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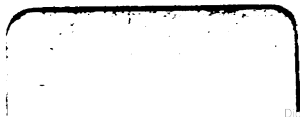
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H. M. Treadway,
New York City.
27th September, 1884



A

MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

60
TIMOTHY DWIGHT;

WITH THE

SERMON

DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH.

BY JOSEPH P. THOMPSON.

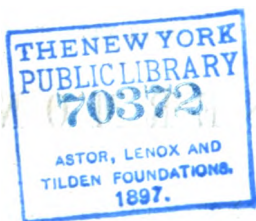
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NEW HAVEN:

PRINTED BY J. H. BENHAM.

1844.

B. E.



TO THE
BEREAVED FAMILY
OF THE LATE TIMOTHY DWIGHT,
THIS HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF
A BELOVED AND HONORED FRIEND,
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR FRIEND AND
PASTOR,
THE AUTHOR.

NEW HAVEN, June 28th, 1844.

Rev. Joseph P. Thompson :

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned have been appointed a Committee of the Church under your pastoral charge, to request for publication a copy of your discourse delivered on the occasion of the death of our much esteemed and beloved brother, the late *Timothy Dwight, Esq.*

With much respect and affection,

Yours in the Gospel,

ISAAC MIX,

ELIHU ATWATER,

NATHANIEL OLMSTED.

NEW HAVEN, June 29th, 1844.

DEAR BRETHREN :

I take pleasure in complying with your request for the publication of the Sermon which I preached on the death of *Mr. Dwight*. Not that I think the discourse itself deserving of this notice, but that I wish to do what I can to keep alive in our remembrance the virtues of our respected brother, and to induce others to cultivate the same. Hoping that the Lord will sanctify to us all the removal of one with whom we were so happily associated, and long continue our fraternal intercourse,

I remain,

Yours with Christian affection,

JOS. P. THOMPSON.

Isaac Mix,
Messrs. *Elihu Atwater,*
Nathaniel Olmsted, } Committee.

PREFACE.

THIS little Memoir makes no pretensions in respect to subject or its execution. Its aim is simply to exhibit a Christian in the ordinary walks of life, whose example seems worthy of record and of imitation. The contemplation of such an example may contribute more to the full development of Christian character, than the study of a whole system of Christian ethics. It is the remark of an enthusiastic German writer, that "one might well consent to be branded and broken on the wheel, merely for the *idea* of such a character as *Christ's*." But while, on the one hand, the Evangelists could never have conceived of such a character, had they not seen it exhibited in fact,—for how could such illiterate men have originated a character, of which Plato and Xenophon, with Socrates, the rest of heathen moralists, before their eyes, had never received?—so on the other hand, the bare idea of Christ's perfect moral excellence, would have done little to incite to attain to that excellence, in comparison with the em-

P R E F A C E .

bodiment of that perfection in our own nature, the realization of the idea in actual life. In like manner, the inculcation of the duty of holy living from the pulpit, is often less effective than the exhibition of practical godliness which we see around us. Hence the utility of delineating the character of a good man, when he is gone, especially if he was a man in private life, whose means of self-improvement and of usefulness are within the reach of others. One such character forms the mold in which many may be cast. Such considerations have led to the preparation of this volume. If it shall lead any who read it, to adopt a higher standard of piety, and to labor more efficiently for the salvation of souls, the main design of the writer will be accomplished.

It may seem strange to some, that so much space is appropriated to narratives of revivals of religion, and to the discussion of topics arising out of them. But the subject of the Memoir was so completely identified with the scenes and topics, that the exhibition of them was necessary to a just view of his character. The relation which a man sustains to certain great public movements, civil or religious, is often pre-eminently his history. It is hoped that this part of the book will be received as a small, yet not unimportant contribution to the religious history of Connecticut. That history, if fully written, would form

P R E F A C E .

be of the most interesting and valuable productions of the
age.

As to the imperfections, both of the Memoir and the
sermon, the reader will discover them without the least
assistance from

THE AUTHOR.

NEW HAVEN, Oct., 1844.

MEMOIR.

TIMOTHY DWIGHT was born at Stratford, Conn., on the 29th day of March, A. D. 1778. He was the oldest son of the late President Dwight, whose Christian name he bore, and whom he strikingly resembled in mature life, both in features and in character. His mother, Mrs. Mary Dwight, is still living, at the advanced age of 90. Nothing remarkable is remembered as connected with his early youth. He was a well-behaved and dutiful child; of a sober, rather than a gay turn of mind; never showing any inclination for dissipation of any kind. The first sixteen years of his life were spent in Northampton, Mass., and Greenfield, Conn., chiefly in the latter place, where he received a thorough education, including most of the branches comprised in a regular collegiate course, and where amid the most charming rural scenery, he acquired a taste for agricultural pursuits, and a practical skill in gardening, which was a source of health and enjoyment till the close of his life.

About the year 1794, he went from Greenfield to New York to engage in mercantile business. He remained in New York seven or eight years, at the end of which time he removed to New Haven, (Dr. Dwight having, meanwhile, been appointed President of Yale College,) and established himself in the business of a hardware dealer, in connection with his uncle, W. W. Woolsey, Esq., whose clerk he had been. His was the only store of the kind in New Haven for many years. This circumstance gained for him an extensive acquaintance with the towns in the interior dependent on New Haven for their supplies, and in connection with his tried integrity, laid the foundation of that wide influence which his religious character in later life enabled him to exert.

In May, 1809, Mr. Dwight was married to Miss Clarissa Strong, daughter of the Hon. Caleb Strong, of Northampton, late Governor of Massachusetts. They had nine children ; five of whom survive their father.

The habitual intercourse of Mr. Dwight with his distinguished father, consequent upon his removal to New Haven, gave greater prominence to the points of resemblance between them, and assimilated their characters more closely than they could have been from the contact of earlier years. Dr. Dwight was distinguished above most literary men for plain common sense and practical skill. These qualities were largely inherited by the subject of this memoir.

He possessed also much of that independence, energy, frankness and decision of character for which President Dwight was conspicuous.

Accustomed to hear his father discourse upon theological science in the pulpit and in the social circle, Mr. Dwight became versed in the various doctrines of Scripture and the proofs of those doctrines, and unusually competent to give instruction to others in the religious conference or the Bible class, on the great truths of the Christian system. It was not, however, till the year 1816 that he made a public profession of religion, by uniting with the North Church. After his father's death, Mr. Dwight attended the ministrations of Rev. Mr. Merwin, in that church, till 1828, when he and a number of other citizens connected with the two Congregational churches, were organized into a third church, and erected a neat and commodious house of worship at the corner of Chapel and Union streets, for the accommodation of families residing in the eastern section of the city. In this building Mr. Dwight invested a large amount of property. Whatever doubts may have been entertained as to the expediency of constituting an additional Congregational church in the city, have long since yielded to the success of the experiment. Mr. Dwight held the office of deacon in this (the Third) church for about eight years, when circumstances induced him to resign it. The acceptance of his resignation by the church was accompanied with an expression of their

high satisfaction at the manner in which he had discharged the duties of his office.

Being always ready to assist new and feeble churches, Mr. Dwight rendered important aid to the Church street and Howe street churches at the time of their formation. When he took a dismissal from the Third Congregational Church, he joined the Church street Church, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Ludlow, and was chosen deacon soon after. His connection with this church, however, was but temporary ; for when, in consequence of pecuniary embarrassments, the Third Congregational Church and Society, vacated their house of worship, Mr. Dwight united with several persons from the various Congregational churches of the city in forming the Chapel street Congregational Church, which was duly organized in this deserted house of worship, on Lord's day, Nov. 4, 1838. With this church he retained his connection until his death, and was one of its most prominent and efficient members, though he declined the office of deacon. He was at all times deeply concerned for its prosperity ; and was permitted in the short space of five years to witness three revivals in it, to see its numbers increase from sixty-one to more than three hundred, and to see a large, intelligent, and thriving congregation filling the house which had been left without an occupant, and which was in danger of being appropriated to secular uses. He often referred to this wonderful

change with tears of gratitude. Mr. Dwight was the oldest male member of the Chapel street Church, and being in one sense its father, he loved it as "the child of his old age."

As Mr. Dwight was extensively known, not only in this community, but throughout the State, as a prominent member of the church of Christ, there are many who will be interested in a brief sketch of his religious history. Early in his Christian life he was impressed with a deep sense of his personal responsibility as a follower of the Lord Jesus, for the advancement of his kingdom. This feeling seemed to increase as he advanced in life, and may be regarded as the secret of his constant and self-denying efforts to bring others to a saving knowledge of the truth. He was not content to leave the entire responsibility for the spiritual state of the church with the *pastor*. He felt that every member of the church had a share in that responsibility, and was bound to co-operate with the pastor in plans of usefulness. Being himself "rooted and grounded" in the faith, and having some degree of fluency in speech, he often rendered great service to the cause of Christ by holding religious meetings in the outskirts of the city, and in neighboring villages. The system of church government under which he was trained is well suited to promote the usefulness of the laity, and to call out all their resources, pecuniary, intellectual and moral, in behalf of the Redeemer's kingdom. Under such

a system, the talents and zeal of Mr. Dwight found ample scope. He was not denied the privilege of laboring for the edification of his brethren, and the conversion of sinners, nor was he slow to improve it. He first became conspicuous for his zeal in the cause of Christ in 1820.

The city of New Haven was then favored with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which continued almost without interruption through that and the following year. It was one of the most powerful and protracted revivals of religion ever known in New England.

In its beginning it was marked by the silent but unquestionable agency of the Divine Spirit. Unusual attention had been given for several months to the religious instruction of the youth in the two Congregational churches, and a general tone of seriousness had seemed to pervade their minds; but it was not till about the middle of the year, that there were any tokens of a general awakening in the churches, or of anxiety among the impenitent. Then the Lord was pleased to manifest himself, as it were simultaneously, in the "still small voice," the "whirlwind," and the "fire."

A single individual in one of the churches seemed first to catch the heavenly inspiration. He called upon a clergyman connected with the Faculty of College, late one Saturday evening, and expressed to him his deep concern at the low state of religious feeling

in the community, and his anxiety for an outpouring of the Spirit. They went in company to his pastor, and after a season of conference and prayer, resolved, as soon as it could be done, to assemble a few of the brethren for consultation in reference to the spiritual condition of the churches. Such a meeting was held early in the week following, at which some three or four from each of the Congregational churches, with their pastors, were present. It was a season of peculiar tenderness and solemnity. This meeting was succeeded by others, which were attended by larger numbers, and marked by a deepening tone of religious feeling. Mr. Dwight, who had not hitherto taken a very active part in religious meetings, having manifestly received a fresh unction of the Spirit, early united with this little praying circle, and entered with his whole soul into the object which it had in view. Such assemblies were ever after his delight.

On the Sabbath after these conferences had been held, there was an unusual seriousness apparent in the congregations, and the word of God was "with power." Cases of conviction and conversion soon became frequent, and the souls of believers were quickened and refreshed. The revival steadily increased in power for several months, and extended, though with declining interest, far into the following year.

As this revival progressed for a considerable period with no other human agency than that of the pastors

and brethren of the churches, and as the manner of conducting it throughout was plainly approved of God, it may be interesting to insert here a more minute account of its origin and results, published by the pastors of the Congregational churches, in the *Christian Spectator* of Jan., 1821. This narrative will awaken in many of our readers the most delightful reminiscences; to others it will convey much interesting information; while it will enable all to understand better the influences under which the religious activity of the subject of this memoir was developed, and the nature and utility of the labors in which he engaged.

The year 1820 commenced without any indication of unusual interest on the subject of religion, except that several young men, members of the Congregational churches, by mutual agreement—requested their pastors to attend a Sabbath evening conference. The request was joyfully complied with, and hailed as the harbinger of greater good. This meeting was continued without interruption, in a place provided for the purpose, and capable of accommodating not less than 300 persons. The room was always crowded, and from the seriousness and solemnity which uniformly pervaded the assembly, a stranger, appearing suddenly among them, would have thought that a revival of religion had already begun. Yet not more than two or three instances of special religious impressions are known to have existed for some time. Meetings for prayer were, as they had previously been, frequent and numerous,—and characterized by fervency of spirit. The spring opened with these prospects,—although no living breath from the four winds seemed to breathe upon the multitude of the slain.

In April, several of the divinity students and charity scholars of Yale College manifested a deep interest to effect the institution of a "biblical class." They were advised to proceed, and not at all discouraged by the general indifference which apparently prevailed to subjects of the kind, succeeded in procuring a large number of subscribers to the proposed establishment. A class, whose written constitution has since been published, was formed,—consisting of youth of both the ordinary and the most respectable standing in the community. The usual exercises were the recitation of a portion of scripture—previously given out, and a lesson in "Perkins' Catechism,"—enforced by explanations, addresses and prayers from the attending ministers. These occasions were always highly interesting to those who attended them. They excited not so much emotion as a spirit of inquiry after religious truth—accompanied, in some cases, with peculiar solicitude and solemnity. The Scriptures were, in consequence, more frequently and diligently searched, and more highly valued as the only source of true wisdom. No method had ever been adopted by us for the instruction of the young, which produced so much attention to the word of God. These recitations became, from week to week, more frequented, and the interest manifested in the subjects presented, more deep and extended. This class, in consequence of the multiplicity of other religious meetings, has now been, for some time, discontinued,—but a large proportion of its members, we trust, are sitting as learners at the feet of Jesus, and training up for the enjoyment of his heavenly presence.

Early in July, the watchmen of the night, saw, or thought they saw, the dawn of day. There were certain appearances, or, there was a certain aspect in the signs of the times, which, although not sufficiently distinct and definite to be characterized, failed not to excite attention and even to inspire hope. Nothing of this was communicated, but an appointment was announced

publicly on the Sabbath, for those who were particularly desirous of being conversed with respecting their own salvation, to meet next day, for the purpose. This notice was speedily noised abroad, and excited unusual interest and inquiry, as to the occasion of its being given. The meeting was accordingly looked for with anxiety, accompanied with many prayers. At the time specified, seventeen assembled,—several of whom were professors of religion—recovered from their declension and awakened to new life and vigor in the cause. The others came as inquiring sinners,—several of whom were under real conviction of sin; and the rest in a state of solicitude on the subject. When the result of this meeting became known, the effect it produced on Christians and on many of the unconverted, was immediate, sensible and important. It communicated an impulse like that of an electric stroke, to no small portion of the community. About the same time, a few of the brethren met for free conversation and the mutual confession of their faults. That week was one of fears and hopes, which had not been felt for a considerable number of years. There was evidently preparation making for an approaching change in the existing state of things.

The next week thirty attended the anxious meeting. It was now evident that God had begun to revive his work; there were perceivable, though as it were in miniature, all the characteristics of a genuine revival of religion. The tidings spread and produced still greater effect. Seventy assembled at the meeting for inquiry the subsequent week; the week following one hundred and twenty; the week after that one hundred and eighty; and for two or three of the succeeding weeks, from two hundred to two hundred and forty or fifty attended. These persons were not all under deep conviction, or that extreme distress of mind which usually precedes the submission of the sinner to God,—but they were all more or less anxious as to what they must do to be saved,—with the exception of those who had begun to hope in the mercy of God through Christ.

These meetings were usually opened with a short address, after which all knelt and united in a short prayer. The ministers present then proceeded to converse with every individual, in a low tone of voice, so as not to interrupt each other, or break the solemn stillness of the scene. The meeting was then closed with suitable exhortation and a prayer. It is impossible to convey to those who have not witnessed such an assembly, an adequate idea of its impressive solemnity. There was evidently much emotion, although no noise,—there were many tears, although no outbreking of the agony of the mind, save in the expressive look and the half-stifled sigh. To stand and attentively survey a multitude of immortal beings, convened for such a purpose,—the salvation of the soul,—that for which the Lord of glory left heaven, and came down to earth,—was an almost overwhelming sight. We have never beheld an assembly, the bare view of which was so affecting and solemn. The fascinations of sense, with all the glory of time seemed to fade away, and an approaching eternity alone to occupy the thoughts. The effect was increased by the fact, that meetings were usually held the same evening for prayer,—with special reference to the additional effusions of the divine Spirit on this anxious assembly. Meetings held from day to day, in private houses, consisting of from eight to fifteen or twenty persons, proved highly useful in awakening the attention, as well as in deepening the impression of religious truth on the mind. Both have been signally blessed of God, and made the birth-place of many souls. One week in September, from twenty-five to thirty, it was judged, were hopefully converted. The week following only a few less; and, on one occasion, eight or nine were, in the compass of an hour, to human view, brought out of darkness into light. Our ordinary conferences, which were frequent, and held in different places at the same time, were always crowded, and from that which was the most public and general, hundreds have been obliged to return home for the want of room.

