*. It is proverbial that where the Lord's house goes the school-house goes. In this town not more than a year elapsed after the erection of the first meeting-house, before a log school-house, sixteen feet by twelve, was built on the common, "*hard by the sanctuary*." And in three years after the building of the Lord's house, four school houses were erected, one in each quarter of the town. Who believes that Pinkerton Academy and Adams Female Seminary would ever have been founded, if there never had been any house of God here?

The regular services of the sanctuary are invaluable simply as

means of popular, intellectual training. The themes continually presented from the pulpit are the grandest that ever occupied human thought. They wake to life every faculty of the mind. The attempt, on the part of the people, to master these themes affords the highest order of mental discipline. Any soul that breathes, every Sabbath, the atmosphere of the Lord's house will be invigorated and elevated. The amount of knowledge also, incidentally acquired upon a thousand subjects, is beyond estimate. While the higher purpose is to bring the congregation under the spiritual power of the tremendous truths of revelation, there is yet imparted a vast amount of subordinate instruction—*subordinate* as compared with revelation, and yet such as no man can afford to disregard. It is impossible for one to be a regular and attentive listener in God's house, without becoming more intelligent in art and science, in history and biography, and in general literature; better informed in respect to the great educational interests of the country and the world, in respect to reforms and politics, governments and rulers, international relations and influences, commercial and missionary enterprises, and in respect to all the living questions and great movements of the day. Nor can a man be faithful in his attendance at church without becoming intellectually an *abler* man—capable of broader views, wiser in his plans, and more successful in his business. It is a matter of common observation, that those who make the most of public worship are usually sagacious and thrifty. The early settlers in this town were distinguished for their reverent regard for the sanctuary, and they were also noted for their wisdom and prosperity. It is not to be denied that, in our times, such devotion to God's house is regarded, by not a few, as a lingering remnant of old Puritan illiberality and superstition. But to learn wisdom by experience and observation is not to be illiberal; and to believe in well established facts is not to be superstitious. Some of the most candid and intelligent men in the less conservative ranks are beginning to confess, that fidelity in the observance of Christian ordinances is, as a rule, rewarded in this life by a reasonable degree of prosperity, while the willing neglect of God's house is followed by troubles and failures. The late Rev. H. W. Bellows, D. D., a distinguished Unitarian clergyman of New York, in his old age, made this public statement: "I never knew one man or woman, who steadily evaded the house of prayer on the Lord's day—who habit-

ually neglected public worship, and had a theory on which it was neglected—who did not come to grief, and bring other people to grief also.” Dr. Robert Collyer, another distinguished Unitarian clergyman, after a ministry of some years in the City of Chicago, upon coming to New York City to take charge of a church, remarking upon this subject in his first sermon, repeated the statement of Dr. Bellows, and added, that his own observation had convinced him, “that those, who desert the sanctuary and its services, in some way sooner or later come to grief.”

Now if there be any truth in such testimonies as these, is not the Christian sanctuary worth something considered as incidentally a means of training men to achieve success in this life?

But a still higher value attaches to the Lord's house because of its *moral power*. There is no virtue it does not enjoin; there is no sin it does not shame. It is impossible to estimate the worth of such things as moral purity, truthfulness, honesty, righteousness, trustworthiness; humility and charity, frugality and benevolence, resignation and self-control, patience and prudence, meekness and temperance, firmness and courage. It will be admitted that these moral qualities, and such as these, are of measureless moment to all people. To a young man just entering into business they will prove to be the best and most enduring capital. To a young lady coming out into the world they are worth more than a queen's diadem. Many a man of the highest promise and the largest opportunities, solely through his immoralities and untrustworthiness, has gone down quickly to unutterable disgrace and ruin. Many a community, bereft of moral restraints and given over to the natural working of human passions and appetites, has become a Sodom. Nations, simply on account of their wickedness, have been blotted out of existence. Through all the ages it has been true, that “Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to (or, to use a better rendering, the *destruction* of) any people.”

It is a question, therefore, of supreme concern to every person and community, *how can men be saved from wickedness and made righteous?* And in all the light of the closing nineteenth century of the Christian era, the true answer to this question still is, that there is nothing, under God, that can do so much to exalt the moral character of individuals and communities as the preached gospel of Christ. More and more generally it is becoming the

conviction of thoughtful men throughout Christendom, whatever may have been their religious vagaries, that "*there is no true and sure foundation for morality except in Jesus Christ.*" And no wonder, for, in every age and community thus far, in which the experiment has been fairly made, the preaching of Christ and his gospel has proved masterful in its moral power. A man of large professions, and a constant attendant upon public worship, who nevertheless was secretly living an immoral life, as he was leaving church one Sabbath morning after listening to an unusually pungent sermon, drew his breath and exclaimed, "Well, I can't stand this. I must do one of three things; I must be a better man, or stop going to church, or drive away this minister." Thousands of men living in sin, upon leaving God's house have *thought*, if they have not *said*, the same thing. Such is the moral power of the Christian sanctuary.

What would have been the character of this town's population if no house of God had ever been built here? As a matter of fact, this church through all its history has been vigorous in its moral exactions. In earlier years its discipline for every kind of immorality was public and strenuous. Its members felt impelled to cultivate every virtue and to live in all righteousness. They did not become perfect, but vice was restrained in this community, and the people of this town obtained an enviable reputation for integrity and trustworthiness. The Rev. J. H. Morrison, whose ancestors resided in Derry, and who made a study of the characteristics of the first settlers of the town, says that one remarkable feature was their courage; that "as a people they never shrunk from peril;" also that they were frank and manly, scorned to whisper private scandal, and would have no secret, under-handed dealing. He likewise affirms that they were a large hearted and generous people. "Though *poor*, they were never *mean* in spirit." They are described by other authorities as true in friendship, good neighbors, and honorable in business. Their love for kindred was strong. One trait for which they were distinguished was a "generous sympathy for their friends in circumstances of affliction, and a readiness to tender relief." And they were as patriotic as they were brave. No community furnished better soldiers for the War of the Revolution than those who went from Londonderry.