The object, in speaking on these occasions, was not to address the passions,—but to impress the simple truth on the conscience; to show sinners, from the word of the living God, that they are guilty, condemned, lost, and must be miserable forever without a change of heart, and that it is their duty immediately to submit to God, and become reconciled to him through the efficacy of atoning blood.

Some weeks after the revival had commenced, the Rev. Mr. Nettleton, providentially directed, came and spent a number of weeks, as an evangelist, among us. He was received with joy, and his labors were eminently blessed of the great Lord of the harvest. Is it not important to the churches, that there be many men of this tried character to assist their wearied brethren, at such times? Several other ministers rendered seasonable and efficient aid.

The brethren of our two churches have also manifested a very becoming zeal and activity for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. They have come forward like men sensible of their duty and desirous to do it, and contributed much, very much, to relieve the labors and strengthen the hands of their pastors. Their conferences and prayer meetings, conducted altogether by themselves, have been important auxiliaries to the great work carried on by the divine Spirit. This revival has by no means, been confined to the denomination with which we are officially connected; but all the other denominations in the place have, more or less, experienced its benign and saving efficacy. Indeed, so great and extensive has been the effect produced, that the community at large wears the aspect of seriousness.

This work begun among the young, and was for some time almost exclusively confined to those between twelve and twenty years of age. But it now comprises many of maturer age, some quite advanced in years. There are those as young as nine or ten, who have, it is hoped, by regeneration, become children of God.

Very few instances are known of those who, having been particularly anxious, have relapsed into a state of stupidity.

There is, as has always been the case, a great variety in the former character and condition of those who appear to have been awakened, convicted and converted. Husbands and wives, in some instances, have been separated, in some they have both been taken, and together made to magnify the grace of God. The amiable, lovely, and accomplished youth who once thought he wanted nothing new, has been distressed for sin, and made a subject of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. The man proverbial for his honesty and morality,—whose life for three-score years had been uniformly exemplary, has been brought to feel that morality could not save him, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. The profane swearer has been struck dumb by a sense of guilt, and his oaths and curses have given place to prayer and praise to God and the Lamb. The scoffer has been taught to admire the grace he once despised, and the supercilious, sarcastic infidel prostrated at the foot of the cross, imploring mercy as a ruined, hell-deserving sinner. Where sin did abound, grace has much more abounded.

We have made no calculation as to the exact number of this accession to the constantly accumulating hosts of the Lord.—About one hundred and eighty have been examined and propounded to the two Congregational churches in the city; perhaps somewhat more than half of the whole who entertain a hope. From fifteen to twenty have recently been admitted into the church in Yale College.

The number that remains to be added to the foregoing list, must depend on the copiousness of the showers of divine grace, that shall in the mean time descend.

And blessed be God that his compassions toward us fail not! blessed be his holy name that we may still speak, not merely of what is past, but of that which is progressing. This is the seventh month of the continuance of the work, and for aught

that at present appears, it may be prolonged through as many successive years. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear." What he has done, if it do not serve as the pledge, may well encourage the hope, that he will do more. There is not indeed the same general excitement, nor the same degree of notoriety attached to the subject now, that there was during most of the month of September. But although the novelty of the thing is gone, its importance is still felt, and that with a deepening interest. Although the number of persons now awakened and hopefully converted, from week to week and day to day, is not so large as it was at that period, fresh instances are still occurring some of which are uncommonly illustrious displays of divine power and grace. The progress of the revival remains the great and general subject of inquiry and conversation. The attention to religious meetings is undiminished. There is no abatement of the animation, zeal and activity of professing Christians. And never among us was there such a spirit of prayer as at the present time.

SAMUEL MERWIN,
NATH'L. W. TAYLOR.

New Haven, January 26th, 1821.

On one occasion during this revival, seventy-three made a profession of religion at one time in the Centre Church; and on another, one hundred in the North Church. The whole number received by profession into these two churches and the church in College at the sacramental seasons in February and March, 1821, was two hundred and twenty-four. The College shared very largely in this work.

In August, 1821, the Editor of the Religious Intel-

ligencer, a weekly paper then published in New Haven, informed his readers that the revival was still in progress, though more than twelve months had gone by since it commenced. "This highly favored city," he says, "is still refreshed by the vivifying influences of the Holy Spirit. We believe there has been no period since the commencement of the revival, which is now more than a year, when there have not been some anxiously inquiring what they should do to be saved." In these twelve months more than three hundred souls were added to the Congregational churches of the city, and a large number to churches of other denominations; and yet these were but a part of the whole number hopefully converted during that period.

Nor was this work of grace confined to the city of New Haven; it extended to the neighboring villages and towns, and finally over almost the entire State. Its general prevalence may be inferred from the following extracts taken at random from the Religious Intelligencer:

October 7, 1820. "A revival has commenced in Woodbridge, and in North Killingworth, (towns adjacent to New Haven,) within a few weeks. In the latter place there are already about thirty hopeful subjects of the work."

January 6, 1821. "The revival in Woodbridge still continues, and nearly one hundred are hoping in the mercy of God. We understand, also, that be-

tween ninety and one hundred are to be added to the church in North Killingworth, on the next Sabbath.

“In Wethersfield, we learn also, that a revival has become quite extensive; some are rejoicing, and others, particularly among the youth, are anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved.”

February 10, 1821. “In North Killingworth, on the last Sabbath, one hundred and seven were added to the Congregational church, under the care of Rev. Mr. King. The whole number of hopeful subjects of the revival in that place is about one hundred and fifty.

“The revival in Wethersfield has become quite extensive. There are already more than one hundred hopeful subjects of renewing grace. In Newington, an adjoining society, many are inquiring the way of life, and a number are rejoicing in hope. In the city of Hartford, a revival of much promise has recently commenced; and also in Bristol the good work is going on. In Plymouth, upwards of seventy have been hopefully converted to the Lord within a few weeks. We hear of revivals also in Goshen, Cornwall, and Warren. In Woodbridge, the work is continued. In North Haven, a number are anxiously inquiring; and in several of our neighboring towns the prospect is animating.”

Toward the close of the same year, the North Association of Hartford county reported, that nineteen of the twenty churches in their connection had en-

joyed a gracious visitation from on high in the preceding twelve months, and that about fourteen hundred souls had been hopefully converted, more than one thousand of whom had united with the churches.

The Rev. Joab Brace, pastor of the church in Newington, (a parish of Wethersfield,) in an account of the revival in that place, says, "the religious concern may be traced to Wethersfield, and thence to New Haven, where the present series of revivals appears to have commenced."

Most of the revivals referred to above might be traced to the same source; and it will appear presently, that Mr. Dwight had an agency in several of them. They are mentioned here as interesting items in the religious history of Connecticut. Verily these were "the years of the right hand of the Most High."

The General Association in its Report on the state of religion, in 1821, says, "Upon eighty-four of our churches, God has, during the past year, poured out his Spirit, and hopefully translated about five thousand souls out of darkness into his marvellous light. This abundant shower of divine grace began to descend nearly a year ago; some of the first drops of which fell upon the favored city of New Haven. The cloud which was at first no bigger than a man's hand, shading and refreshing the souls of a few Christians mourning their own barrenness, and the widespread waste around them, soon expanded over the

whole town, reached the neighboring villages, overshadowed counties, and is now making its progress to the utmost borders, resting over us in majesty and mercy."

The Report specifies the following characteristics of this revival, viz: its "unity," its "power and rapidity," its "purity," its "continuance," and its "influence in elevating the Christian character both of ministers and churches."

It is much to be desired that a history of this revival should be written before those who remember its remarkable incidents and thrilling scenes have passed away. It would stand by the side of the history of the great awakening in 1740. In fact the Report referred to says in view of it, "The days of 1740 have returned with brighter luster. There remain among us here and there a Simeon and an Anna of that glorious day, who have waited from that time to this for the consolation of Israel. The hour has come; they are giving a rapid and exulting glance at the flying clouds, and hastening away to carry the glad tidings to the upper world. Shout, oh inhabitants of Zion: Sing a new song. The Lord hath triumphed gloriously."

It is hoped that the distinguished clergyman who is preparing a memoir of the Rev. Dr. Nettleton, who acted a conspicuous part in these memorable scenes, will favor the Christian public with a more detailed account of them than has yet appeared.

One of the most interesting features of this revival was the missionary zeal which it awakened among the brethren of the churches, especially in New Haven. In the early stages of the work, an association comprising several of the brethren of the two Congregational churches of this city, was formed for the purpose of sustaining neighborhood meetings in the city and vicinity. An arrangement was made by this association to hold meetings for prayer and religious conference, in various parts of the city, every week; and on every Sabbath evening, in some of the adjacent villages. About twenty individuals pledged themselves to attend these meetings according to appointment. In these labors Mr. Dwight always bore a conspicuous part. He would often walk from two to four miles in the evening, without regard to the weather, to fulfil such an appointment. For a long time he, in conjunction with others, held religious meetings on Sabbath evenings in Fair Haven and Westville. This was prior to the organization of Congregational churches in these villages, when the people had to come into the city, a distance of two or three miles, to worship God. It was a great convenience to persons thus situated, to have religious privileges brought to their very doors. Many were induced to attend the place of prayer who seldom visited the distant sanctuary. Mr. Dwight's addresses, on these occasions, are said to have well supplied the place of a sermon, and to have produced at times remarka-

ble effects. Is any one so scrupulous in regard to lay-preaching as to disapprove such labors? Is there not more reason to say, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." Would, especially, that our Western churches had many such members to carry the Gospel into the desolate regions around them; to widen the influence of the ministry, and prepare the way for the organization of new churches whenever the increase of population may demand it. What pastor, burdened with the care of a great moral waste, would not rejoice in such aid?

These labors were remarkably fruitful. At the several stations where meetings were conducted, almost exclusively by the brethren of this association, there were about one hundred hopeful conversions. The association met at the house of one of their number every Saturday evening, when the brethren reported their labors for the past week, and made their appointments for the next. For this meeting Mr. Dwight's house was always open, and such was the interest felt in it that a spacious parlor was generally crowded. Here originated the plan of visiting sister churches by lay-delegates. The members of the association went out two by two, by invitation, to visit almost all the churches in this section of the State, and even extended their visits to churches sixty or seventy miles distant. Mr. Dwight made many of these visits in person; and when he could not go

himself he would manifest his engagedness in the cause, by assuming the sole care of business at home, in order to enable his partner, Mr. T. Dwight Williams, (whose name is still fragrant in the memory of the pious,) to engage in these more delightful labors abroad. His horse and carriage were always at the service of the brethren in their missionary tours, and were in such constant employment that the animal became extensively known as "the missionary horse."

These visits to neighboring churches were greatly blessed in the promotion of revivals of religion. At least twenty-five out of thirty-one congregations in New Haven county, which were visited by the brethren of this association, were soon after favored with an out-pouring of the Spirit, and between fifteen hundred and two thousand souls, in this single county, were hopefully converted to Christ. The General Association of Connecticut state in their Report in June, 1822, that more than three thousand had been added to the Congregational churches in the State during the year which then closed. We have already seen that five thousand were added in the preceding year.

This statement is not intended to intimate that the labors of Mr. Dwight, or of the brethren associated with him, produced these wonderful effects. It was "the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes." The glory belongs to Him alone. Yet the Lord was pleased to employ this particular instrumentality for

the promotion of his great work ; and as far as the labors and prayers of a private Christian (who was neither a Whitfield nor a Nettleton) can promote the salvation of sinners, so far the subject of this memoir has been honored and rewarded with the cheering welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The preceding statements are made upon the authority of a gentleman who often accompanied Mr. Dwight on these errands of love, and who, with many others, can bear witness to his zeal and fidelity in his Master's service. It may be interesting to subjoin a somewhat similar narrative of these visits of the brethren, from the pen of Mr. Dwight himself. It is taken from a biographical sketch of Mr. Williams, published in the *Christian Intelligencer* in 1831. By substituting Mr. Dwight's name for that of Mr. Williams, the reader will see how faithfully he has portrayed his own character and labors in describing those of his friend and partner.

"As we have lately followed to the grave the remains of our much respected brother in Christ, Mr. T. Dwight Williams, whose labors in the cause of his Lord and Master were well known, and often witnessed by you and myself, I feel unwilling that the example he set in Christian activity, in obedience to the precepts of the gospel, should pass unnoticed. It

may be useful to the young men who have recently united with the family of Christ, to have the example of one whose light shone with no doubtful radiance, clearly exhibited, at least in some of its most striking characteristics.

“Many who read this article, will remember the great reformation which took place in New Haven, in the years 1820 and 1821. That gracious effusion of the Divine Spirit, exhibited to the eye of the intelligent disciple of Christ, several peculiarities; but none which to me seemed so remarkable as the earnest and long continued labors of our Christian brethren. These exertions were reduced to system. A regularly organized plan was adopted. The individuals who were to be called upon to act, subscribed a written document, subjecting themselves on certain evenings of each week, to be in readiness to engage in conferences, at the house and place to which they should be directed by the Superintendent. These conferences were held in various parts of the city, and were extended to the villages, where the brethren were welcomed with entire cordiality. In the front of this band of *working Christians*, was ever found our much respected brother, whose departure we lament, and whose memory will be affectionately cherished by many a follower of the Lord Jesus, who has reason to trace the first serious impression on his own mind, to the truths which fell from his lips. As a part of the system of operations then adopted, these

brethren convened every Saturday evening, for prayer and praise. On this occasion, a report was made of each meeting which had been held; of the convictions and conversions which were known to have occurred; and of the revivals of religion in the neighboring towns and churches of which intelligence had been received. Of the striking exhibitions of brotherly love, of animation in the cause of truth, and of zeal, guided by knowledge, which were manifested on these occasions; and particularly of the hearty cooperation of our departed brother, the vivid traces can never be obliterated from the recollection of those who survive. And when we advert to the great numbers (not less than one hundred and seventy-five) who were converted in our villages during that revival, chiefly through the instrumentality of these brethren,—for they often went out to the high-ways and hedges and compelled them to come in, through the force of truth,—we have reason to believe that in the final day, many a sinner, saved from the wrath to come, will point to our departed brother as his spiritual father.

“But my object is not so much to insist on the labors in our villages, as to state and explain a different course of efforts, which, so far as my information extends, was new in our churches, commencing in the year 1821; and which, by the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, was crowned with surprising success. In order to place the subject clear-

ly before the mind, I observe, that the revival of religion in New Haven, at the time I have mentioned, was a great work; an out-pouring of the Divine Spirit, more signal and powerful than had ever been known in the State. It extended to all denominations of Christians in the city, and the anxious inquirer was found in almost every family. The churches at that time, in this region of country, had settled down into a state of formalism. Christians, when they examined the evidences of their discipleship to Christ, were under the necessity of looking back to years which had passed by, and to exertions made at the time of their conversion, and not to the present state of their active obedience, or the ardor of their present religious affections. While the churches around us were in this state of apathy and indifference, the intelligence of the wonderful displays of divine grace, as exhibited in New Haven, was circulated far and wide. As the sound fell on the ear, the attention was excited, and some desires for a revival of religion among themselves, arose in the hearts of the followers of Christ; desires which, although at first faint and feeble, grew more distinct and vivid, as the subject was contemplated, and the intelligence repeated. Information concerning the wonderful works of God among us was transmitted by letters, which, in some instances, were read publicly before the congregations assembled on the Sabbath. By this means the churches were prepared for

the personal visits of brethren from New Haven, and the attention of the people was awakened to receive their communications.

“The first visit was made to the church in Derby, by a request communicated through their minister. Soon after this, applications were received from other churches in the vicinity, that similar visits might be made to them; and as the animating effects of these efforts became apparent, the solicitude to see the brethren became greater and greater. I have now on hand, of those which have been preserved, a file of nearly fifty letters, received from the pastors of churches, urging the New Haven brethren to come and hold meetings with their people. In order to prevent jealousies, at an early period in this course of labors, a rule was adopted not to go to any place when the minister did not unite with the church in the application; and this regulation was strictly adhered to, except in one or two cases, and in those instances it was departed from only through erroneous information.

“The labors of the Christian brethren who went out two and two on these occasions, after the primitive example, were substantially as follows:—they met the assemblies of people when they were invited, at the time appointed, usually at the meeting-house, as the numbers drawn together were too large in most instances for a common dwelling-house, and held a *conference* in the manner customary throughout New

England. Reading the scriptures, prayer, singing a hymn, and exhortation to the impenitent, always formed the chief part of the exercises. The object of the speaker in his exhortation was to elucidate some important scriptural truth, and to apply it to the conscience in a pungent and familiar manner. The condemnation of the sinner by the Divine law, and the only way of escape by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, were held up to view in a prominent manner. The members of the church were likewise addressed with affection; a rehearsal of the most remarkable incidents in the great work of saving love at New Haven, was made; individual cases of conversion which were peculiar, were related; and all the means within their power were used by the visiting brethren to arouse the church to prayer and labors for a revival of religion among themselves.