Now who believes that the first inhabitants of this town, and their successors, would have been renowned for such traits as these,

if there had been no house of God on all this territory? We have here another illustration of the truth, that the Christian sanctuary tones up the morals of the entire community, creates in the people a character of larger and grander type, elevates the habits and ambitions of the people, makes every home brighter and happier, all trade and business more honest, all social life purer and nobler, and this world more like heaven.

The *supreme* value of the sanctuary, however, is found in its *religious power*. Man's relations to his fellow men are of great moment, but his transcendent concern is his relation to God. He has temporal interests to attend to, but he also has interests to care for that sweep through the eternal ages. He was created and is preserved, not simply that he may enjoy himself for a brief time here, but that he may live in sympathy with God and enjoy *him* forever.

But man has sinned, and has lost God's image in his soul. He is out of harmony with his Maker, and is not living in accord with the high and holy purpose which his Maker had in creating him. And he who has thus sinned is burdened with immeasurable guilt. Can he be forgiven? Is it possible for him to be spiritually and morally re-created, redeemed from all his iniquities, completely justified and brought back into harmony with God, and with God's purpose in bringing him into being? If so, how? Of all the known religions in the world's history only that of the Bible has answered these questions in such a way as to bring the peace of innocence and of heaven into man's sinful and wretched soul. The Christian Religion gives us the only *gospel*. And the good news is, that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners; that he "hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" that "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" that God now offers to fallen and lost men the free forgiveness of all their transgressions, full redemption from sin, condemnation and death everlasting; the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; deliverance out of the power of darkness, and translation into the kingdom of his dear Son; *on condition* that they truly repent of their sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ, accepting him as both Saviour and King. And it is also a part of this blessed gospel that sinful and lost man, having been "born of the Spirit," and "justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" will be "kept by the power of God through faith," advanced in knowledge, and grace, and changed from glory unto glory through the abundant provision made for such Christian progress in the divine ordinances and the Sanctifying Word and Spirit, until, complete in Christ, they shall enter into the inheritance of the saints in life and glory everlasting.

Such are some of the "good tidings of great joy" which have come to this sin-burdened and sorrowing earth in our holy religion. But how shall these tidings reach the people? Christ says "*Preach* the gospel." But to secure this proclamation through all the seasons and the years, the Christian sanctuary is indispensable. Nor can the preaching of the gospel be made most effective save as it is accompanied by public worship and the observance of all Christian ordinances. The dominating purpose of God's house, therefore, is to make it practicable for the whole surrounding population to assemble with one accord, in one place, that *there* they may listen to "the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God;" bring their confessions, prayers, offerings and praises to Christ; penitently give their hearts, themselves and their all to the Lord Jesus; observe the holy sacraments which Christ has appointed; receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins; that through all this the church may be enlarged, sanctified and cleansed, so that Christ may "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish." Thus gracious and spiritual, thus religious and heavenly is the dominant purpose of the Christian sanctuary. And the fulfilment of this divine purpose in human experience is the supreme benefit of God's house. All its other benefits—a few of which I have noticed—are subordinate to this and dependent upon it. The Lord's house is invaluable to our secular and educational interests; it is a powerful support to civil government, and to some extent a substitute for it; it purifies, and so endears and hallows our homes; it sanctifies and ennobles all social life, and makes the people in character and conduct righteous; but all this the sanctuary accomplishes only because *in it* is preached the glorious gospel of Christ, and *in it* is offered to God a pure and acceptable

worship. Let these strictly evangelical and religious services be dispensed with, and the house will be shorn of its chief power and glory, and be of no more benefit to the community than any other building. Let that pure and spiritual praise, which, ascending from humble and believing hearts in God's house, is designed for *his* ear, be supplanted by merely artistic and esthetic performances designed only for *man's* ear; let that sincere, humble and believing prayer which God has promised to answer, and *does* answer to the unspeakable joy of his people, give way to that make-believe prayer which is offered with no faith that it will ever be answered, but solely as a good mental exercise, a sort of spiritual gymnastics,—in reality an impious pantomime before the Throne of Mercy,—and the divine and transforming power of the sanctuary will be experienced no more. Let the simple and positive messages, sent of Heaven through Christ and inspired prophets and apostles to perishing men, be displaced by destructive criticism of the sacred Oracles; let all clear and definitive statements of revealed truth, and all use of particular scriptural texts for the establishment of Christian doctrine be disparaged, and made to give way to dreamy guesses and worthless speculations respecting things unrevealed; let that gospel which has been the source, under Christ and the Holy Spirit, of all successful evangelical work and missionary enterprises, and which is now so rapidly conquering the world for Christ, be dishonored by abortive attempts to find another gospel "better fitted" to meet the fancied demands of the present time, "more Christian" according to some man's idea, and which God, in his implied weakness, may, it is thought, more easily justify and maintain in the presence of the ungodly and the sceptical—let these destructive changes, and others like them, be made in the preaching of the pulpit, and the supreme purpose of God's house will be defeated, and the sanctuary, bereft of its distinctive power and glory, will render no better service to even the secular and educational, nor to the moral and spiritual interests of the people, than will any other building in the town. No edifice can become a Christian sanctuary, save as it is devoted, first, to Christian worship and the observance of Christian ordinances; and devoted, secondly, to the proclamation of that gospel which Christ has commanded should be preached in all the world, for the conversion of men, for their redemption from sin and eternal death, and for the constant advancement of his people in knowl-

edge and grace ; and devoted, thirdly, to earnest prayer for, and the grateful and actual reception of such a baptism of the Holy Ghost, that it shall be said of this and that man that he was born there, and that Christian believers shall testify, out of their own experience, that the place is to them none other than the house of God, and that it *is* the gate of heaven.