“There was no person who insisted on immediate submission to Christ more strenuously than Mr. Williams. This was a theme on which he delighted to dwell. He appealed to the commands of God, to the sinner’s love of happiness, to the worth of the soul, to the love of Christ, to the influences of the Holy Spirit, and to the retributions of eternity. His addresses to Christians, and his prayers, warmed their hearts, rekindled their zeal, animated their resolution, and stimulated them to active exertions in the salvation of those who were in danger of perishing. Neither the heats of summer nor the frosts of winter stopped

him in these visits of mercy; and in several instances, he breasted severe snow-storms rather than fail to meet those who had assembled to hear from him the wonders of redeeming love. He acted upon the principle, that the present moment must be improved, because we know not what a day may bring forth. Christians were exhorted to commence their operations before the meeting closed, and plans were discussed and matured for attending conferences every week or oftener, in different districts of the town; and when practicable, the persons who were to conduct them, designated; plans for visiting from house to house were formed, and female circles for prayer recommended and urged. A part or the whole of the next day was spent in calling on individuals, both in and out of the church, exhorting and warning them to come to an immediate decision—to commence at once a life of active obedience.

“The effects of these labors were surprising. It seemed as if it was the pleasure of God to work by feeble means, that it might appear in a lucid manner, that although he chose to dispense the gift of eternal life through the instrumentality of his children, yet the efficiency was entirely from Him. It seemed as if God had determined to exhibit in sunbeams to the churches, the strong and intimate connection between the means which were used—means appointed by himself, and the blessing which followed—the regeneration of the soul.

“The effect on the people was great. Large assemblies collected in almost every instance. It was no uncommon thing to learn that persons who had not attended public worship on the Sabbath for five years, were present on these occasions. An unusual degree of solemnity was apparent; agitations of mind were visible in the countenance; the impenitent were pricked in the heart; God was present by the influences of the Holy Spirit; saints were revived and animated. I have been informed by a pastor living in a neighboring town, that when he came to examine the candidates for admission to his church, he found twenty-five individuals who dated their first impressions to a meeting held by two of our brethren in his society. The effect on the church of Christ was great. Christians awaked from their long slumbers; they shook off the torpor which had been accumulating for years; they humbled themselves before their Lord and Master; they became earnest and fervent in prayer,—and proved their prayers to be sincere, by entering vigorously into the field of labor. Revivals of religion commenced, and spread over this section of country. The intelligence received from one week to another, cheered and animated the disciples of Christ; and when conveyed to the heavenly world, undoubtedly awoke new raptures of joy among the saints and angels who surround the throne of God.

“The number of visits made by the brethren to the churches within fifty miles, was more than one hundred and fifty. It formed a part of the plan of operations, that in every instance where a church were visited, within a week or two they should be seen a second time, in order to learn their progress in active obedience—thus copying the example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, when he said to Barnabas, “Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Lord, and see how they do.” Three or four times the brethren went out to those places, which were within a convenient distance. The number of revivals which followed this course of measures, was between thirty and forty; and some of them, powerful effusions of the Divine Spirit.

“In contemplating the wonderful success attending these operations, not one of those who entered the field of labor, would be more ready to disclaim any personal merit than our respected brother, who has bidden us and the world a final farewell. The spontaneous emotions of his heart were, ‘not unto us, not unto us, but to thy great name be all the glory.’”

It will be seen from the preceding narrative, that these labors of the brethren were in no way designed to interfere with the prerogatives of pastors; nor were they supposed to interfere with them at the time. On the contrary, they met the hearty approbation of pastors throughout the State. Many inter-

esting letters might be selected from the file to which Mr. Dwight refers, to show the cordiality of ministers toward these lay-deputations. The following, from two of the most distinguished clergymen in the State, may serve as specimens of the whole :

SOUTH BRITAIN, Feb. 18th, 1821.

Dear Sir :—I write, not because I have much intelligence to communicate, but because I know you feel interested to hear from us, and also because I have one or two requests to make. Your visit to this church and people, I hope and trust will not be lost. The members of the church who were present, appear to be very considerably excited, and those who were absent feel much disappointed. All, so far as I can learn, are very grateful for your visit, and are very desirous that it should be repeated. Our congregation to-day was not very full, owing to the fact that the roads in some places are very much blocked by snow drifts, but it was more than commonly attentive and solemn. The same is true of the conference this evening. There were three prayer meetings in different parts of the parish last evening. The church have agreed to hold a weekly prayer meeting, and several of the sisters in different districts have promised to use their influence to establish little meetings for prayer among the females. I have no doubt that two or three such meetings will be immediately commenced. On the whole, I feel

that things are assuming a more favorable aspect among us, though nothing decisive as yet appears. I feel that another visit from the brethren of New Haven is very desirable, and that it be made as soon as may be. If possible, I would wish it might be during the next week. If, dear sir, you can send me word by the bearer, that we may expect a visit next week, and that Southbury and Roxbury will be visited at the same time, I will take it upon me to communicate the intelligence to those parishes.

I am yours, with much affection,

MR. CHAS. SHERMAN.

B. TYLER.

P. S. One reason that has induced me to write, is that you may communicate the substance of this to the next Saturday evening prayer meeting, and that we may again have a special remembrance in the prayers of our New Haven brethren. B. T.

FAIRFIELD, Feb. 23d, 1821.

My Dear Friends:—I have wondered that some two of brother Taylor's church members have not come as far as Fairfield, in their evangelical excursions. But I have just learned that you and your fellow-laborers do not go except where you are invited. Had I known this before, I should have been among the foremost and most urgent in soliciting a visit from you. I do now most cordially and vehemently desire you to "come over into Macedonia" and help us. I stand in need of you to strengthen my hands and en-

courage my heart. If you will appoint a time, and give me notice, I will ensure a large and attentive auditory. You will also refresh and greatly oblige a number among us who are striving together for a renewal of our late revival.

Wishing you great success in your eminently Christian enterprise, I am your brother in the Lord,

NATH'L HEWIT.

MR. CHARLES SHERMAN, }
MR. DWIGHT WILLIAMS. }

SOUTH BRITAIN, March 4th, 1821.

Dear Sir :—I promised to write to you, but have time to say but little. I can state generally, that things are assuming a more and more interesting appearance. Our preparatory lecture was on Friday, and as Mr. S. was with us, we appointed a meeting in the evening. A large number of the youth assembled, and there were very visible tokens of the special presence of God. On Saturday evening, the neighbors assembled at my house for a prayer meeting. It was a very solemn meeting, and at the close of it, one of the young ladies with whom you conversed when here, was found to be in great distress. Her distress still continues. There was much solemnity on the congregation to-day, and the conference this evening was crowded. We had to make new seats in the school-house to accommodate all who came. An awful stillness pervaded the assembly,

and many were in tears. This, in brief, is the state of things among us. With the exception of Miss —, I know not that there are any under deep conviction; but there is very considerable excitement, and I hope that Christians are praying. I feel that another visit from our New Haven brethren would be very desirable, and as speedily as possible. I wish it might be on the next week. Should any of the brethren come, I hope they will calculate to have an interview with the church in the afternoon.

Yours affectionately,

DEA. CHAS. BOSTWICK.

B. TYLER.

The pastors of the two Congregational churches then in New Haven, say, in the narrative inserted at pp. 20—26; “The brethren of our two churches have also manifested a very becoming zeal and activity for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. They have come forward like men sensible of their duty, and desirous to do it; and contributed much, very much, to relieve the labors and strengthen the hands of their pastors. Their conferences and prayer meetings, conducted altogether by themselves, have been important auxiliaries to the great work carried on by the Divine Spirit.”

The General Association in its Report for the same year, mentions as one pleasing feature of the revival, that intercourse among brethren of different churches which has now been described. “Churches

have also felt a solicitude for their sister churches. Not content with barren wishes for their mutual welfare, they have visited each other, to go together to pray before the Lord, and to talk of the things of his kingdom. They have spoken often one to another, and the Lord has hearkened and heard."

The Hartford North Consociation, in the narrative of the revival within their limits already referred to, corroborates this testimony in the following words: "Among the means by which the revival has been commenced in several of our parishes, we mention with confidence, the intercourse which individuals belonging to them have had with other parishes, where the work had been previously begun; together with statements in public assemblies concerning the work, and exhortations to the churches, calling upon them to prepare the way of the Lord."

Viewed at this distance, these labors appear to have been not only in the main unexceptionable, but highly commendable. They are such labors as might often be engaged in by private Christians, with the most happy results both to themselves and others. True, there may have been an occasional indiscretion on the part of some of these brethren. In their visits to neighboring churches, they may sometimes have forgotten that they were only laymen; sometimes they may have indulged in censoriousness toward those who did not sanction all their measures, or who seemed less active than themselves. But

such evils, if they existed at all, were but trivial, in comparison with the good accomplished by these fraternal visits, and they were evils which a judicious pastor could easily counteract. Nothing is more natural than for those who are living continually in that state of mental excitement produced by a revival, to say and do rash things, and to be uncharitable toward those who are behind them in zeal. The infirmities of our nature will often mar our holiest undertakings. But shall we attempt no good because that good may not be unmixed with evil? In every extensive revival yet witnessed, there has been something which a sound judgment could not approve. But there was less that was exceptionable in connection with those revivals in which the visits of the associated brethren of New Haven formed such a prominent feature, than in connection with some more recent revivals; far less than in the "great awakening" a century ago.

In 1742, the General Assembly of Connecticut, chiefly at the instance of "certain ministers near New Haven," passed "An act for regulating abuses and correcting disorders in ecclesiastical affairs;" an act directed against itinerant preachers and exhorters, forbidding them "to preach, or exhort the people, in any parish not immediately under their charge," unless expressly invited by "the settled minister and the major part of the church of said parish," under penalty of being "denied and secluded the benefit of

any law of this colony, made for the support and encouragement of the ministry," if settled within the colony, or of being "sent, as a vagrant person, by warrant from any one assistant or Justice of the peace, from constable to constable, out of the bounds of this colony," if not an inhabitant thereof.*

The Consociation of New Haven county, at its meeting in September of the same year, thanked the Legislature for passing this Act, and prayed that it might continue in force.

The Association of the county of New Haven, assembled in New Haven, Feb. 19th, 1744-5, and issued a "Declaration, concerning the Rev. Mr. *George Whitfield*, his conduct, and the state of religion at this day." In this declaration they say,† "We can in no wise approve of his *itinerancy*, in going from country to country, from town to town, and from one place to another, under a pretence of preaching the Gospel. We think him guilty of uncharitable censoriousness, and slanderous reproaching, in the vile aspersions, bitter reflections, and condemnatory censures he hath passed upon the main body of the ministry in this land, though the most of them he was a perfect stranger to, and of most of them it may be boldly said, that they are sound in the faith, and of blameless conversation, and his superiors both in age and abilities." Among the "evils and mischiefs

* Trumbull.

† Am. Bib. Rep. Vol. vii. p. 187.

which have followed his conduct," they enumerate the following: "The ministry is cast into much contempt, and their usefulness greatly clogged and obstructed;—unchristian censoriousness and hard judging abound; love stands afar off, and charity cannot enter;—numbers of *illiterate exhorters* swarm about, *as locusts from the bottomless pit*. For all which reasons, and others which might be mentioned, it is our judgment that the said George Whitfield should not be allowed to preach any where, or to have communion; and we do hereby publish and declare, that it is our purpose and determination, that we will not admit the said Mr. Whitfield into any of our pulpits, nor receive him to communion in any of our churches, and that we will caution the people under our charge against going to hear him any where, till he hold forth repentance according to the Gospel rule, and *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*."

If Mr. Whitfield fared so badly at the hands of settled ministers, if his labors were considered so prejudicial to their usefulness, and his occasional extravagances so injurious to their influence, it would not be surprising if the labors of these unlicensed, though not "illiterate" exhorters, who sometimes, it must be owned, spoke plainly and perhaps injudiciously of the faults of ministers, excited jealousy and apprehension in the minds of some of the clergy. Here and there a minister who questioned the expediency of inviting the New Haven brethren into his

parish, but was constrained to do so by his people, may have felt that lay-visiting and lay-preaching were serious evils. Yet as these brethren were for the most part intelligent and judicious men, and as they never visited a church knowingly without the approbation of its pastor, no open difficulty occurred between them and the pastors. We have seen, in fact, that their labors were very generally approved and encouraged by pastors in all parts of the State, and that many instead of apprehending a visit as an evil, were apprehensive only that their churches would not be favored with these visits of love. The precedent, however, was thought by some to be dangerous; perhaps it was abused by improper and incompetent men.

Several years after, the Consociation of the Eastern District of New Haven County, feeling that the "encroachments of private members of the churches on the ministerial office" were so frequent and injurious as to call for their animadversion, adopted a minute upon the subject, which they ordered to be published. After expressing their approbation of "meetings among the brethren for prayer, for free conversation on religious subjects, and the familiar investigation of the Scriptures,—meetings for mutual exhortation and comfort," and of a "readiness to visit and converse with the impenitent on their guilt, their danger and duty," they proceed to say :

"In reference to religious meetings conducted by

private members of other churches, even if such persons may be in a course of preparation for the ministry, but unlicensed to preach: the Consociation are unanimous in the opinion, that meetings so conducted have not unfrequently a very unhappy influence on the brethren of the churches where they are held; sometimes by producing or cherishing a sense of inferiority in their minds, and preventing them from acquiring those qualifications which would enable them essentially to aid their pastor in seasons when he needs their assistance; and sometimes by producing a feverish excitement, which leads to disorders and divisions. Such meetings have an unhappy influence also on the private Christians who are sent, or who voluntarily go forth for the purpose of conducting them; and such meetings are most generally so conducted, as to encroach on the appropriate duties or services of authorized preachers of the Gospel. The whole history and experience of the church show, that they are highly detrimental to the peace and prosperity of Zion. They beget or strengthen a desire to be teachers. They tend to produce divisions in churches, to disparage the work and importance of the ministry, and bring in the disorders which have so frequently swept over fair portions of the Lord's visible heritage, and turned the fruitful field into a wilderness.

“ While we do therefore express an opinion that great caution is requisite on the part of pastors and

church officers, in the introduction of private members of other churches, and of all persons not regularly vested with authority to preach the word, for the purpose of conducting religious meetings, we do especially disapprove of meetings or Bible classes, set up and managed by such persons, without the invitation and approbation of the pastors, or, in case of vacant churches, without the approbation and concurrence of the brethren of those churches.

“ We do further affectionately entreat the pastors and the members of our churches, to regard the order which Christ has instituted, and to watch against all innovations on that order.”

To this declaration of the Consociation, Mr. Dwight made the following rejoinder, through the columns of the Religious Intelligencer, from which it will be seen that he was extremely tenacious of the rights of the laity.

“ In the Intelligencer of the 20th inst., I read with some surprise ‘an extract from the minutes of the Consociation of the Eastern District of New Haven County,’ and while reading it, certain texts of Scripture came to my mind, which I beg leave to state.

“ *Numbers*, xi. 26—29. ‘But there remained two of the men in the camp, Eldad and Medad, and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant

of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, *Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets.'*

“ *Acts, viii. 1, 4.* ‘And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles—Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.’

“ *Luke, ix. 49, 50* ‘And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, *forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us.*’

“ *1 Cor. i. 1. 2.* ‘Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs, and ours.*’

“ In connection with chap. xiv. 1. ‘Follow after charity, and *desire* spiritual gifts, *but rather that ye may prophesy.*’

“ 3. ‘*He that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.*’

“ 23. ‘If therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues,

and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

"24. 'But if *all prophesy*, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all.'

"29. 'Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.'

"31. '*For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.*'

"32. 'And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.'

"33. 'For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.'

"39. 'Wherefore, brethren, *covet to prophesy*, and forbid not to speak with tongues.'

"40. 'Let all things be done decently and in order.'

"In the course of their communication, the Con-sociation say, 'We call upon the brethren to strengthen the hands of their pastors, by co-operating with them in their efforts to do good, and by discountenancing all attempts to throw open the ministry of the Gospel to the common use of *unauthorized persons*, or persons who with seeming, or perhaps real, but indiscreet zeal to do good, thrust themselves into the appropriate labors of ministers, *without regular license to preach.*'

"It seems that 'unauthorized persons' are those *who have not been licensed by an Association of ministers*. Now Mr. Editor, I would thank you to point

out that part of the Scriptures, where the disciples of Christ are commanded *not to preach until they have been licensed by an Association of ministers*. I want chapter and verse. If it cannot be done, it will bring to my mind another text, *Matthew xv. 9*. 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men.'

Before dismissing the topic of lay-preaching, it may be pardonable in the writer to offer one or two remarks upon it, though his opinions may not be satisfactory to some of his more experienced brethren in the ministry. The subject is one of practical interest to every church and pastor. I would yield to no man in my estimate of the importance of the Christian ministry. I regard it as Christ's own institution; an institution permanently identified with his Gospel; an institution which he has honored and blessed in every age, and which has the promise of his favor "to the end of the world;" an institution which has been, and must be the chief agency in the evangelization of mankind. I believe that the true method of evangelizing our own western country, is precisely that which the Apostles adopted as soon as it was practicable, viz: to organize churches and institute an eldership in each, to be the "bishops" or overseers, "pastors," "teachers," "leaders," "guides," and "guardians" of the flock. Paul and Barnabas, after having preached the Gospel and gathered churches in many parts of Asia Minor, retraced their steps for

the purpose of strengthening the faith of the converts whom they had made, and of establishing the institutions of the Gospel on a firm basis. This they did, by explaining more fully the doctrines of Christianity, and by constituting elders in every church. (Acts xiv : 23.) The same policy must be pursued everywhere, if we would make the influence of the Gospel permanent ;—churches must be planted, and ministers appointed and sustained. Nothing can be more preposterous than the idea of evangelizing the West by means of books and tracts, and itinerants, without a settled ministry. However important such instrumentalities may be as preparations for and auxiliaries to the labors of pastors, the most economical and expeditious, as well as the only sure way of securing the ascendancy of true religion in our land, is by an educated and permanent ministry.

Lest this should be regarded as mere special pleading in behalf of my own profession, I will substantiate what I have said by the testimony of a *layman*, whose opinion upon a subject which he has carefully studied, is as much to be relied on as that of any man living. Says Mr. Webster, in his manly and convincing argument in the Girard case, before the Supreme Court of the United States, “ There is nothing set forth more authentically in the New Testament, than the appointment of a Christian ministry ; and he who does not believe this, does not, and cannot believe the rest. It is true, that Christian ministers in

this age of the world, are selected in different ways by different sects and denominations. But there are still ministers of all sects and denominations. Why should we shut our eyes to the whole history of Christianity? Is it not the preaching of ministers of the Gospel that has evangelized the more civilized part of the world? Why do we at this day enjoy the lights and benefits of Christianity ourselves? Do we not owe it to the instrumentality of the Christian ministry? The ministers of Christianity, departing from Asia Minor, traversing Asia, Africa, through Europe to Iceland, Greenland, and the poles of the earth, suffering all things, enduring all things, hoping all things, raising men everywhere from the ignorance of idol-worship to the knowledge of the true God, and everywhere bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel, have only been acting in obedience to the Divine Institution; they were commanded to go forth, and they have gone forth, and they still go forth. They have sought, and they still seek to be able to preach the Gospel to every creature under the whole heaven. And where was Christianity ever received, where were its truths ever poured into the human heart, where did its waters, springing up into everlasting life, ever burst forth, except in the track of the Christian ministry? Did we ever hear of an instance, does history record an instance of any part of the globe Christianized by lay-preachers or lay-teachers? And descending from kingdoms

and empires, to cities and countries, to parishes and villages, do we not all know that wherever Christianity has been carried, and wherever it has been taught by human agency, that agency was the agency of ministers of the Gospel?"

But while I thus "magnify mine office," while I would be jealous of the rights and influence of pastors, and would defend the pulpit against all disorderly encroachments, I would not impose unwarrantable restraints upon any class of men who desire to proclaim the "unsearchable riches of Christ." It is a common tendency with those who are charged with a specific duty, to look upon themselves as a "standing order," having the *exclusive* control of every thing pertaining to the object of their "mission." Hence among ministers, we often find a jealousy of any thing like *preaching*, by those who are not ordained to this particular work.

But what is that *lay*-preaching which is thus condemned? The Roman Catholic and the Churchman agree in telling us that the preaching of "Christ and him crucified" by those whose Apostolic grace and commission exceed the compass of a bishop's fingers, is *lay*-preaching. They have a way of measuring a man's qualifications to preach the Gospel, which it must be owned, has the merit of being as *tangible* as it is superficial; but not of confining the virtue of "Apostolical succession" within such limits as prevent it from becoming a "cheap" and "vulgar"

thing. Unfortunately too, none but the most unenlightened and bigoted sectarians, those who in this land of the Pilgrims are "schismatics," and "dissenters" from the pure faith and worship of their fathers, can be induced to sanction a criterion so absurd. The Christian world, indeed, suffers the weakness, since in a free government, it must always be a comparatively harmless piece of folly, which may stand in lieu of some more hurtful superstition.

But do not those ministers of Christ who are thus disowned by prelatists, often declaim against "lay-preaching" as foolishly in their turn?—acting in this respect, more like subalterns in a despotism, who transmit an insult from one grade to another, than as the members of a Christian democracy.

The truth is, that no invariable rule can be laid down upon this subject. If by lay-preaching is meant, the practice common among laymen of exhorting each other in meetings for social worship, who would not encourage it? If it means the practice of giving a more formal and public address, at stated times, upon some topic of religion, what objection can there be to such preaching, if the Christian brother who engages in it is competent to give instruction in religious truth? Mr. Dwight was accustomed, at one time, to expound the Scriptures to a Bible class composed of from fifty to a hundred individuals. Is such an exercise, so profitable to old and young, to be proscribed as lay-preaching? Yet it was often real preaching, and that too upon the Sabbath.

Suppose that a lay-brother holds religious meetings on the Sabbath among those who do not enjoy the stated ministry of the word. What then? Does it infringe upon the prerogatives of ministers, for private Christians to proclaim the Gospel to all who will hear them? But it may be said, that the tendency of such labors will be to undermine the Christian ministry. It would indeed be unfortunate, if these labors should in any case be substituted for those of a settled clergyman. But where the people are without a settled clergyman, is not lay-preaching better than none? And even if a church should prefer lay-preaching to any other, though their choice might be unwise, who could object to it? Preaching in such a case, would cease to be mere *lay-preaching*, and become the preaching of such a ministry as the church approved. Such labors on the part of private Christians, surely, can never injuriously affect a pastor who is fitted for his work. They can hardly fail to extend his influence, and to prepare new materials for his labors. If incompetent or officious persons attempt to make themselves teachers, they will soon find their level in every congregation of ordinary intelligence. A judicious pastor can so foster the disposition of private Christians to become exhorters, as virtually to regulate it, and to make it a powerful auxiliary.

I was always glad to hear it said, that "Mr. Dwight could explain the Bible as well as a minis-

ter;" for I felt, that I could leave the charge of a religious conference in his hands, with entire satisfaction to the church. He was always ready to assist his pastor in such a meeting; but he never thought of taking the direction of it in my presence, or of performing any duty which belongs especially to ministers. His doctrine was, that the pastor should *always lead*, but never *rule* the church. When I remember the labors of Mr. Dwight in the weekly conference, and especially his efforts to sustain religious meetings in the suburbs of the city; when I am told that his labors and those of his brethren, in Fair Haven, twenty years ago, produced a reformation of morals which prepared the way for the organization of a church in that village; and when I read the record of the numerous revivals which originated in the blessing of God on similar labors,* so far from joining in an

* Among Mr. Dwight's papers I find the following list of churches which were visited by himself and his associates during the revival of 1820-21. It may give the reader a more definite idea of the extent of the labors of those brethren than is conveyed by the preceding narrative. When we consider that these visits were made by men in active business, some of whom spent a part of every week, for a considerable period, in promoting revivals of religion, we cannot but admire the zeal and self-denial of that devoted band, and pray that their spirit may actuate all the followers of Christ.

The figures in the following list denote the number of visits made to a church, and the letter R, indicates that the visit was followed by a revival of religion.

Bethel, R.; Bethlem, R.; Branford, 2, R.; Bridgewater; Brook-

indiscriminate condemnation of lay-preaching, I cannot but praise God for what he has done through this instrumentality, and pray that he would make it even more efficient.

The true doctrine in respect to lay-preaching, was happily stated two hundred years ago, by Oliver Cromwell, who was as ready, and perhaps as competent, to conduct a theological controversy as a civil revolution. While Cromwell was besieging the Castle of Edinburgh, he caused the following note to be sent to the Governor, relative to certain of the more

field, 2, R.; Burwel's Farms, many, R.; Cheshire; Chester, R.; Colchester; Columbia, R.; Danbury; Derby, 3, R.; Durham; East Haven; East Guilford, R.; Exeter; Fairfield, 2, R.; Farmington, R.; Greenwich, 2, R.; Guilford, 2, R.; Hamden; Hartford; Humphreysville, 3; Killingworth; Lebanon; Meriden, 2, R.; Middlebury, 2, R.; Middletown, R.; Milford, 6, R.; New Milford, 2, R.; New Stratford, R.; North Branford, 2, R.; North Bristol, R.; Northford, both Societies; North Guilford, R.; North Haven, 2, R.; North Milford, 3, R.; Norwalk, R.; Norwich, both Societies; Norwich Landing; Oxford, 2, R.; Pettypaug, R.; Reading; Ripton, 2, R.; Roxbury, 2, R.; Salem; Saybrook; South Britain, 3, R.; Southbury, 2, R.; South Farms; Southington, R.; Stratford, 3, R.; Trumbull; Wallingford, 2; Washington, R.; Waterbury; Watertown; Westbrook, R.; West Haven, many, R.; Weston; Wilton, R.; Windham; Woodbury, 2, R.; Woodbridge, both Societies, R.

Total—95 visits, 64 Churches, 38 revivals.

In several cases, brethren have been out and held meetings at different places, when we do not call them formal visits. Applications for visits on hand, upwards of 20. Many revivals still in progress.

rigid ministers of the reformed Kirks, who had taken refuge in the garrison after the defeat at Downhill.

“Sir, I received command from my lord-general, to desire you to let the ministers of Edinburgh, now in the Castle with you, know that they have free liberty granted them, if they please to take the pains, to preach in their several churches; and that my lord hath given special command, both to officers and soldiers, that they shall not in the least be molested.

Sept. 9th, 1650.

EDW. WHALLEY.”

The ministers replied on the same day, that they had resolved “to reserve themselves for better times, and to wait upon Him who hath hidden his face for a while from the sons of Jacob.”

To this Cromwell sent a rejoinder, bearing the same date, which called forth another letter from the clergy, in which, after enumerating various grievances, they state that “they are especially indignant, *that men of mere civil place and employment should usurp the calling of the ministry*, to the scandal of the reformed Kirks, particularly in Scotland, and contrary to the discipline therein established; to the maintenance whereof, they insisted that Cromwell continued bound by the solemn league and covenant.”

Cromwell now felt called upon to defend his views of ecclesiastical polity; and accordingly, we have the singular spectacle of a great military commander engaging in a theological controversy with a besieged

enemy. Homer narrates the sharp disputes which often took place between his heroes prior to an engagement ; but these were commonly disputes about personal dignity or valor, or some point of national honor. The great master of the Grecian Epic never conceived of such a polemic hero as this same sturdy Puritan General. How well he acquitted himself in this religious war, may be seen by the following extract from his reply to the ministers, dated Sept. 12.

“Sir : Because I am at some reasonable good leisure, I cannot let such a grosse mistake and unsequential reasonings passe without some notice taken of them.” After commenting upon one or two points in the letter, he proceeds : “Thirdly, you say you have just cause to regret, that men of civil employments should usurp the calling and employment of the ministry, to the scandall of the reformed Kirks, &c.

“Are you trubled that Christ is preached ? Is preaching so inclusive in your function ? Doth it scandalize the reformed Kirks, and Scotland in particular ? Is it against the Covenant ? Away with the Covenant, if this be so. I thought the Covenant and these would have been willing that any should speak good of the name of Christ ; if not, it is no covenant of God’s approving, nor are the Kirks you mention in so much the spouse of Christ. Where doe you finde in the Scripture a ground to warrant such an assertion, that preaching is included in your function ? Though an approbation from men hath order

in it, and may do well, yet he that hath not a better warrant than that hath none at all. I hope He that ascended up on high may give his gifts to whom he please ; and if those gifts be the seale of mission, be not envious, although Eldad and Medad prophesie. You know who bids us covet earnestly the best gifts, but chiefly that we may prophesie, which the Apostle explains there to be a speaking to instruction, and edification, and comfort, which the instructed, edified and comforted, can best tell the energy and effect of ; if such evidence be, I say again, take heed you envy not for your own sakes, lest you be guilty of a greater fault than Moses reprov'd in Joshua, for envying for his sake ; indeed, you erre through the mistake of the Scriptures ; approbation is an act of conveniency in respect of order, not of necessity, to give faculty to preach the Gospel. Your pretended fear lest error should step in, is like the man who would keep all the wine out of the country, lest men should be drunk.* It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deny a man the liberty he hath by nature, upon a supposition he may abuse it ; when he doth abuse it, judge. If a man speak foolishly, you suffer

* Perhaps Cromwell would not have chosen this illustration, if he had lived in these days of *tee-totalism*. But still, the principle of the illustration holds ; for however desirable the prohibition of *dram-selling* may be, it would be unwise legislation to prohibit the manufacture, importation or sale of an article, which has many valuable uses, simply because some men misuse it to their hurt.

him gladly, because ye are wise; if enviously, the truth more appears by your conviction; stop such a man's mouth with sound words that cannot be gain-said; if blasphemously, or to the disturbance of the publique peace, let the civil magistrate punish him; if truly, rejoice in the truth: and if you will call our speakings together since we came into Scotland, to provoke one another to love and to good works, to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance from dead works, to charity and love towards you, to pray and mourn for you, and for the bitter returns to, and incredulity of, our professions of love to you—of the truth of which we have made our solemn and humble appeals to the Lord our God, which he hath heard and borne witness to—if these things be scandalous to the Kirk, and against the Covenant, because done by men of civill callings, we rejoice in them, notwithstanding what you say.”

The doctrine of Congregationalists respecting ordination, could not have been better expressed than by these words:—“approbation is an act of *conven- iency* in respect of order, not of *necessity* to give faculty to preach the Gospel.” Might not those ministers who hold, that none should proclaim the word of God but such as have been ordained in a certain mode, learn a useful lesson from the example of Paul? He rejoiced when *Christ* was preached; whether by an Apostle, or a private Christian; whether of “love,” or of “contention.” * * * * “And many of the *breth-*

ren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed, preach Christ, even of envy and strife; and some also, of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”—(Phil. i: 14–19.)

We have now seen under what influences Mr. Dwight formed the habit of active Christian effort for which he was so distinguished. Qualified by nature and education to take the lead in plans of usefulness, he was thrown by the providence of God, early in his Christian life, into circumstances which called forth all his talents and energy in the service of his Master. When brought under the quickening influences of the Spirit, and surrounded by praying Christians and inquiring sinners; when sought after by ministers and churches from abroad, to instruct and edify them in the knowledge of Christ; when made the instrument of the conversion of souls in various parts of the State, and blessed with the joy of those who “turn many to righteousness,”—then it was, that his religious character assumed a tone above that of the generality of Christians, a tone of fervor, of decision, of faith, of prayerfulness, which it never lost. Through life, that character bore the im-

press of those memorable scenes in which it was so strikingly developed. The views which Mr. Dwight entertained of the importance of personal efforts to promote revivals of religion, and of the duties and influence of the laity, were plainly derived from the same source. They were founded upon experience no less than on the word of God.

Passing over a space of five or six years, in which Mr. Dwight was forward in every "good word and work," we come to a second great religious movement, in which he bore a conspicuous part.

In the years 1827-28, the State of Connecticut was again favored with extensive and powerful revivals of religion, through which a new channel was opened for the influence of private Christians. It was at this time, that the system known as the "Conference of the Churches," was devised; a system which was eminently adapted to strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship, and to kindle the flame of religious zeal. As the character of these conferences is but little understood by many now upon the stage, it is important to preserve some record of them, as constituting an era in the religious history of Connecticut. Fortunately, we have a somewhat minute account of this system from the pen of Mr. Dwight, who was not only familiar with its operations and results, but in a measure identified with it. The account is in the form of a letter to his brother, Mr. Jas. Dwight, and is as follows:

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 10, 1828.

My Dear Brother—Many accounts of the conferences of the churches have been given in our religious newspapers, during the last two years, particularly as having been held in the States of Maine,* New Hampshire, and the eastern part of Massachusetts. These conferences have generally been formed by the ministers and delegates of ten or fifteen churches assembling together at a central place, and employing their time in narrations of the state of religion in each church, in religious services, and in discussing questions relative to religious doctrine, or the order and discipline of the churches; and closing with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, by all the communicants who were assembled. These meetings have undoubtedly been useful, and good has resulted from them; in some few instances, I believe, revivals of religion have followed them.