I have now presented such views of the Christian sanctuary as, I believe, have been held by this church from the time of its organization to the present day. The members of this church from the beginning have revered, and have desired to bring all the people of the town to reverence the Lord's house. During the first year, no movement seems to have been made by the colonists to build a house of worship. But at a public meeting, held June 3, 1720, it was voted that a small house should be built "convenient for the inhabitants to meet in for the worship of God," and that it should be placed "as near the senter of the one hundred and five lots as can be with convenience." At another general meeting of the inhabitants, held on the 29th of the same month, the location of the meeting-house was definitely determined. The site chosen was a little north of the present house of worship. At a third public meeting, held January 11, 1721, it was voted, that "a meeting-house shall be built in this town as speedily as may be," and that "it shall be fifty feet in length, forty-five feet broad, and as high as may be convenient for one set of galleryes." For some reason, however, the work of building was not at once commenced. This delay may have been occasioned by the lack of means to meet the cost, or perhaps by the fact that they had not yet obtained altogether satisfactory title to the land selected for their town. But in June 1722, a charter was obtained, and the town was incorporated under the name of Londonderry. In this same year, 1722, or about three years after the first log house was erected, their church edifice was completed, and with appropriate religious services dedicated to the worship of God and the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

During these first three years, however, they faithfully maintained all the ordinances of the gospel, holding their services of public worship either in one of their log dwellings, or in the open air, as the season of the year and the weather might permit.

They had little of this world's goods, and that first house of

worship was not built without large sacrifice on their own part, nor without some pecuniary aid from abroad. It is significant of the religious conscientiousness and devotion of those first settlers, that in their straitened circumstances they erected such a house of worship as they did; for they built for the Lord a *framed* house, "convenient and well finished," while they constructed their own dwellings of logs and covered them with bark.

In this first sanctuary the people worshipped nearly fifty years. During this period the congregation had so increased as to need ampler accommodations; and in 1769, during the ministry of the Rev. William Davidson, a new, larger and more imposing edifice was erected. Its dimensions were sixty-one by forty-five feet, and it was high enough for the introduction of galleries, and a lofty sounding board suspended over the high pulpit. It was also ornamented with a steeple more slender and towering higher than the present steeple. This house, we are told, "was well finished, and equalled, if it did not surpass, in its appearance most of the church edifices of that period. The "*raising*" of this edifice was a great event. A large multitude of people assembled. And the several parts of the huge, heavy timbered frame were lifted into position by hundreds of strong arms amidst the thundering of commands and the mighty shoutings of the people, and not without the inspiration of no small quantity of stimulants, according to the custom at that time. When completed, this edifice, like the first, was publicly dedicated to the worship of God.

This second house of the Lord, built in 1769, enlarged in 1822, remodelled in 1845, renovated and adorned in 1884, is the house in which we are assembled to-day. This First Church in Derry, in its history of one hundred and sixty-five years, has had but two church buildings. In the first it worshipped forty-seven years; in the second, in its different forms, it has worshipped one hundred and fifteen years.

The house in which the Rev. Edward L. Parker preached during the first twelve of the forty years of his ministry was that built in 1769 unchanged. Happily he has left on record a description, in a few particulars, of its interior structure. "As you approached the pulpit," he says, "you first come to the deacon's seat, elevated like the pews, about six inches from the floor of the aisles. In the deacon's narrow slip usually sat two venerable men, one at each end. Back of the deacon's seat, and elevated ten or twelve inches

higher, was the pew of the ruling elders, larger than that of the deacons and about square. Back of the elder's pew, and two or three feet higher, and against the wall, was the pulpit." Mr. Parker adds, that there was "appended to the pulpit an iron frame for the hour glass that was turned by the minister at the commencement of his discourse, which was expected to continue during the running of the sands. Sometimes, when the preacher deemed his subject not sufficiently exhausted, the glass would be turned again, and another hour, in whole or in part, occupied. * * * * *

In many of the meeting-houses of that day, there were, on each side of the centre aisle and in front of the pulpit, two or three seats of sufficient length to accommodate eight or ten persons. These were designed for the elderly portion of the congregation and for such as had no pews. In these the men and women were seated separately, on opposite sides. On these plain seats our grave and devout forefathers would contentedly sit during a service of two hours, without the luxury of cushions or carpets, and in the colder seasons of the year without stoves, and in houses not so thoroughly guarded against the penetration of the cold as those of the present day."

The edifice erected in 1769 remained unchanged fifty-three years. It was enlarged in 1822. This enlargement was effected by cutting the house into two parts, and then inserting between the parts twenty-four feet of new building, thus making the edifice, as it is to-day, eighty-five feet in length. In this first change, the general internal arrangement was retained. The pulpit remained on the north side, and high galleries on the other three sides. But the old sounding board over the pulpit disappeared. Two new front doors separated, one from the other, about twenty-four feet, were inserted on the south side nearly opposite the pulpit, each opening into an aisle, whereas previously there had been but one door on that side, opening into one central aisle; and there was also a door on each end of the edifice as before. The new seats in the gallery facing the pulpit were reserved by the Parish for the singers. The new seats on the floor of the house fronting the pulpit were straight, narrow slips. "But the old square pews on either side of the new ones," it is said, "remained; so that from 1822 until 1845 there were the old square pews on each end of the church, and between them the new straight and narrow *slips*, like a piece of new cloth on an old garment."

The old, and unusually lofty and slender steeple was regarded as too frail, and therefore was taken down, and a stronger one erected in its place; and in this new steeple was hung the first church bell ever heard in Derry. It was the gift by legacy of Jacob Adams, the same who founded Adams Female Academy. Such was the edifice as enlarged in 1822. By this generous enlargement of the Lord's house, the people appropriately celebrated the centennial anniversary of the building of the first house of worship in the town.

It is of some interest to know, that in December, 1821, or in the last winter before the change was made in the church building, *stoves* for the first time were introduced into the house of God. And then again, one year after the enlargement, stoves were placed in the improved edifice: for the record tell us, that on the 27th of October, 1823, it was voted, that 'one stove should be located near Capt. Redfield's pew, and the other near Dr. Farrar's pew; and that the stove pipes should extend out of the windows north and south.' Thus it seems, that for a century, lacking one year, the people of Derry worshipped, through the long cold winters, in an unwarmed meeting-house. The women may sometimes have used foot-stoves and heated hand-stones, but these were scorned by the majority of the people. Their church edifice was colder than their barns, but their hearts were warm, and their faces glowed with the joy of their worship.

Twenty-three years after the enlargement of the house, or in 1845, another change was made. This time the interior of the edifice was entirely reconstructed. The new arrangement furnished a town hall and vestry below, and a spacious audience room above. The pulpit was transferred from the north side to the west end of the house. The high galleries on three sides disappeared, and instead of them was built one gallery on the east end, designed for the choir. The two great front doors on the south side were seen no more, but the people entered through two doors on the east end of the house. All the old square pews, with their hinged and rattling seats, were now supplanted by the straight and narrow, but more convenient and room-saving slips of modern times. The new audience room was also made inviting by tasteful painting and frescoing. And when the colors of the frescoing were fresh and all was new, this *auditorium*, in its simple yet harmonious adornment and furnishing, was regarded as unusually chaste and

attractive, and so it seemed to me when I began to preach in it in 1851.

This meeting-house externally, especially since its enlargement, has been the most imposing structure in all this region. No one, who has ever looked upon it from any distant point on this wide expanse of country, can ever forget it. Lifted upon this slightly eminence and pushing its spire far heavenward, conspicuously set in the midst of an extended and unusually attractive landscape, it is "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." And to a great multitude of hearts, this sacred edifice is as dear as it is beautiful. No wonder the revered historian of the town wrote of this house of the Lord: "Its location evinces the wisdom and taste of the early settlers; and around this spot, on which their first altar was reared, and where they stately met to worship God, the most hallowed associations will ever cluster."

Now we come to speak of the change last made in this temple of God—the change which is the special occasion of holding these public services.

And first of all, it is becoming that we should gratefully remember him, through whose generous legacy, aided by gifts which his own benevolence prompted, this church edifice has been restored to more than its pristine beauty. MR. DAVID BASSETT was the son of Thomas and Susannah (MacGregor) Bassett. He was born in Deerfield, N. H., in the year 1800. His mother was a descendant of the Rev. James MacGregor. With such blood flowing in his veins, it is not strange that he cared for the Lord's house. It was worthy of his noble lineage that he should make that bequest, by means of which the exterior of this sanctuary has been thoroughly repaired, and the interior elegantly renovated. As I remember Mr. Bassett, he was a man of few words, quiet in his disposition, living an unobtrusive life, but was not unthoughtful of divine and eternal things. For a time he was the sexton of this church, and the interest he then came to take in the church edifice seems never to have died out. And in his advanced years, when he observed the sad wear of time upon the ancient building, it was not unnatural that he should raise the question of his own duty to repair the house of the Lord. In his early life, if I am correctly informed, he had some religious experience which made an ineffaceable impression upon his mind, but he never made any public

profession of Christian faith until the year 1876, when he united with this church by confession of Christ. And may we not hope that his gift by will for the repairing and adorning of the Lord's house was designed to be an offering expressive of his own love and gratitude to his Redeemer?

Mr. Bassett's name is not inscribed upon these walls, but this communion table, and this externally and internally renovated sanctuary are his fitting memorial.

The three men* whom he made trustees of his legacy and on whom he placed the responsibility of deciding what repairs should be made, and of superintending the work, have had a delicate and difficult task to perform. With what fidelity and wisdom they have discharged their trust, this transformed and beautifully adorned house of worship testifies to-day. These gentlemen deserve and, I am sure, will receive, your sincere and grateful acknowledgments.

But others have supplemented Mr. Bassett's legacy by timely and noble gifts. This new and tasteful pulpit furniture, presented by the family of DEA. DANIEL J. DAY, tenderly reminds us of one who loved and faithfully served this church, but has now entered into the communion and service of the church triumphant.

These memorial windows, so rich in artistic beauty and tasteful, suggestive symbols, are richer still in the names they bear. To give any just account of the characters and lives which these names represent would require a volume. I can only allude to them.

Nothing can be more appropriate than that the memory of the first pastor of this church, the REV. JAMES MACGREGOR, and of his devoted wife, MARION CARGIL, should be honored in this house of worship. Tradition represents him as every way a noble man. Tall, erect, athletic, he swayed people by his commanding personal presence. Distinguished for his mental ability and self-control, for wisdom and goodness, manly energy and courage, for sagacity and prudence in secular and civil affairs; a man of sincere and humble piety; thoroughly evangelical in his faith; an able and eloquent preacher of the gospel; a devoted pastor, loving his people as he loved his own family, and interested in all that concerned his flock; he was eminently fitted to be the father of this church, and the acknowledged leader of that noble band of men who founded this

* The trustees of the legacy were Messrs. James C. Taylor, Charles H. Day and Frank W. Parker.

town. The members of this church rejoice to-day that his name and ministry are commemorated in this house of worship.

But the same radiant window is rich in other historic names.

The REV. DAVID MACGREGOR, a son of the first pastor of this church, was himself the first pastor of the church in the West Parish, now the Presbyterian Church in the modern town of Londonderry. He was ordained in 1737. The son inherited largely the commanding abilities and noble spirit of his father. His ministry was eminently evangelistic. He preached and labored for the conversion and salvation of his people. Sympathizing with the great evangelist, George Whitefield, he invited him to his pulpit; and his own fervid preaching and prayers were rewarded with revivals of religion. He labored with the church in the West Parish until his death, which occurred in 1777. The length of his able and faithful pastorate was forty years. It is fitting that the name of this distinguished son of the first pastor of this church, and also that of his accomplished wife, MARY BOYD, should have an honorable place in this Christian Sanctuary.