* "The churches of Maine, meet by their pastors and delegates, in stated conventions called conferences. Each conference has its own constitution, and is designed to include the churches of a county, or of some other convenient district. The rules of the conference expressly forbid the exercise of any authority or control over the churches. The meetings are held, not to receive appeals or complaints, or to inquire after error and disorders, but for united prayer, for the extension of Christian intercourse and acquaintance between the members of different churches, for mutual instruction, by the discussion of such questions as arise from time to time, for devising and imparting aid to feeble churches, and for promoting in all such ways, the prosperity of religion."—(*Congregational Order*, p. 443.)

But a very different kind of meeting, although designated by the same name, has arisen, and is now continued every week in the northern section of this State, of which I will attempt to give you a particular statement. This meeting originated in Berkshire county, Massachusetts, directly north of Connecticut, last autumn, and seems to mark a new era in the Church of Christ. Revivals of religion commenced almost simultaneously in the towns of Lee and Lenox, and became very powerful. In Lee, I understand, that within the short space of eight or ten days, sixty persons were, to the eye of Christian charity, hopefully born into the kingdom of Christ. The brethren of these two churches felt a strong desire that the blessings poured out on them so bountifully, might be enjoyed by the neighboring churches; and to accomplish this object, they resolved, in compliance with the invitation of a church in the vicinity, (the North Church in Stockbridge,) that on a certain day they would send a deputation to visit them, and relate what great things the Lord had done. This notice was received kindly, and at the appointed time great numbers of Christians, and of those who had not made a profession of religion, came together to learn the wonderful works of the Lord. The deputies who met the people were laymen appointed by their respective churches, who told their story, accompanied by exhortations to repentance and faith, in a plain, but pungent and com-

mon sense manner. The result was a revival of religion in the town visited. The next week deputies were sent by request to another town, and the same blessed result followed. As the revivals increased, the number of churches represented increased, and the interest taken in these meetings was greatly extended. All the towns in Berkshire county were in this manner visited by the conference. About twenty revivals of religion took place, and about two thousand persons were hopefully converted from sin to holiness.

This statement of the wonderful works of God by his Holy Spirit in the towns in Berkshire county, I have gathered from the verbal relations of an individual, who had known the facts, and from printed communications in our religious newspapers. The account I shall now give you of what has transpired in the northwestern towns in Connecticut, I derive from individuals who have been eye-witnesses of the operations of the Divine Spirit, and from personal examination. After all the towns in Berkshire county had been visited by the delegates of the churches, the brethren, feeling that God was ever ready to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, nothing wavering, raised their eyes and extended their vision across the dividing line, into Connecticut. They sent word to one of the churches on the northern border, that a visit should be made them on a particular day, I think on Wednesday of the following week. Many assem-

bled at the time appointed, and it seemed that the Lord was present with them, and a blessing followed the Conference. The next week another church was visited in the neighborhood, and a similar blessing was granted. This took place, if I am rightly informed, in the month of March, and has been continued every week until the present time. In a few weeks it was unnecessary for the brethren from Berkshire to come down, as several of the churches in Litchfield county, which is the north-western county in Connecticut, having revivals of religion given them by the great Head of the Church, established a Conference for themselves, and they have continued these meetings until the present time, the middle of September. One of these Conferences I attended early in August. Before that time, so many churches were represented by their delegates, that it had become necessary for a second Conference to be organized. On the day I attended as a delegate, there were thirty-two churches represented in the western Conference, and I was informed there were thirty-four in the eastern.

At twelve o'clock on Wednesday the delegates assemble by themselves, and organize their body by choosing a Chairman and Secretary; a plan of their future business is also drawn up. At two o'clock a public meeting takes place in the meeting-house, at which the minister of the parish in all instances acts as moderator. The minister, the Chairman

of the delegates, and the Secretary sit in the deacon's seat. After a prayer for the divine blessing, the first business is a relation of the state of religion in each church which is represented. This relation is given by the delegates in turn as they are called upon by the Chairman. At the time I attended, more than half of these accounts were acknowledgments of the goodness of God in pouring out his Spirit on the churches, and were rendered very interesting by narrations of many striking instances of conversion. The afternoon was spent in these narrations, until a little before sun-set, when the meeting was closed with prayer by one of the brethren. The delegates remained a short time after the audience departed, when the minister appointed district conferences in different parts of the parish, of which public notice had been given, and assigned two or more delegates to each. These were held on Wednesday evening, and at the same places, a prayer meeting was held the next morning at sun-rise. At the district conference which I attended, as many as two hundred persons were present, and a good degree of solemnity prevailed. The delegates assembled the next morning at 8 o'clock to finish their business. At this time they chose four members of the Conference, to make addresses, as I shall mention hereafter, and also fixed the place where they should assemble the next week. They then adjourned to a public meeting at the meeting-house.

That meeting took place at 9 o'clock on Thursday morning. It was opened with prayer, and those brethren who had not on the preceding day an opportunity to give an account of the state of religion in the churches which they represented, were then called upon to do this service. After their narrations were completed, the minister of the place rose and mentioned, that there were many impenitent persons in his parish who were stupid and secure in sin, and he asked if there was not some member of the Conference who would address them. The brother who had been appointed to this service, then stepped forward, and made a brief address to the impenitent. The minister again said, that there were many young people in his parish who were very careless and indifferent as to the salvation of their souls, and asked if there was any brother who would address them. An address to youth was then made by the person who had been appointed for the purpose, which was about twenty minutes in length. The minister rose again, and said, that there were a number of persons in the parish who formerly hoped that they had given their hearts to Christ, but who neither went forward and united with the church, nor went back to the world, but still rested on their former hope of pardon and forgiveness; and he asked if there was any member who would speak to them. A third address was made to this class of persons, of the same length as the former. The minister then rose the fourth

time, and mentioned, that there were but seventy persons belonging to his church, twenty-three of them males, and the residue females; that he had been settled eighteen months over that church, and no accession had been made to it, by letter or by profession; and he asked if there was any one of the Conference who would make an address to professing Christians. The Chairman of the Conference, who had been chosen for this service, then addressed the church for about half an hour, on their appropriate duties. These several addresses were all solemn, and were listened to with an interest altogether unusual by every individual in the house. The brethren and sisters of the church were then assembled in the middle aisle, and one of their deacons read a confession which had been agreed to by them at a former meeting. The members of the church then solemnly renewed their covenant with God, and with each other, and after this was done, before they went to their seats, the brother who had addressed the impenitent, made some further remarks to them on the separation which had now taken place between the church and the world—referring particularly to that great separation which will take place at the judgment-seat of Christ. The members of the church then retired to their seats, and a neighboring minister who had been appointed for this purpose, addressed the minister of the place on his want of faithfulness, diligence, and zeal in his pastoral duties. When this was done, the

minister of the place rose and made a humble confession, that he had not done the work of the Lord with a single eye to his glory, as his duty required. This address to the pastor of the church, and his confession, were to my mind among the most interesting circumstances which I have ever witnessed, and excited an intense and almost breathless attention throughout the audience. The Christians present, particularly the brethren of the Conference, were then invited to continue seated, and spend a few minutes in silent prayer for a blessing on the labors of the meeting, and particularly for a revival of religion in that church and congregation. About eight minutes were passed in this manner, when the silence was broken by the minister commencing the last prayer, which was followed by the doxology in long meter, to the tune of Old Hundred, when the blessing was pronounced. The services this day were more than four hours in length—as the congregation was not dismissed until after one o'clock. I forgot to mention, that after the accounts of the state of religion in the churches were finished, the delegates were invited if they knew of any remarkable instances of conversion, to relate them. The time occupied in these accounts was nearly an hour, and one case was so interesting and instructive that I will mention it.

A few months since, in a town favored with a revival of religion, a little girl of about eleven years of age, was converted, and gave good evidence of a

change of heart. After her convictions of sin, she felt in her own heart, that she had found peace and joy in believing, and the love of Christ constrained her to try to do good to others. She observed that her father had employed several men who were working near the house, and she went out to them and began to converse with them on the immense importance of the salvation of the soul. Her father, who was a man of the world, took notice of her conduct, and called her to him, and inquired what was the subject of her conversation. When he learned that his daughter was talking to the men on religious subjects, he reproved her sharply, and forbid her taking up their time again with her idle talk. The little girl retired to her chamber, and poured out her heart to God, and asked the divine direction relative to her duty in this particular. When she rose from her knees, she felt strengthened, and in a little time went out again, and exhorted the men to a life of religion. Her father again saw her, and calling her to him, said with anger, if you again disobey and talk to these men on the subject of religion, you shall not stay in my house. She went to her closet the second time to ask counsel of her heavenly Father, and returned from it strengthened and comforted. A day or two afterwards she went the third time, like a young missionary, to the men, and exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come. Her father saw her and his wrath was kindled; he told her immediately

to take her clothes and begone out of his house. She went up to her room very calmly, gathered up her clothes in a bundle, and took them under her arm, to go she knew not whither. As she was going out of the front door, she saw her father, and running up to him, she embraced him, saying, "My father I do love you,"—and went from the house. The course she took was up a neighboring hill, and as she ascended it she was followed by her father's eye. His heart began to soften; he called her but was not heard, and she was soon out of sight. The father followed his daughter a little over the hill, and found her on her knees praying for him. As soon as her prayer was finished, he embraced her, and invited her to return to her home. This incident awakened the father's mind to consideration and conviction of sin, and by the operations of the Holy Spirit on his heart, he was induced in a short time, to give himself up to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The effect produced on my own mind by the scenes I witnessed at this Conference of the churches, was so powerful, that it seems as if it could never be effaced. Very many revivals of religion have followed these meetings, and I think it may be said with truth, that in the region of country where they have been held, there have been more instances in which the Lord has poured out his Spirit in answer to prayer, than were ever known since the first settlement of the country. The good work still

goes on and prospers; Christians pray with some good degree of faith in the declarations of the Gospel, and sinners are converted to God.

When a person unaccustomed to these Conferences first visits them, this idea will strike the mind very forcibly—that the aged and most experienced brethren of the churches, have taken up the subject of building up the kingdom of Christ in earnest, and that they have engaged in it as a matter of business. Our Lord declared when he was on earth, that “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light;” and the experience of all Christians must coincide with this declaration. But in these Conferences of the churches, it seems as if the best and wisest means were used, to awaken Christians and churches to prayer and labor; those means which are of divine appointment, and which of course will be attended with a blessing. This result does follow, and when Christians exhort one another daily, then sinners will be alarmed, and consider their ways, and turn unto the Lord. The Psalmist understood this subject when he said, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners *shall be* converted unto thee.”

It ought not to be omitted, that in all that region of country where the churches send delegates to the Conference, they hold a concert of prayer on Tuesday evening, of each week, to cry unto God for the

Divine blessing on the meeting which will be held the succeeding day.

I am yours affectionately,

T. DWIGHT.

The religious newspapers of this period are filled with interesting accounts of revivals of religion occurring in connection with these Conferences. The number of applications to a Conference for a visit would sometimes be so great, that a church would have to wait three months before its turn would come. This system at length became so prominent as to awaken suspicion, and even jealousy to some extent, in different parts of the State. Fears were entertained, that the Conference would come to be in time, a permanent ecclesiastical organization, exercising an undesirable supervision over the churches and their pastors. That such might have been the fact, that when the circumstances which gave birth to the Conference no longer existed, it might have been turned from a simple agent in promoting revivals into an engine of spiritual oppression, no one familiar with the rise and history of ecclesiastical establishments will deny. That which is framed to be an instrument of benevolence is often turned into an instrument of evil when improper persons get control of it, or when better uses fail.

But on the other hand, the continuance of these fraternal conferences might have done much to pre-

vent that jealousy and alienation which, in connection with a theological controversy now happily ended, afterwards separated ministers and churches which, having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," ought ever to dwell "in the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of peace."

But however we may speculate upon the probable results of a permanent system of intercourse among sister churches by lay-delegates, it is certain that the design for which the Conference of the churches was established, was simply the extension of revivals of religion, and that it was eminently blessed to this end. No one concerned in the movement appears to have harbored the intention of establishing an ecclesiastical court, of instituting a censorship over either ministers or churches, or of restraining in any degree their Christian liberty. The principles on which it was conducted favored no such design. Nothing could have been farther from the subject of this memoir than such a design. He was the uncompromising enemy of ecclesiastical dictation in every form, whether on the part of ministers or churches, or of any combination of ministers and churches. He contended for the rights of the brotherhood, not as against the rights of ministers or of ecclesiastical bodies, but as against any stretch of authority on the part of any ecclesiastical organization, whether clerical or lay. His views on this subject, which were sometimes misunderstood, are precisely expressed in

the following standing rule of the Chapel-street Church, which was adopted at his instance.

“This church does not recognize any ecclesiastical court, except *a particular church*, as of Divine appointment. When our Savior gives the law in the case of private offences, he says relative to an offending brother, ‘but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican.’ As Christ has not commanded or authorized any appeal to a higher court in this case, and as he has mentioned no such court, this church considers all such courts to be of human appointment, and their acts not binding on the conscience of any Christian; yet, as advisory bodies, they may be, and are in many cases useful.”

A prominent minister in the eastern part of the State, wrote to Mr. Dwight desiring particular information about the nature and ends of the Conference. The censorious tone of the letter indicates the deep prejudice against the Conference, and against Mr. Dwight as one of its leading advocates, which existed in the minds of those who were misinformed upon the subject. The reply of Mr. Dwight is a satisfactory vindication of the Conference and himself. There can be no impropriety in publishing this correspondence for the sake of acquainting the reader with the entire subject, especially as the name of the clergyman referred to will be withheld.

———, MAY 21, 1828.

Dear Sir,—I take the liberty to address a few lines to you, as you are at least acquainted with the Church Conference in your region, if not the prime mover of the engine. We have heard much of it here, and many are anxious to know its character. I know not whether it is compatible with your principles to have communication with any of the clergy on this subject, but if it be not deemed inconsistent, it would be gratifying to me and to my church and people, to understand the terms of your union. What do you enjoin upon any church as pre-requisites to the favor of a visitation? What is the established and indispensable order of exercises? and in what form and degree do you hold the churches in your connection subject to your discipline and control? Is a church once visited considered permanently attached to the Conference? What rules have you for the government of the Conference, or have you no system of regulations? Is a church allowed to secede, or what is the penalty of secession? What is the present extent of the Conference, and what are to be its limits, or may it extend indefinitely? How often are meetings held, and in what order of place and time? Are delegates, and how many from each church, expected and required to attend every meeting? Is there any established rule or order as to the assignment of parts to the delegates at the successive meetings?

If public admonitions or charges are given, how are the persons to perform these duties chosen ?

These are points, Sir, of great interest with us in this place, and on which I hope you will have the goodness to give us early satisfaction. We wish to be instructed in our duty, and I trust you would not have us act blindly. If you will have the goodness to give a full and open answer to these inquiries, and state whatever else pertains to the Conference important to be known, you will confer a special favor on your obedient servant.

P. S. If you would enjoin as a preliminary to union, that the church should as such take a public stand on the side of *temperance*, make the sale of ardent spirits by their members disciplinable, and pledge themselves individually to entire abstinence from spirituous liquors, and to banish them from their houses, we might feel ourselves drawn by additional motives to approve and join you.

I will now add one or two more queries, and beg explicit answers. What is your mode of communicating with distant churches, or have you any appointed organ of communication ? In what manner are they expected to hold communication with you, or to make known their wishes to unite with you ? Is it requisite, and do you require evidence that their pastors concur with them ? Or is it deemed sufficient and agreeable to your scheme, that the churches proceed without the concurrence of their pastors, and in-

dependently of them and without their knowledge, or without consultation with them, or in opposition to their known views and wishes?

NEW HAVEN, May 26, 1828.

Dear Sir—Your letter of May 21, has been received. I read it over two or three times before I could make up my mind what was the intention of the writer. When I cast my eye on such passages as these; “is it compatible with your principles to have communication with any of the clergy on this subject;” “in what form and degree, do you hold the churches in your connection, subject to your discipline and control;” “is a church allowed to secede, or what is the penalty of secession,” &c., &c., I was at a loss, Sir, whether you intended to treat me with the civility customary in the intercourse of gentlemen, with Christian courteousness, or with sarcasm and rebuke. But when I recollected the long, and intimate, and affectionate intercourse between my father’s family, and your father’s, I concluded that whatever appearance of asperity was found in the letter, it could not arise from any thing which I had said or done, and must therefore have been owing to some extraneous cause. With this understanding, I proceed to reply to the letter, and I shall try to give “explicit” answers to the inquiries.