On this same window is the name of GEN. GEORGE REID, who with Gen. John Stark, both of Londonderry, attained high military fame in the Revolutionary War. He was the son of James Reid. The father was a native of Scotland and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. He was one of the first settlers of Derry, a member of the First Church, and of its session. Afterwards, for many years, he was an elder of the church in the West Parish. His famous son, Gen. Reid, was himself a Christian man, and through all the years of his military service under Gen. George Washington, evinced a firm faith in the efficacy of prayer, as well as in the potency of arms. His wife, MARY WOODBURN, was every way worthy of her noble husband. She is described as "a woman of rare endowments." Gen. Stark, who knew her well, once remarked, "If there is a *woman* in New Hampshire fit for *governor*, 'tis Molly Reid." This church honors itself in receiving her name, with the historic name of her husband, upon one of its memorial windows.

There is likewise recorded upon this window the name of COL. ROBERT MACGREGOR. He was the son of Rev. David MacGregor. In the War of the Revolution he was on the staff of Gen. John Stark. His wife, ELIZABETH REID, whose name is placed with his on this roll of honor, was the daughter of Gen. George Reid.

On the lower part of this same window—so brilliant in both its beauty and its names—we find commemorated the REV. JOHN RIPLEY ADAMS, D. D., and his wife, MARY ANN MACGREGOR; also Mrs. Adams' two sisters, MARIA MACGREGOR COGSWELL, and ELIZABETH MACGREGOR HALL. Dr. Adams, born, 1802, in Plainfield, Ct., graduating from Yale College in 1821, and from Andover Seminary in 1826, was for seven years—from 1831 to 1838—pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Londonderry. He was afterwards pastor of churches in Great Falls, N. H., Brighton, Mass., and Gorham, Me. In the War of the Rebellion he was chaplain for three years of the Fifth Maine Regiment, and for one year of the One Hundred and Twenty-First New York Regiment. He died at Northampton, Mass., in 1866. He was an accomplished man, genial and sympathetic, an able preacher, and much beloved. Mrs. Adams, and her two sisters—Mrs. Cogswell and Mrs. Hall—were daughters of Col. Robert MacGregor and Elizabeth Reid. Their grandfather on their father's side was Rev. David MacGregor, son of Rev. James MacGregor, and their grandfather on their mother's side was Gen. George Reid. Noble and cultured women were these, and worthy of the honored name they bore. All the grand memories of this town and of this church of their fathers were dear to them; and they themselves are tenderly remembered by many now living.*

A resplendent window has also been placed in these walls, "In loving memory of JAMES and PERSIS TAYLOR." These names are too familiar and dear to us all to need any words of praise* from me. But permit me to say, that Dea. James Taylor was a member

*The new memorial windows are five in number. All of them are costly and beautiful. It is believed that there are no such windows in any church outside the cities in New England; and probably those in the cities that excel them in magnificence are not numerous.

The MacGregor window was given by Mr. James MacGregor Adams, of Chicago, Illinois. On the upper half of it, at the left, is seen the family coat of arms, with the Scotch motto, "E'EN DO BAIT SPAIR NOCHT." Beneath this are the names, REV. JAMES MACGREGOR; HIS WIFE, MARION CARGIL. And below these are the names, REV. DAVID MACGREGOR; HIS WIFE, MARY BOYD. On the lower half, at the left, are first a dove as an emblem, and then the names, MARIA MACGREGOR COGSWELL, ELIZABETH MACGREGOR HALL. On the upper half of the window, at the right, are seen as emblems, the Stars and Stripes, and a Sword. Beneath these are the names, GEN. GEORGE REID; HIS WIFE, MARY WOODBURN. And below these are the names, COL. ROBERT MACGREGOR; HIS WIFE, ELIZABETH REID. On the lower half, at the right, is, first, the emblem of an open Bible with two swords crossed; and then below the emblem are the names, REV. JOHN RIPLEY ADAMS, D. D.; HIS WIFE, MARY ANN MACGREGOR.

of the Church Session when I assumed the pastorate of this church in 1851. I knew him well. He was a good man and true. He had in his character the old-fashioned Scotch honesty and steadfastness. He always made himself understood, and every body knew where to find him. A man of sound, practical judgment, he was often appointed arbiter in the settlement of disputes. Always calm and self-possessed, he was yet a man of deep feeling, and had a large and kind heart. He was beloved in his own family, a true friend, public-spirited, greatly respected and honored in the town, and always faithful to his trust as an office-bearer in the Church of Christ. He loved this church, and to the promotion of its interests he was thoroughly devoted.

His beloved wife, Mrs. Persis Taylor, while like her husband possessed of strong and sterling traits of character, was also a woman of tender heart and far-reaching sympathies. The chief arena of her power and life-work was her home. There she reigned supreme. And as her reward, she had every right to glory in her children, and her "children rise up and call her blessed." Though the mother of a large family, she was also "a mother in Israel." Ardently loving her own household and kindred, and always laboring and praying for their highest welfare, she yet took an affectionate interest in her neighbors, in the church of which she was a member, in her pastor, in all Christian institutions and service, and in every person to whom she could be helpful. She never seemed despondent. She carried good cheer with her wherever she went. Never shall I forget the motherly and encouraging words she repeatedly spoke to me during the years of my first pastorate. Many of the noblest traits of Dea. and Mrs. James Taylor were reproduced in the character of their distinguished son, Samuel Harvey Taylor, LL.D., so long the Principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. How pleasant it is to see these two names honored in *this* house of prayer, where they together for so many years, and with such regularity and devoutness, worshipped God !*

We read upon another of these memorial windows the name of DEA. HENRY TAYLOR, by the side of the name of one of his own dear kindred. He was a John-like man. It is difficult to believe

*This window was the gift of Mrs. Mary E. (Taylor) Fairbanks, of St. Johnsbury, Vt. The symbols in the upper part are, at the left, flowers, and, at the right, the cross and crown. Beneath these, but far down on the window, is the inscription, "IN LOVING MEMORY OF JAMES AND PERSIS TAYLOR BY THEIR CHILDREN."

that he ever had an enemy in the world, so sweet, gentle and loving was his disposition. Having no family of his own to care for, he took every body into his capacious heart. All the people in the town fondly called him "Uncle Henry." He greatly loved Christ, and was the true friend of the church and of his pastor. Very tender in the memory of his benignant face, and of his reverent, trustful prayers.*

Two sisters, maiden ladies, Jennette and Sarah Humphrey, sisters of the venerated and beloved Dea. John Humphrey, dwelt together for many years quietly and lovingly in their little cottage in this Upper Village. Like Mary and Martha of Bethany, the one silent and thoughtful, the other not less thoughtful but more energetic and demonstrative, they were well mated, each supplying the lack of the other. Little had they to do with the great and wide world. They lived alone in their own loved home, and yet not alone, for the Lord Jesus was with them as with the sisters in Bethany, speaking his words in their ears and breathing his spirit into their hearts. They were accustomed to speak evil of no one, but abounded in kind words and deeds, ready always to minister to the sick and needy, the bereaved and troubled. They were frugal, yet saved not for themselves, but for Christ and his Kingdom. Their names were never sounded abroad in the public prints, but their Christian benevolence has reached round the globe.

Now these two humble disciples, living apart from the world, so contentedly and lovingly, hardly known beyond the limits of this church and parish, were about the last persons to have ever dreamed, that *their* names at some future day would be emblazoned in the midst of indescribable splendors of color in the house of God. And had some prophet told them that this honor awaited them, they would have been as much surprised, as they will be when Christ at the last day shall recount before the universe all their little deeds of kind ministration and love, and they shall reply, "When did we do all these things?" But *this* glory which has come to them, as well as *that* which will be the spiritual and eternal halo of their names in heaven, is explained by those words

* The donor of this memorial window is Mr. James Calvin Taylor. For placing it in the house of the Lord in honor of his beloved uncle, he will receive the gratitude of all his kindred, and of the many friends of Dea. Henry Taylor. The window bears upon its upper part simply the Greek, symbolic letters, ALPHA, OMEGA. In the lower portion, at the left, we read the name, DEA. HENRY TAYLOR, and, at the right, FAMILY OF JAMES CALVIN TAYLOR. (See note at the end of the Sermon.)

of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

Since leaving the pastorate of this church, I have known many good people, God's saints on earth, the prospect of meeting whom beyond this life helps to a better understanding of heaven. But none have I met, who, so far as I can judge, surpassed in unselfishness and kindness, in sincerity and honorableness, in unflinching geniality and good will, in Christian simplicity and trustworthiness, in genuine goodness, in unaffected piety, and in all real worth of character, Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Parker. Living in their happy home five years, I yet have no recollection of hearing either of them speak a single angry or improper word. If compelled to listen to hard and uncharitable speech, they either gently demurred or were silent. They knew the worth and sacredness of friendship, and how to be themselves true friends. They made advances cautiously, but having once given their friendship they would sooner have cut off a right hand than have proved false. Mr. Parker had lived so long in a minister's family, and was so familiar with all the labors and anxieties of a pastor for his people, that he seemed to take the entire care of this church and parish upon his own mind and heart. And his wife had learned to bear her full share of the same burden. They were never tired of thinking, talking and planning for the good of this people. And had they been my own brother and sister, it is difficult to see how they could have been more anxious for the success of my ministry. Wholly unacquainted as I was with the parish, and utterly inexperienced in the ministry, their counsels, so kindly and courteously expressed, were invaluable. From whatever mistakes I was saved, and if there was any wisdom or worth in my pastoral service here, the people were indebted for it more to them than to me.

Their house was a house of prayer. Christ had long made his abode there, and all the rooms seemed to be the realms of gentleness and love. It is well that the names of these two friends of Christ and of his church should be made conspicuous in this house of God, that those who worship here may often look upon them,

* This window was presented by Mrs. James Calvin Taylor. On the top, at the left, is the emblem of the dove, and at the right, of the harp. At the bottom of the window are simply the two names, JENNETTE HUMPHREY, SARAH HUMPHREY.

Dea. John Humphrey, the brother of these two Christian women, was the father of Rev. John P. Humphrey, of Winchendon, Mass., and of Rev. Simon J. Humphrey, D. D., of Chicago, Ill.

and receive the inspiration that must come from the sweet memory of their Christian kindness and fidelity, their friendship and piety.*

All these beautiful memorial windows are the gifts of reverent affection for kindred, and most of them are gifts of filial love. There is something honorable and satisfying in such expressed devotion to the memory of our dear and sainted dead, and this devotion has the promise of a great reward. But the donors in this case have brought their gifts, not simply to honor the memory of revered ancestors and kindred, but also to adorn the house of the Lord. The members of this church, to-day, gratefully receive these elegant and costly memorials as the fitting remembrancers of worthy men and women now glorified with Christ, and also as the resplendent adornment of their house of worship. All this beautifying of the sanctuary at so much expense, is, as we trust, on the part of the donors themselves the grateful presentation of so many free-will offerings to God their Saviour, and so is true worship, offered in the spirit of the ancient, royal worshipper, who in the generous, outbursting gratitude of a redeemed soul exclaimed, "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth *cost* me nothing." If this munificent giving be only such loving and grateful *worship*, then though all this splendid material adornment should in time, like the perfume of Mary's costly ointment, perish forever from the earth, still the memory of the *giving*, like the memory of Mary's ardoring gift, shall be as immortal as the gospel of Christ and the love of God.