Your first remark is, “I take the liberty to address a few lines to you, as you are at least acquainted

with the church Conference, in your region, if not the prime mover of the engine." I am somewhat "acquainted with the church Conference," but I am not the "prime mover of the engine." If I am rightly informed, the church Conference as constituted in the western and northern district of this State, originated in Berkshire county, in 1826. I believe in the summer of that year, visits were invited, and actually made, to twenty-one out of twenty-two churches in that county, and revivals of religion commenced and spread in twenty of those churches, the Holy Spirit blessing the labors of Christians, and converting the souls of about two thousand persons. When the visits were completed in that county, the brethren in the towns bordering on the north line of Litchfield county agreed among themselves to hold a Conference in one of the towns nearest to them in Connecticut. That meeting was held; the brethren waked up and were animated to establish the Conference among themselves. It soon became so large and was extended to so many churches, that it was divided into two, the eastern and western. The eastern continued a few months and expired, in consequence, as is believed, of a want of firmness in the brethren to resist alterations in the original constitution of the meetings. The western has gone on, blessing and being blessed, until most of the churches in Litchfield and Fairfield counties, have been visited, and all in the western district of New Haven county.

The meeting last week was at West Haven, and the Conference resolved, that after the places which have applied or may apply for visits, have been gone through, they would commence re-visiting those churches which may apply for a second visit. Three applications for second visits were made, and it was stated by the delegates that many churches stood ready to apply for a renewal of the visits. The meetings of the western Conference have been signally blessed by the Holy Spirit, and probably from forty to fifty revivals of religion have taken place through their instrumentality. They excite intense interest. Christians are awakened to labors and prayers, and sinners are converted by God from sin to holiness. With respect to my being a "prime mover in the engine," I state, that I have attended but four of these Conferences, exclusive of those held in New Haven.

2d. You say, "I do not know whether it is compatible with your principles to have communication with any of the clergy on this subject, but if it be not deemed inconsistent, it would be gratifying to me and to my church and people to understand the terms of your union." I am not conscious that I have personally, or that any member of the Conference, has ever refused to have communication with ministers of the Gospel, on this or any other subject, relative to the advancement of religion among us. The Conference of the churches, is a meeting of brethren chosen as delegates by those churches who choose to

be represented at the Conference. The Conference make visits every week when they are invited. Of course the delegates are chosen every week by the brethren, and they send one, two, or more delegates from each church; generally two are sent. It is a meeting of the churches, and not of the ministers; and I have yet to learn that the churches have not the same right, and as much power, to appoint meetings of their own, to promote revivals of religion, as ministers have to form associations, consociations, presbyteries, synods, &c. And I shall adhere to this opinion, until I can learn from the Bible, that churches were organized on account of, and for the sake of ministers; and not that ministers were appointed for the sake of the churches. The number of churches usually represented in the Conference is from thirty to fifty, and the number of delegates is from forty to eighty. I have never heard that any minister in the bounds of the western Conference has been opposed to these meetings, except in one instance. Our ministers generally are hearty in their approbation; and if any, through ignorance or prejudice, feel jealous of these meetings, I would say to them, come and see what the Lord has done through their instrumentality; and be very cautious that you do not oppose the work of the Spirit of Truth.

3d. The next inquiry is, "What do you enjoin upon any church as prerequisites to the favor of a visitation?" Before the Conference agree to visit a church,

they always inquire, are the church prepared for a visit? This preparation is understood to be,—that the church have appointed committees to visit every brother and sister, and inquire whether they have any controversy, or hard and unchristian thoughts toward any individual of the same church. If so, all disputes must be settled, and heavenly love restored, before the Conference will consent to make the visit desired; in many places, these committees converse with each member on the importance of a revival of religion, and before their departure, make a prayer with them. The Conference will not visit a church unless they pass a vote, to make an acknowledgment of their past delinquencies as to their Christian duties, which is to be read in the public meeting by one of the brethren; and the church must likewise vote that they will renew their covenant with God, and each other, in the same public manner. When these preparatory steps are complied with, the Conference, giving previous notice of two or three weeks, make their visit to that church, whenever their turn comes, which is in the order of time that the applications are made.

4th. The next inquiry is, “What is the established and indispensable order of exercises?” There is no indispensable order. The common course is this. The Conference meet at the place appointed, on Wednesday, after dinner, at one o’clock, at a school house or conference room. The names of the church-

es which have sent delegates, and the names of the delegates, are taken down on a list, by some brother present. As soon as it is supposed that a majority of those who are coming have arrived, they proceed to choose a clerk and a moderator. They also choose a committee of five or seven members to make arrangements for the addresses, &c., at the public meeting. The public meeting commences about 2 o'clock, and the minister of the church, as a matter of courtesy, is invited to preside. In some instances he does so, and when he declines, the moderator of the Conference presides. The meeting on Wednesday afternoon, is occupied with accounts of the state of the churches represented, and usually is held from two to three hours. District conferences are appointed in different parts of the parish, for Wednesday evening, the places of holding them being fixed some time before; and after the public meeting is over, six or eight brethren are appointed to conduct each of the district conferences, and it is expected that at the same places, on Thursday morning at sun-rise, a prayer meeting will be held for one hour, by the brethren who conduct these several conferences. On Thursday morning, at 8 o'clock, the general Conference assemble, transact any business which is brought before them, and hear the statements relative to the meetings of that morning and the preceding evening. At 9 o'clock, Thursday morning, the public meeting commences. The nar-

rations relative to the state of the churches are now concluded. Remarkable incidents relative to revivals, and individual conversions, are related when there is time. The addresses are then made. The order, however, is not uniform. Usually the first address is made to the impenitent ; then, an address to the youth ; then, one to the aged ; then, one to those who are hoping that they are christians, and yet remain with the world. The church then rise in their seats, or come forward in the broad aisle, and their confession is read ; they then renew their covenant, and are addressed before going to their seats. All these addresses are made by brethren of the Conference, and usually occupy from fifteen to twenty minutes each. It is then customary, but of this the Conference has no control, for the minister of the place to address the church and congregation, acknowledging his own unfaithfulness in his pastoral duties ; then a neighboring minister, selected by the minister of the place, addresses him on the same subject, urging the importance of more watchfulness, more labors, and more earnest prayers, for the salvation of his people. It is then customary for an address to be made to the Conference by a neighboring minister. A silent prayer for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the church and society visited, follows, for six or eight minutes, while all keep their seats, and this is interrupted by the closing prayer by the pastor of the church. The blessing is then invoked, and the

assembly disperse. I have not thought it necessary to mention the prayers and singing which are interspersed among these exercises. The meeting on Thursday generally continues until half past one or two o'clock, and has been the most interesting meeting on those occasions when I have been present, which I have ever witnessed.

5th. The next question is, "In what form or degree do you hold the church in your connection, subject to your discipline or control?" I answer, in no form or degree. For myself, I consider a particular church the only ecclesiastical court established by the great Head of the Church; and if the Conference, from a love of power, were to assert any authority over the churches, I would not attend another meeting.

6th. You ask, "Is a church allowed to secede, and what is the penalty of secession?" Churches choose delegates or not as they please; they send them to the Conference when they please.

7th. You ask, "What is your mode of communicating with distant churches?" We have no mode of communicating with any churches, unless they send delegates to the Conference.

8th. You ask, "Do you require evidence that their pastors concur with them?" (that is the churches.) No question is ever asked about the pastors. If the churches send delegates, they are received, and form part of the Conference; if the churches omit to send their delegates, no questions are asked. If the church-

es have got pastors who are opposed to sending delegates, they must settle the controversy among themselves. The Conference has nothing to do with it. With respect to your observations on the subject of intemperance, if I remember right, the Conference did in one instance *recommend* to the churches to adopt measures to prevent intemperance. This is a subject that the churches can manage for themselves.

All the other questions in your letter I believe are already substantially replied to. I have taken pains, Sir, to give you this detailed account, that no misapprehension might rest on your mind, or on that of any of the brethren of your church. These meetings have been so signally blessed by the Holy Spirit, that we are afraid to alter them in any particular; and where the Lord leads, we need not be afraid to follow. In these operations of the churches, the prophecy is literally fulfilled, "there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts; I will go also."

That the Lord may warm the hearts of all the brethren, and of all ministers, so that they may earnestly and sincerely desire, and labor and pray that revivals of religion may be extended and enlarged, is the prayer of yours,

T. DWIGHT.

It was natural for Mr. Dwight and others who had taken an active part in these Conferences, and who had shared so richly in their blessings, to regard them as an important means of promoting revivals of religion, and to desire the renewal of them upon any indication of general attention to religion throughout the State. Two or three attempts were made to revive the Conference, (one so lately as the last winter,) but they were unsuccessful. The probability is, that it could not be resumed with any thing like its former interest and usefulness. It originated in peculiar circumstances. It grew up gradually and naturally. Its novelty enhanced its interest, and the general prevalence of religious solemnity prepared the way for its extensive usefulness. To go to work mechanically to introduce the same system without regard to circumstances, to recommend it as an infallible mode of awakening interest in religion, because it had once proved eminently successful, would be a sort of religious empiricism, at variance alike with the dictates of good sense and the laws of Divine Providence. If circumstances like those in which it originated should again arise, we doubt not that it would prove, as it then did, a highly useful measure. We should love to witness such scenes as are described in connection with the Conference of the Churches; but we cannot *make* them; they must come "from above."

What has been said of the Conference of the Churches, is true substantially of protracted meet-

ings, and the labors of itinerant evangelists. Mr. Dwight approved most heartily of both these methods of promoting revivals of religion. He animadverted somewhat severely through the columns of the *New York Evangelist*, upon the resolutions of the General Association of Connecticut in 1836, respecting itinerant revivalists, known familiarly as "the Norfolk resolutions." His theory upon the subject was,—that there is in human nature a *love of novelty*, which will bring a congregation together to hear a distinguished preacher from abroad, at times when they would not assemble to hear their own pastor; and also, that the thoughts must be concentrated upon the truth by *frequent* preaching, before the power of worldliness can be broken, and the soul subdued to Christ. These are correct and important principles.* Their soundness is admitted by many of the leading clergymen of our land. They are precisely the principles upon which politicians conducted the great Presidential campaign of 1840, and on which they are again acting at the present hour.

It was not characteristic of the Athenians alone, that they "spent their time in nothing else but either

* On the same principles, Mr. Dwight was of the opinion that churches might be benefited by a somewhat frequent change of pastors; but in this he attached too little importance to the character and influence which a minister acquires by long residence among a people, and which constitute an accumulating capital for future years of usefulness.

to tell or to hear some *new* thing." We must avail ourselves of this love of novelty and excitement in religion ; and endeavor not only by the ordinary and established means of grace, (on which we must place our main reliance,) but also by extraordinary measures, varied according to circumstances, to arrest the attention of worldly men to the truths of the Gospel. But on account of this very love of novelty, (if for no other reason,) the system of protracted meetings, anxious seats, and preaching by evangelists, should now be modified or discontinued. These "measures" are no longer "new;" and "that which is old is ready to vanish away."

Ten or fifteen years ago, the appointment of a "four days meeting," or the visit of an evangelist, would of itself excite general attention, and bring together a large concourse of people. But it will not do so now. Could a pastor in a season of mere ordinary religious attention among his people, announce from the pulpit on the Sabbath, that Mr. Whitfield or Dr. Nettleton would preach in the place during the week, there would be no difficulty in securing a large congregation; though even their preaching might produce but little effect. But if he should give notice simply that A. B. or C. would hold a series of religious meetings during the week, who does not know that A. B. or C. would preach to empty seats ?

The providence of God is leading his people at the present day to a deeper sense of *personal responsi-*

bility for the prosperity of his kingdom. He is teaching them to rely more upon the regular institutions of the Gospel, upon the Sabbath and the stated ministry, the prayer meeting and the conference ;—upon personal exertion in the family and the neighborhood to bring men to Christ. These things appear to us in contrast with the revival system of late years, with all the freshness of “new measures.” The most striking feature perhaps in the revivals of 1843 was, that religious meetings were so generally conducted by the pastors and brethren of the churches, without extraneous aid.

In saying that we must rely more and more upon the stated ministry of the word, I do not mean that we must use no other instrumentality. Certainly I do not mean, that the brethren of our churches are to be inactive, and to leave the whole labor of building up the kingdom of Christ to their pastors. Congregationalism does not teach the laity, that they have no part in ecclesiastical concerns, and then call upon them to thank God that he has committed the management of those concerns to more competent hands ; it does not teach them that their great duty is that of obedience to ecclesiastical superiors ; but it assigns to them that important part in the economy of the church which belongs to the citizen in a pure democracy ; the part which was sustained by them in the early Christian churches, and which by making every Christian a virtual missionary, contributed

more than any other single cause to the rapid spread of the Redeemer's kingdom.

The great problem to be solved by the pastors of our Congregational churches, is not—"how can we best control the laity, and restrict their influence?"—but, "how can we bring every individual member of our churches to feel the deepest personal concern for their prosperity, and to do the most to promote it?" "How shall we fully employ the moral power of every man, woman and child who bears the name of Christ?" The moral power of individual churches and individual Christians has never yet been felt as it should be, or as it must be before the world is brought to the knowledge of Christ. Here, for example, is a church of a hundred members, in a population of a thousand souls. Is the power of such a church commonly felt to its full extent in restraining wickedness and upholding truth? If one hundred closets were daily occupied by praying souls, if one hundred bright examples of piety were daily shining in all the walks of life, would not the effects be always visible in the community around? Would not the kingdom of Christ continually gain upon the kingdom of Satan? I had almost said that scarce a tenth part of the moral power actually within the compass of our churches, the power of prayer and holy living, is ordinarily brought to bear upon an ungodly world. In many places, were all the professors of religion to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth

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the word of life," there would be no spot so dark that iniquity could lurk in it unseen, or vice appear with an unblushing front. In future revivals of religion, and above all, in the work of evangelizing the world, the great problem will be, "how to arouse the energies of each individual Christian and bring out and apply the now latent power of the church."

It is but just to say, that while Mr. Dwight sanctioned the labors of evangelists, as did most good men until some of this class abused their confidence, he always preferred that course of action in a revival which would most fully engage individual Christians in the work. Some remarks upon this subject, appended to his biographical sketch of Mr. Williams, are so replete with good sense, that I will insert them at length.

"It is evident to the most superficial observer, that the revival of religion lately enjoyed by the people of this city has been of very short continuance, compared with that of 1820 and '21, of which I have given an account. The wonderful display of Divine love and compassion through which we have just passed, although it commenced a few months earlier than the four days' meeting, yet did not become powerful until the week in which that meeting was held. The impressions made during that memorable period in the three Congregational Societies, and I do not profess to be acquainted with the facts which took place among other sects of Christians, were of a

wonderful, an astonishing character. The number of those who were brought into a state of awakening was unprecedented. Probably a large portion of the whole number among us who have become converted to God, up to the present day, received their first impressions during the week I have mentioned. But the season of awakening has already passed; it remains now only to gather in the harvest. Why is this? why was the revival of 1820-21, eighteen months or two years in its progress, while the present continued but a few weeks? This is an important question, and I will give it that answer, which, after a careful examination, appears to me to be the correct one. In the revival which took place ten years since, the Christian brethren labored much; they labored long; they labored prayerfully; they labored with the expectation of the Divine blessing, and they received it. By preparing themselves for the work, by going out into the field and exerting themselves with vigor, their hearts were kept warm, their faith was strengthened. Can the same things be said with respect to the revival of the present year? Far otherwise. The efforts of the Christian brethren have been few and feeble. So much of the time has been engrossed by public meetings, that there has been very little opportunity for personal conversation or for neighborly conferences. And in the villages, from one cause or another, very few religious meetings

have taken place ; few when compared with the former period.

“ Moreover, most of the instruction and advice given to inquirers and young converts, has been in the way of public addresses ; addresses made to large masses of people,—from three to eight hundred. Now it is a well ascertained fact, that general addresses do not fasten on the mind, do not remove difficulties, do not arouse the conscience, to the same degree with those which are particular and personal. In the former revival, the same classes of persons were instructed in a different, and in my view, far happier manner. In addition to public exhortations, which were sufficiently numerous, there were very many small circles of individuals, called for the purpose of familiar conversation, for the purpose of removing doubts, and elucidating difficult doctrines. This course of procedure was attended with great success. Most of those who associated in these inquiring circles, became disciples of Christ, as their subsequent lives have attested. The attention to religion was kept up with interest, and the revival continued for a long period.

“ It has been objected,—it was at that time, that private Christians took too much upon themselves ; that they were righteous overmuch. In reply to this charge,—which doubtless originated in the mind of some one whose love had become cold and whose services were formal,—I have two remarks to make. One

is, that God has commanded us to love him with all the heart, and all the soul, and all the strength, and all the mind, and our neighbors as ourselves. If we obey this command, I do not see how it is possible that we can do more in building up the kingdom of Christ, or in promoting the spiritual welfare of our neighbor, than our duty to God and man requires. The other is, that as these labors have received in a most signal manner, the blessing of God, it is perfectly safe, it is a duty which we cannot neglect with impunity, to persevere in our efforts. Let us follow the plain path pointed out by the providence of God. Let us work as long as the Divine Spirit will bless our labors—let us imitate our departed brother in his activity, in his zeal, in his faith, in his love to the kingdom of Christ and to the souls of men; and then at the last day, we may have confidence, that with him we shall stand on the right hand of the Judge, and receive the sentence, ‘Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.’”

The last revival which Mr. Dwight was permitted to witness, (that in the Chapel St. Church in 1842–43,) resembled the revival of 1820–21 in its general features, though it was much more limited in extent and duration. Early in the winter, a few brethren met with their pastor for consultation and prayer respecting the state of the church, and were deeply affected by the interview. Similar meetings were held for several weeks in succession at the house of Mr.

Dwight, till the number who attended them increased from ten or twelve to between thirty and forty ; all male members of the church. At these meetings the brethren communicated their own feelings freely to each other, with whatever was known of the spiritual condition of the church at large ; they agreed to visit all the families of the church, to sustain religious conferences in various sections of the city, and to secure, as far as possible, the attendance of their impenitent friends and neighbors at the inquiry meetings appointed by their pastor. Gradually the opportunities of religious instruction were multiplied, and many of the congregation became deeply concerned for the welfare of their souls. In the progress of the revival, very judicious and timely aid was rendered to the pastor by Rev. E. Beecher, D. D., whose labors will long be remembered with gratitude. One blessed effect of those labors was the elevation of the tone of piety in the church, so that the work of grace was little affected by the departure of Dr. B. ; but the various meetings were sustained with unabated interest for several weeks after he was gone. In this revival, Mr. Dwight was particularly active, and did much by exhortation and example to animate his brethren in the performance of their duty. It was evidently a hallowed season to his own soul.

I have dwelt at considerable length upon the various methods of promoting revivals of religion, because the views of such an intelligent and experien-

ced friend of revivals as the subject of this memoir was every where known to be, must be of value to all who love the prosperity of Zion. If these pages have thus far exhibited the marks of the essayist rather than the biographer, I count it one of the chief merits of my subject that his life was a series of sober and useful essays rather than of entertaining incidents.

But let us now resume our survey of the character of Mr. Dwight. His activity in the service of the Redeemer has been sufficiently exhibited in connection with the several works of grace which have now been described. Let it not be supposed, however, that his religious activity was confined to seasons of revival. True, at such times, his love would be more ardent, his faith more clear and strong, his prayers more fervent, his efforts more zealous than in a less excited state of feeling in the community on the subject of religion. Such, we believe, is the experience of every Christian. But Mr. Dwight was far from being a *periodical* Christian. Though he thought much, perhaps too much, of "special" efforts for the conversion of men, there was great uniformity and consistency in his own piety. He was susceptible of deep religious feeling; yet religion with him was evidently a *practical* matter and a matter of *principle*. It governed him in all the transactions of life. He endeavored to conduct his business according to the rules of the Gospel, and gained an enviable reputation for scrupulous integrity.

He was regular in his attendance on the stated meetings of the church. His seat was never vacant in the sanctuary or the lecture-room, unless he was absent from the city or detained at home by ill health; and until within a few weeks before his death, he walked every Thursday evening the distance of a mile or more to conduct a conference in the eastern or southern section of the city. He could always be depended upon by his pastor and Christian brethren, to carry forward any plan of usefulness in the church.

He was a man of great stability and decision of character. His manner of expressing his opinion had, to a stranger, the appearance of sternness. But this was a fault in manner only; for he had the same decided way of speaking, upon trivial as upon weighty subjects. It was a habit formed under the example of his father, and was in keeping with the position of that distinguished instructor of youth, though it sometimes appeared out of place in the ordinary transactions of life. Mr. Dwight was sensible, in his later years, that this peculiarity had somewhat impaired his influence, and both regretted and endeavored to correct it. He once said to me of his own accord, "My way of speaking leads some to suppose that I wish to dictate; but I have no such desire; and if I had, it would be sinful."

Mr. Dwight was indeed impatient of contradiction when he had made up his mind as he supposed in accordance with reason and truth. Quackery and im-

posture commonly met with a merited rebuke in his presence ; but he was always willing to investigate the truth, and was open to conviction by fair argument. He could usually assign some good reason for differing from others, and he respected their rights too much to censure them for differing from him. In a church or society meeting, after a frank expression of his own views, he would always acquiesce in the decision of the majority. He might think that decision unwise, he might not hesitate to call it so ; but if it was an expression of the will of the body, he would respect it and abide by it. Would that every Congregationalist understood his duty as well !

His frankness of expression was often pleasing to those who were too much accustomed to it to take offence when it bore hard upon themselves. I recollect once being in company with him and Mr. C***, when Homœopathy was the subject of conversation. I soon perceived that Mr. C. was an advocate of the system, and was therefore cautious in stating my objections to it, not to wound his sensibilities even in an infinitesimal degree. But Mr. Dwight, having little patience with what he looked upon as downright quackery, said bluntly, "Do you suppose, now, Mr. C. that any man of common sense can believe in such a system ?"

"I do not claim," said Mr. C. "to have any large measure of common sense, yet I must confess that I both believe in it, and practice according to it."

“Oh then,” rejoined Mr. D. “I should not have asked you the question; however, after all, *I don't see how any man of common sense can believe in it.*”

However Mr. C. may have forfeited his claims to sanity by embracing such a creed, he had good sense enough remaining to join in a hearty laugh at this frank and well-meant disparagement of his favorite system.

But losing sight of any little peculiarity of manner, who that knew Mr. Dwight did not admire him for his independence of character? There was no disguise about him. His views were always open. Every one knew what to expect of him—every one felt that he could depend upon him. His Christian manliness and firmness are worthy of all imitation.

But though the sterner virtues of our nature were thus conspicuous in his character, Mr. Dwight was not deficient in its softer graces. Far from being morose, he was almost uniformly cheerful. He was naturally of a lively temperament, fond of social enjoyment, full of good humor, and therefore always an agreeable companion. His vivacity of manner, his native wit, his extensive information, his rich fund of anecdote, with the tone of refined moral sentiment which pervaded his conversation, made his society valuable and attractive to the young, in ministering to whose enjoyment he took particular delight. But it was in the society of his fellow-Christians, that he found his own highest pleasure, and contributed most

largely to the gratification of others. Being well versed in history, and a diligent student of prophecy, he would often discourse of the triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom with clearness, eloquence and power. Any intelligence of the success of that kingdom would at once engage his attention, and elicit unequivocal expressions of joy.

In the various relations of social life he was uniformly faithful and kind. His unwearied assiduity in ministering to the comfort of his venerable mother; his minute attentions which enlivened the evening of her life so as to cause her to forget that the evening was almost spent; (now alas! how keenly felt!) these, in particular, showed to all who witnessed them, a truly noble heart.

A prominent trait in the character of Mr. Dwight was *conscientiousness*. He was strictly just in his dealings; a man of honor and veracity. Unbounded confidence could be reposed in his word. Even in the most trivial things, he manifested a scrupulous regard for the truth; and no one accustomed to deal with him, has ever been known to question his integrity. Of him it might have been said without qualification, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright!" Not "perfect" in the sense of entire freedom from sin, (for such is not the meaning of the word, nor was any thing farther from his pretensions,) but *sincere* in the consecration of himself to God, and in his endeavors to do his will; "upright" in all his in-

tercourse with his fellows, faithful in every relation of life; the man who stooped to no unworthy ends, but walked erect and firm amid all the enticements and threatenings of an ungodly and gainsaying world.

Mr. Dwight was remarkable also, for *the strength of his faith*. His confidence in the divine government, and in the promises of the Scriptures, was unwavering. So strong was his faith in the Abrahamic covenant, that he never entertained a doubt that his children would be converted to God. He was eminently a man of prayer, for he had full faith in its efficacy. His faith too was *practical*. It led him to make appropriate efforts to secure the divine blessing. In him was seen a happy combination of a sense of dependence on God, with a sense of personal responsibility. Knowing that "faith without works is dead," he was ever active in deeds of holy love. Benevolence was one of his leading characteristics. He indeed questioned the utility of some enterprises which look to the Christian public for support; but he took a deep interest in whatever tended manifestly to promote the Redeemer's kingdom. He reserved to himself the right of judging of the relative importance of the various objects soliciting his aid, and of adjusting the measure of his contributions accordingly. Possibly the agents of certain charitable societies may have thought him illiberal, when he had more reason to regard them as censorious. About

fifteen years ago, he published an article containing some useful hints to those who are engaged in the onerous and thankless office of collecting funds for benevolent objects. A soliciting agent not unfrequently falls into the mistake of supposing, that the object which he presents is more important than any other, and consequently makes extravagant appeals in behalf of it. At the anniversary of some benevolent institution, Mr. Dwight had heard the question asked, *What has become of the money which ought to have been put into the treasury of this particular charity?* He replied to it in a tone of pleasantry, through the columns of a newspaper, as follows: "In the first place, the money of those who might, if they had thought proper, have contributed to this charity, had been expended in the support of the ordinances of the Gospel, in the respective societies with which they were connected, and this item of expense had not been small.

"In the second place, their money had been expended in trying to give their children a good education; which in these days costs for every child at least double what it did twenty years ago.

"In the third place, a considerable part of it had been given for establishing Sabbath Schools, and building up Colleges, in the valley of the Mississippi; for supporting teachers and missionaries abroad; especially for supporting agents at Smyrna to open schools to educate the children of the poor and op-

pressed Greek population ; for purchasing paper and printing Bibles to distribute among the destitute of our own country ; for the education of young men in poverty, to prepare them to preach the Gospel ; and for many other charitable purposes.

“In the fourth place, a portion has been expended to support our families, to pay our debts, and to increase our libraries ; and to purchase furniture and clothing to give to some of the destitute ministers around us.

“If this reply is not sufficiently minute, it can be made more particular. I ask, Mr. Editor, are not these proper and praiseworthy appropriations of our property ? If not, who is to take the privilege out of our hands, and decide for us ?”

There is a just discrimination to be made between the various objects of Christian benevolence which are yearly brought before our churches ; and it is not for pastors or for agents to determine in what ratio an individual should contribute to any one of them. It is their duty to unfold the object, and to lay down the general rules for giving, but they are not authorized to say what each man should contribute. I recollect a piece of pleasantry which passed between Mr. Dwight and myself one Monday morning, after I had preached a sermon in behalf of foreign missions, in which I had attempted to state, with some precision, what proportion of his property a Christian should give to this cause. It was during the “hard times,” when the necessity of self-denial for the cause

of Christ was beginning to be felt. Mr. Dwight observed to me, "You ministers sometimes forget the simple rule of the Apostle, that we are to give 'as the Lord has prospered us;' now the fact is, we have not been prospered for a few years past, and cannot give to charitable objects as freely as we should like. You don't know how hard it is to get money at the present time for any purpose."

I replied, that I knew very well how hard it was to get money, and had no wish to lay down a different rule from the Apostle; but that as we might have forgotten his rule in our prosperity, it would be well to *wipe off old scores*, and to adhere to it more closely in the future.

We separated with mutual satisfaction; Mr. Dwight acknowledging that I had the advantage of him in the argument, and I feeling that I had learned from him a useful lesson upon the manner of presenting an object of benevolence to my people.

I believe that Mr. Dwight endeavored conscientiously to follow the Apostle's rule. From the time of his conversion, he showed it to be his intention to make contributions to benevolent objects a matter of principle. He laid aside yearly the entire profits of one branch of his business for benevolent uses; having more particularly in mind the raising of a fund for the benefit of Yale College. This circumstance being known to some of the friends of the College, by whom the design of establishing a Theological

department was entertained, they applied to him for aid in that enterprise, and received from him a very liberal donation for the purpose of founding a professorship of Didactic Theology.

The chief design of the founders of Yale College was to make it a school for the preparation of young men for the Christian ministry. The Professor of Divinity in the College is "bound by the statutes of his office, not only to act as pastor of the church, and religious teacher of the undergraduates, but likewise to furnish such students in Theology as may have been reared in the College, or may choose to resort to it from abroad, with assistance in the studies preparatory to the ministry. There has, therefore, always been maintained in the College, a strictly Theological School. The Rev. Professors Daggett and Wales, and the Rev. President Dwight in his capacity of Professor of Divinity, have each successively given instruction to students in Theology, and prepared many for the ministerial office, who have been distinguished for their usefulness in the churches." So long as the only other method of gaining a Theological education was that of studying with pastors, a considerable number of young men, principally graduates of the College, annually placed themselves under the instruction of the Professor of Divinity. Several hundreds of the Alumni who entered the ministry, were thus qualified for their work. But about thirty years ago, the system of Theologi-

cal education in this country experienced an entire change. "The labor of instruction in the several branches of Biblical criticism, systematic Theology, and the composition and delivery of sermons, was found too great for any one man to sustain. Institutions exclusively Theological, were therefore established. The duties which formerly devolved upon a single individual were distributed among three or four Professors, each selected with reference to his qualifications for a particular department, and confined to the discharge of its appropriate duties. A much greater extent and perfection were thus given to a course of Theological education than could possibly be attained by the exertions of the most highly gifted individual. It was not surprising, therefore, that the department of Theological instruction in Yale College, (destitute of these advantages,) should be for some years in a languishing state. Indeed, the whole influence of the College was cordially granted for the advancement of other Theological Institutions which needed its aid, though it was foreseen that the measures which were taken to promote their interests would diminish the prosperity of the school at New Haven. In giving this aid, however, it was never contemplated to abandon the course of Theological education which had been so long sustained. On the contrary, the late President Dwight, who took so active a part in favor of the Andover Institution, maintained to the day of death, and bequeathed to

his successors the duty of *extending* the department of Theological instruction in correspondence with its enlargement in other Institutions."

In the year 1822, the question came definitely before the officers of College, and the Christian public, "Shall the department of Theological instruction be now abandoned, and Yale College become merely a school of philosophy,—or shall an effort be made to extend this department, and to place it on a respectable and permanent foundation?" Fifteen young men, Alumni of the College, then made application to the Faculty to be received as a Theological class, for the ensuing year. It was felt that the rejection of so many Theological students, under the circumstances, would be a final abandonment of the object. The Faculty, feeling the importance of sustaining this department of instruction in a manner consistent with the dignity of the College and the interests of the Church, and being especially desirous of retaining, as far as possible, the religious character of an institution of learning, founded for pious ends, determined to recommend to the Corporation to establish the Theological department upon an enlarged and permanent basis. But the question now arose, "where shall the funds requisite for this important object, and without which the Corporation will not sanction it, be obtained?" The prospect of raising \$20,000 for the support of a Professor of systematic Theology, appeared at first view quite discouraging.

But just at this crisis, Mr. Dwight came forward and subscribed *five thousand dollars* toward this fund. He also pledged himself privately to make up any deficiency to the extent of \$5,000 more, if the remaining \$15,000 could not be obtained in season to secure the action of the Corporation at their next meeting. The sum was secured, however, and a professorship of systematic Theology was endowed under the name of the Dwight Professorship. The Rev. N. W. Taylor, D. D., then pastor of the first church in New Haven, was elected to the office, which he still holds, and entered upon his duties immediately. Had it not been for the timely encouragement given by Mr. Dwight, though there might have been an imperfect arrangement made for the instruction of Theological students by the distribution of the several branches of Theological learning among the Professors of Divinity, Rhetoric, and Languages, in the College, the department probably could not have been placed on its present foundation, at least for many years after.* It was Mr.

* These statements are made chiefly on the authority of Professor Goodrich, to whom the Theological department in Yale College is largely indebted for its present prosperity.

I would here take occasion to recommend the example of Mr. Dwight to gentlemen of property, and to put in a plea in behalf of a professorship of Ecclesiastical History and Polity, for the same institution which he endowed. Recent events have given a special importance to these branches of Theological education; and no minister can be fully qualified for his work without being

Dwight's intention to have doubled his original subscription; but the investment which he had made with this end in view, proved unfortunate, and the embarrassment consequent on this reverse, prevented him from contributing afterwards to benevolent objects on so large a scale as he had at first projected.

Of the various donations which Mr. Dwight made at different periods, to assist feeble churches, to sustain missionary laborers in our own land, and to distribute the word of God,—objects in which he felt a peculiar interest, it is not necessary here to speak. The plan of appropriating the avails of a particular

instructed in them. Yet there is no provision made for lectures upon these topics in the Theological Seminary connected with Yale College. All the instruction which the students receive in them, aside from their own private reading, is in the form of an occasional lecture from the Professors in other departments, or of a brief course of lectures delivered gratuitously by one of the clergymen of the city. Hence it is not unusual for students to desert this institution in their Senior year for some other which has greater advantages in this respect. If this department could be filled, the New Haven Seminary would, to say the least, be inferior to none in the land, in the facilities for obtaining a thorough Theological education.