But with all these appropriate memorials, now making this place of worship so beautiful, there would still be a sad lack here, were one more name not honorably inscribed upon these walls. True, many are the departed worthies who might fittingly be commemorated in this house of God. I should wish, for instance, as doubtless you all would, to see illumined upon some of these windows, instead of the names of *two*, the names of *all* the members of that Church Session which I found here in 1851. They were rare men, and eminently worthy of such honor. Still every one of you will agree with me in saying, that no name has any clearer right to

* This memorial window was placed in the church by the son of Mr. and Mrs. Parker, Mr. Frank W. Parker. At the top of the window, on the left, is the representation of an open Bible; and on the right the symbol is the Anchor. At the bottom of the window are seen the two names, CHARLES C. PARKER, SARAH TAYLOR PARKER.

All the memorial windows in the church were manufactured by Redding, Baird & Co., 146 Franklin Street, Boston, Mass.

have honorable place in this sanctuary than that of Rev. Edward L. Parker. I need not speak of him in this presence. Words better than any that I can utter you can read from the Tablet of marble placed upon the wall at the right of the pulpit, and which now so appropriately commemorates his character, and his ministry of forty years with this church.*

In closing, let me remind those of you who are now members of this church, that you are the successors of successive generations of noble men and women who revered the sanctuary, and maintained here at no little sacrifice the blessed institutions of the gospel. Yours is a rich inheritance. You have also received a great and sacred *trust*. And now is your time. Be faithful. Live not upon the past; live for the present, and for the future. There are indications to-day that the house of the Lord, and all the sacred ordinances and institutions that go with it, will receive no harm in your hands. Nevertheless gird up the loins of your minds for a still grander work in the Lord's *spiritual* house. Be prayerful, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Walk humbly before God, love mercy and do justly. Abide in Christ, that you may bear much fruit. Abide in the truth, that you may be mighty in character and life. Covet earnestly the best gifts and aspire to

* The inscription upon the tablet is as follows:—

IN MEMORIAM.

THE REVEREND EDWARD L. PARKER,

BORN JULY 28, 1785,

GRADUATED AT DARTMOUTH, 1807,

DIED JULY 14, 1850.

FOR FORTY YEARS THE FAITHFUL AND BELOVED PASTOR OF
THIS CHURCH.

HE POSSESSED IN A HIGH DEGREE, SOUND JUDGMENT AND DISCRETION, REMARKABLE WISDOM AND PRUDENCE, SHREWDNESS AND TACT, COMBINED WITH KINDNESS OF MANNER, HUMILITY, PERSEVERANCE, AND UNTIRING INDUSTRY.

PLAIN, PRACTICAL PREACHING, CROWNED BY ARDENT PIETY AND DEVOTION TO HIS WORK, MADE HIM A MAN OF MARK AND GREAT USEFULNESS.

“THEY THAT BE WISE, SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT, AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, AS THE STARS FOREVER AND EVER.”

the grandest achievements. Whenever it shall be needful, *make sacrifices*—sacrifices of time and strength, of labor and money, of personal preferences and tastes, of all opinions, forms and methods non-essential. Faint not. You get weary in your business and in the care of your dear ones; exhaust your strength also in service for your dear Lord. Hold together. Be one in Christ. "See that ye fall not out by the way." Give up in petty contentions, but hold on in all Christian charity and good works. Strengthen the heart and ministry of your new and beloved Pastor. Help him "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Stand for Christ, for his blessed gospel and glorious kingdom, for all truth and personal righteousness; and God will "MAKE A COVENANT OF PEACE WITH YOU, AND WILL PLACE YOU, AND MULTIPLY YOU, AND WILL SET HIS SANCTUARY IN THE MIDST OF YOU FOR EVERMORE."

NOTE.—Dea. James Taylor, and his brother, Dea. Henry Taylor, who are referred to on pages 26-27, were for many years members of the Church Session. And associated with them, in office, were Deacons Matthew Clark, Robert Morse, John Humphrey, Joseph Jenness, the two brothers, James Choate and Humphrey Choate, William Ela, Robert Montgomery, and William Cogswell,—eleven in all. When full the Session consisted of twelve Elders or Deacons. In 1851, all of the above-named men were living, and enrolled as members of the Session. Two of them, however, Deacons Morse and Clark, by reason of age and infirmity, were not active members. Practically, at that time, the session consisted of nine members. A few years later Dea. Cogswell removed to Manchester, and Mr. George Shute was elected a member of the Session. All these Deacons, save Dea. Cogswell and Dea. Shute, have now entered into the goodly fellowship of the church triumphant. They were noble and godly men. Sturdy in character and honorable in life, wise in counsel and of grave and devout spirit, they were much respected in both the church and the town.

Rev. G. M. Pennington

Of positive convictions, strong will, and, of great decision of character, they were yet remarkable for their Christian gentleness and courtesy. Very beautiful was their treatment of one another. Their mutual love and Christian fellowship were not demonstrative, but were *real* and *abiding*. It is pleasant to bear this testimony, that in all the numerous and often protracted meetings of the Session during five years, to the best of my recollection, the Deacons were never, in a single instance, divided in voting, and not a single unkind or bitter word was ever spoken. They were not always of the same mind at the outset, and not unfrequently a long debate, or rather conference, preceded their final decision; but when they came to the vote and to action, their harmony was perfect. They were not timid or vacillating men. When need required they acted with great boldness and energy. This was illustrated by an incident which occurred at the meeting of the Ecclesiastical Council on the day of my ordination. Some of the good Presbyterian brethren on the Council erroneously supposed that the Church was a strictly Presbyterian church, and under the care of the Londonderry Presbytery. They, therefore, made a formal remonstrance against the action of the church in calling a Council instead of the Presbytery, and against the proposed examination and ordination of the pastor elect by the Council assembled. Rev. Amos Blanchard, D. D., of Lowell, was moderator. A large congregation filled the church. The excitement was intense. All the active members of the Session were present, and sitting together in pews at the left of the Moderator. When the remonstrants had fully presented their case, the Moderator turned to the Deacons, and said, "You hear the objection which has been made to the action of your Church, and to the proposed action of this Council. What is the desire of the Session?" The Deacons, without leaving their seats, consulted together for a moment. Instantly they appointed Dea. John Humphrey their spokesman. Dea. Humphrey, a man of great weight of character, of perfect self-command, and of imposing presence, being over six feet in height, rising slowly and with solemnity from his seat, and stretching himself up to his full length, with a calm, firm voice and great courtesy of manner, said,—as nearly as his words can be remembered—"Mr. Moderator: This is *not* a strictly Presbyterian church. Though governed by a Session, it is *not* under the government of any Presbytery. This Council has been called in exact

accordance with certain '*Articles of Agreement*' by which this Church, in a few important particulars, is governed. Our late pastor, the Rev. Edward L. Parker, was ordained forty years ago by a *Council*, and not by the Presbytery. We have taken the same course that was taken then. A *Council* was called then, a *Council* has been called now. And, Mr. Moderator, the desire of the Session *is*, that this Council proceed *at once* to examine the young man whom we have called to be our pastor; and if he shall be found fitted for the office, we desire that he be ordained and installed. And if *this* Council does not do this, *we shall call a Council that will.*"

Slowly Dea. Humphrey resumed his seat. Some members of the Council smiled. The Deacons did not smile. They meant business. They knew their rights and liberties, and that such things were sacred, and not to be trifled with by anybody. Nothing more was said upon the question raised by the remonstrants. The Council "proceeded *at once*" to its appointed work, according to the directions given by the nine venerable men who sat in the corner of the church.

This incident discloses, in several particulars, the character of that Board of Deacons. They had the Scotch stanchness, decision and energy. It was sometimes said of them that they were slow men, but in emergencies they moved swiftly and with irresistible force. They were not educated in the higher schools; but they were intelligent. The Bible was their study. Some of them were versed in theology, and could define sharply the variances of the New England theology from other systems. The New England theology was accepted by them because they believed it to be scriptural, and also because they believed it to be substantially that interpretation of the Scriptures, which through the ages has stood the test of being judged by its fruits. The Bible they accepted as the Word of God. The modern glib talk about the mistakes of Moses and the prophets, and the blunders of Paul and the Evangelists, would have shocked them beyond measure. The statement now made with such nonchalance in limited circles, that Christ was either in error in some of his religious teachings, or was incorrectly reported by the Evangelists, would have been regarded by them as blasphemous. If even a theological Professor had said to them, You must accept *my* view of the utter untrustworthiness of the Bible in some of its religious teaching, or you must stand

convicted of being "bent on ignorance," he probably would not have said that to them the second time.

But while they were bold and persistent in maintaining the truth, and in standing for what they knew to be right, they were yet men of rare tenderness and kindness of heart. They were also reverent before God. Sincere humility was a prominent element in their piety. Their prayers abounded in confessions. They had profound convictions of sin. In their view, disobedience to God was appalling wickedness. They were always solemn and afraid at the thought of sin. They believed that "God is love;" but they also believed that "Our God is a consuming fire." They accepted without a doubt the scriptural teaching, that the just punishment of sin in the abiding wrath of God, death everlasting. These profound views of sin and of its demerit determined their personal relation to Christ. With great joy and gratitude, and with a deep sense of their inexpressible obligations to him, they believed on the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and for the life everlasting. They hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and therefore attached the highest value to all means of grace, especially to the Sabbath and the sanctuary as appointed of God to aid men in the attainment of holiness, and to inspire them to be "faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God." Sabbath-desecrations, and neglect of the sanctuary they regarded as heinous sins, because they are a defiance of God's appointed means of grace, and to commit them is doing despite to the Spirit of Grace. These venerable and godly men greatly magnified the *grace of God*, and esteemed, as beyond all price, every divinely appointed channel of that grace. They were penitent and believing men, but their penitence quickly blossomed into hope, and their faith into joy. The farthest possible were they from being stern and gloomy men. They were delightfully social in disposition and habits. Their words were often playful, and they told and relished good stories. Of despondency they knew little. Their hearts were full of courage. In earlier years they may have had spiritual conflicts; but now their kindly, cheerful faces, and all their external bearing told of the peace of God that reigned within. They were thoroughly possessed of the spirit of worship. Deep and satisfying was their joy in religious services, whether in the house of the Lord, or at the family altar, or in meetings of the brethren for prayer or conference. One of them at least

seldom or never entered the house of God, without pausing for a moment, (after passing the door of the auditorium,) and lifting his eye heavenward, as if he were saying, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And immediately upon entering his pew, he bowed his head in silent prayer. The devoutness of those aged and venerable deacons was not official, not assumed nor formal; it was in the heart, and therefore in the life. They were men of lordly will, but in the presence of God they had the spirit of little children. In their view, some things were sacred. The name of God was sacred. The house of prayer was sacred. The Christian church and ministry were sacred. The Christian sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper were sacred. The commandments of God, and the gospel of Christ were sacred. Friendship was sacred. All promises and vows, all obligations were sacred. The reverence of those men, as well as their sturdiness and gentleness, made them great. And this reverence was contagious. Under the inspiration of their example, many other people were made more devout and loyal. Those members of that Church Session did not *seek* office, it *came* to them. They did not seek personal influence, it was theirs before they knew it. But they shrunk from no obligation, were faithful to every trust, and lived in humble, but joyful hope of the promised inheritance of the saints in heaven.

Altogether they were rare men. The churches and the world have need of such men to-day. And these few words have been written to aid a little, if it may be, in perpetuating the inspiring memory of their great worth and services. Blessed is the church that is under the lead of such a Board of Deacons; and blessed the pastor who has such men for his friends and counsellors.