May not some individual or company of individuals be found who will contribute the sum required to establish this professorship? I hesitate not to say, that Mr. Dwight could not have made a *better* appropriation of the money which he gave to found a professorship in a Theological Seminary. While that Seminary stands, his influence will live and diffuse itself through a thousand channels over this and other lands.

branch of business to benevolent purposes, might well be imitated by Christians generally, and especially by those who are just entering into mercantile pursuits.

It ought not to be omitted, that Mr. Dwight was a faithful student of the word of God. Of all books, the one in which he took the greatest and most uniform interest was the Bible. He never seemed to become tired of it, but sat down to read it with Clarke's Commentary, with as much pleasure, apparently, as others would take in history or fiction. Nor did he simply read the Bible; he *studied* it. He wrote out with care a course of lectures on the historical books of the Old Testament, which were listened to with great interest by a large and intelligent Bible-class. He could always quote Scripture promptly and correctly, and elucidate its meaning. His familiarity with the doctrines of the Bible, and his clear discrimination of the evidences of conversion, made his services particularly valuable in the examination of candidates for admission to the church.

Mr. Dwight was accustomed to commit to paper his thoughts on important subjects, and often contributed useful articles to both religious and secular journals. His style was clear and forcible, clothing the thought in plain language, and aiming at conviction.

In middle life, he was an active and prominent citizen, taking an interest in town meetings, and

often speaking in them. But of late years he avoided political meetings altogether, and he always refused to be a candidate for any public office.

I have thus sketched, though with an imperfect hand, the prominent features in the character of Mr. Dwight. Those who knew him can easily fill up the outline from their own pleasing recollections; those who did not know him must be denied,—what I confess myself incompetent to furnish,—a finished portrait. May all, however, find this bare outline of service in forming their own characters!

But “there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.” Death marks them both for his prey, though he comes to them under far different aspects, and introduces them into far different scenes. Our Savior said in his last prayer for his disciples, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” It is in answer to this prayer that death comes to the Christian. It is a token of the Savior’s continued regard for his disciples; the fulfilment of his promise to “come again and receive them to himself.” When he sees that they have had enough discipline upon earth; when he would deliver them from coming evil; when he has need of them in some higher department of his kingdom; he offers up that same petition, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be *with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory.*”

Mr. Dwight, though approaching the limit of "three score years and ten," was yet in robust health, and apparently destined to a good old age. But that all-wise Providence which appoints to every man "his bounds that he cannot pass," had otherwise determined. In the winter, he suffered somewhat from an attack of influenza, which did not however materially interrupt his business, or abate his religious zeal. But as spring advanced, instead of gaining strength, he became more and more debilitated, till, in the month of May, he was obliged to confine himself entirely to the house. On the 5th of May, being communion Sabbath, he visited the house of God for the last time. An inflamed tone of the stomach, refusing almost every kind of nutriment, with a consequent diminution of strength from day to day, now gave alarm to his physicians and friends. Still it was hoped that his vigorous constitution would resist the encroachments of disease. For a while the prospect of his recovery was encouraging; but about the first of June he began to be confined entirely to his chamber and bed, and the inevitable result of his sickness could be clearly foreseen. He was not in the least agitated by the announcement of his danger. Having arranged his temporal concerns, he cheerfully resigned himself to the will of his heavenly Father. His views of the plan of salvation, the completeness of the atonement, and the preciousness of Christ, were remarkably clear. He said little, indeed, of his own

state and prospects; but his confidence in the Redeemer was strong and unwavering. He always spoke with modesty of his own title to eternal life. Gradually, however, the Lord shed light upon him here; and as I visited him from time to time, I found him more and more confirmed in his hopes, till, on the day of his death, he expressed himself to me, as he had done to others before, as being fully persuaded of his acceptance with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. It was delightful to visit him in his sickness; to witness his composure; to see him calmly awaiting the "time of his departure."

"Is this a death-bed, where the Christian lies?"

Yes! but not *his*;—'tis *death himself here dies.*"

Mr. Dwight expired on Thursday, June 13th, 1844, at about eleven o'clock, P. M., being a little more than 66 years of age. He died apparently with little suffering, and like the patriarch of old, while invoking with lifted hands and feeble utterance, the blessing of heaven upon those whom he held most dear. His loss is more and more deeply felt by a wide circle of relatives and friends, by the church of Christ, and by the community at large.

SERMON.*

"For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people was added to the Lord." *Acts xi, 24.*

THIS is an inspired testimonial to the character of one of the most efficient members of the early Christian church. There must have been something remarkable in the piety of Barnabas to have called it forth. The Scriptures do not deal in the language of eulogy. They faithfully record the failings of good men as well as their virtues. What modern biographer would transmit to posterity such an impartial

* The funeral of Mr. Dwight took place on Saturday, June 15th, at 4, P. M., and drew together a large concourse of the most respectable citizens of New Haven. Four clergymen were present, who at different times had sustained toward him the pastoral relation; two of whom participated in the funeral services. On the next day, the following discourse was preached to a crowded assembly, in the house where the deceased had been accustomed to worship. It is now given to the public, at the request of the Chapel Street Church. There is an occasional repetition in the Sermon, of something already said in the Memoir; but this seemed unavoidable, as the expression of the same thought was sometimes necessary to the completeness of both productions.

history of the subject of his memoir, (when that subject was a personal friend, and of kindred views and feelings,) as that which the sacred historians give us of David and Peter?—telling the unvarnished story of their crimes, and simply adding that they repented, and leaving the reader to form his own estimate of their character. This fidelity of Scriptural biography warrants the belief, that whatever is commended in the character of its subjects was truly *worthy* of commendation ; that its praise is as just as its censure. When therefore we are told that Barnabas was a good man, we feel that he must have been *eminent* for goodness to have received such a testimonial. For observe how *naturally* it is introduced ! Luke is not writing a biography of Barnabas. He is not professedly holding up his character for imitation. He is simply recording his visit to Antioch, when he was commissioned by the church at Jerusalem to go to that city and labor in the mighty work of grace which the Lord had there begun. He tells us of the joy which Barnabas felt at witnessing the outpouring of the spirit at Antioch—of the zeal with which he engaged in the work, and of the great success which crowned his labors. It is in this connection, that he alludes in a word, to the *character* of Barnabas. “ Who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord. For he was a *good* man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith ; and much people was added to the Lord.”

This simple tribute to the memory of a faithful servant of Christ, (for the narrative was probably written after his decease,) is far more valuable than the high-toned eulogies so often chronicled on marble in letters of gold. Who would not rather have it said of him, if such were the testimony which God approved, that he was "a good man," that he was "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and that through his instrumentality many were turned to the Lord, than that he reached the pinnacle of human greatness, made the proudest discoveries in science, or wrought the mightiest achievements of conquerors or kings?

What then was it in Barnabas which elicited this commendation? What is it to be a *good man*? I shall not here enter into an analysis of holiness. Instead of attempting to show that it consists in entire devotedness of *heart* to God, in distinction from an outward conformity to his will,—in a predominant state of benevolence toward God and man,—I shall endeavor to exhibit it in action, to show you what it was in *Barnabas*, as a living operative principle. Though the details of his life are scanty, enough remain to furnish us with the leading characteristics of a good man.

The first mention which is made of Barnabas is in Acts iv : 36, 37. He is there introduced to us as one of the early converts to Christianity. Though a Jew by birth, and of the tribe of Levi, he was a native of the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean, near Cili-

cia, the birth-place of Paul. He had come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Pentecost; and had probably been converted on the occasion of the remarkable outpouring of the Spirit at the commencement of that festival, or during that extensive work of grace which followed it. We are told that his name was Joses or Joseph, and that the Apostles gave him the surname Barnabas to be significant of his character. Most Scriptural names have some such significance. Thus Simon was called Peter or Cephas, which means a rock; James and John were surnamed Boanerges, the sons of thunder. The name Barnabas, which is here interpreted "the son of consolation," means more properly the son of prophecy, exhortation or entreaty; implying that he early distinguished himself by his zeal in exhorting others to embrace Christianity—a distinction which he ever afterwards maintained. The occasion of his being mentioned is itself an index of his character. The historian is recording the liberality of those Christians who had property, in disposing of it for the common benefit. He tells us, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles'

feet ; and distribution was made to every man according to his need." Amid this general liberality, however, that of Barnabas was conspicuous. Luke thought it deserving of special notice, either on account of the largeness of the gift, or of the spirit which it exhibited in one who was afterwards a prominent preacher of the Gospel. " Josep, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet."

Here then we have one characteristic of this good man. He was a *liberal* man ; forward to do good with his property ; and especially mindful of his poorer brethren. He was benevolent on a large scale ; eager to do *all* the good in his power. He sold his land, and put the avails of it at the complete disposal of the Apostles, for the benefit of those who were in need.

No less conspicuous in this incident, was his entire consecration to Christ. He made this sacrifice of property, not for the sake of ostentation ; not to gain a reputation for benevolence, but from sincere love to the Redeemer and his cause. This is apparent from the fact, that his offering is put in contrast with that of Ananias and Sapphira. They wished to have the *appearance* of benevolence without the reality ; and to gratify their pride without much expense to their covetousness. Hence they attempted to impose upon

the Apostles, by bringing only a part of the price which they had received for their land, under the pretence that it was all. They were under no obligation to bring any of it. They might have kept their land, or have kept their money. But they wished to gain some degree of consideration in the church, and therefore resorted to hypocrisy and falsehood. You know with what retribution they were visited. If now Barnabas had had any sinister design in surrendering his property to the Apostles, would not the same searching Spirit who exposed the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira, have brought it out to view ?

The fact that his benevolence is chronicled in contrast with the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, is highly honorable to his sincerity. He laid his all at the feet of the Apostles, because he had already laid himself at the feet of their Master. Having given the greater why should he withhold the less ? He was a good man—wholly devoted to Christ and his cause.

The next mention which is made of Barnabas is in Acts ix ; 27,—a mere passing incident,—which exhibits however his Christian *frankness* and *boldness* in a pleasing light. It was when Saul returned to Jerusalem after his conversion, and “assayed to join himself to the disciples.” They were suspicious of him. They felt towards him, much as we should feel towards a lion which we were told was tame and harmless ; we should prefer keeping at a distance from him, till others had tested the change in his nature.

“They were all *afraid* of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.” They apprehended that his professed change was a mere artifice to win their confidence, and thus enable him to act against them more effectually. But Barnabas, who had acquainted himself more fully with the circumstances of Saul’s conversion, whose own frank and generous disposition made him less suspicious of others, and whose confidence in the power of God led him to credit the story of a change as wonderful as that of the proud and persecuting Pharisee, took him by the hand and “brought him to the Apostles, and declared to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him,” and how he had gone to Damascus and preached there in the name of Jesus at the hazard of his life. It was an act of Christian kindness in Barnabas thus to countenance a new convert to the faith, and introduce him to the friendship and confidence of his brethren.

Thenceforth Saul and Barnabas were kindred spirits.

We learn moreover, from the context, that Barnabas *enjoyed the confidence of his brethren* in a high degree. This indeed we might infer from their receiving Saul upon his testimony. But we have still higher proof of it in the fact, that they commissioned him to go and labor at Antioch, as soon as they heard of the remarkable blessing which had there attended the labors of those who were scattered

abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen. The primary reason for sending Barnabas on this errand may have been, that being a native of Cyprus, he had a better command of the Greek language than the other disciples. But the fact shows also, that his Christian brethren at Jerusalem had the utmost confidence in his piety and his ability to preach the Gospel. I do not mention this as proof that Barnabas was a good man. We are often painfully deceived in those in whom we put the greatest confidence. Of this the Christian community have had of late some melancholy examples. We look only on the outward appearance, while God looketh on the heart. Yet however much hypocrites may worm themselves into the confidence and affection of others, their true character can hardly fail to be *suspected* at times, and at length exposed. But a truly good man, on the other hand, can hardly fail to enjoy the strong and unwavering confidence of his brethren through life. And this universal confidence, taken in connection with such traits of character as Barnabas exhibited, is a strong testimonial to moral worth.

At this point in his history, there comes to light one of the most interesting features in the character of Barnabas. I mean his *delight in the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, and his zeal in promoting it*. The historian, at a single stroke, brings out to view, as it were, the whole soul of Barnabas,—shows us a Christian intent upon his Master's work, and happy in it beyond mea-

sure. "Who, when he came to Antioch, and had seen the grace of God, was *glad!*" How expressive! Can you doubt that he was a good man whose heart thus leapt for joy when he saw the power and grace of God in turning numbers to Himself! Barnabas entered into this work with his whole soul. "He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave to the Lord." The strain of this exhortation shows the character of his own religion. He exhorted them all, that with *purpose* of heart they would cleave to the Lord. His standard of piety was a fixed devotedness of heart to Christ!

Barnabas having secured the assistance of Paul, remained in Antioch a whole year; laboring with much pleasure and success for the edification and increase of the church. It was at this time that the name "Christians" was first given to the disciples.

That Barnabas enjoyed the full confidence of the brethren at Antioch, is seen in the fact that he was sent by them with Saul to Jerusalem, with means of relief to the brethren there who were suffering by famine. No errand could have been more congenial to his feelings than this.

On their return from Jerusalem, it was resolved by the church at Antioch, under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, to send a formal mission to the surrounding heathen; and Barnabas and Saul were designated by the same divine authority to this important work. Thus Barnabas found favor in the

eyes of God as well as man. We have the testimony of the Holy Ghost to his piety, intelligence and zeal.

This missionary tour was one of great hardship and danger, and yet of great success. It was in the course of it, that Paul and Barnabas were almost worshipped as Gods, and then exposed to all the fury of a mob for their steadfast resistance to such idolatry. Having reported the results of their tour at Antioch, they continued to labor successfully in that city, till the dissension arose there about circumcision. They then went to Jerusalem for advice, and returned not only with the means of adjusting the difficulty, but also with an honorable and voluntary testimonial from the "Apostles, elders and brethren," to their own character; for they speak of them as their "beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Having disposed of this troublesome question, they determined, with wonderful courage, to re-visit the churches which they had planted in their recent tour, though they knew that they must do so at the hazard of their lives. Yet here, unhappily, we meet with an incident which betrays the imperfection of both Barnabas and Paul. They were unable to agree in respect to a traveling companion, and after a painful contention they separated and went in different directions. In this difficulty, Barnabas seems to have been chiefly to blame, as it was his attach-

ment to a relative which led him to insist upon having an attendant who had proved unacceptable to Paul. There are intimations, however, that the difficulty was subsequently healed, and that these two devoted men again traveled and labored in company. The only other fault mentioned in the demeanor of Barnabas—a fault arising, probably, from the warmth and tenderness of his disposition,—is that he was led away with the dissimulation of Peter and others in respect to their intercourse with the Gentiles. But notwithstanding these imperfections, how striking is the evidence that he was a good man!

We are told also, that he was “full of the Holy Ghost;” by which we may understand either, that he possessed the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, inspiration, and the power of working miracles; or, which is more probable, that he was under that constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is vouchsafed to every Christian. He was also full of faith; he had strong confidence in God, and relied upon His promises in all that he undertook. As a consequence of this, not only at Antioch, but wherever he went, much people was added to the Lord. His sincerity, fervor and faith, made him an eminently successful preacher of the Gospel. He won the confidence of those to whom he spoke, and demonstrated the power of religion by the exuberant fruits of *goodness* in his own life. He was a useful and happy man.

In this community, my brethren, we are happily

surrounded with those, who, like Barnabas, may be characterized as "good" men. They are our richest ornaments. But among our numerous excellent citizens, while some combine the most fervent piety with the most eminent attainments, others are pre-eminent for moral worth. Of such was he for whom we mourn. As I have specified the traits of the good man's character, you have doubtless anticipated me in tracing the resemblance between that which I have now described, and that which we have so lately seen. I have chosen to set before you the life of a good man as portrayed by the pen of inspiration, that you might have in mind the proper standard by which to test the character of our departed friend and brother. There are two or three points of resemblance between him and the "good man" spoken of in the text which are so striking, that I cannot forbear adverting to them briefly in this connection. Like Barnabas, he might well be termed a "son of exhortation." How often was he the life of our social meetings! How ready was he, on all suitable occasions, to exhort Christians to fidelity and sinners to repentance. And how clear, pungent and faithful—how earnest and affectionate were those exhortations! The little circles which meet weekly for prayer, have lost one of their most valuable members. He was always ready to give counsel and instruction to his brethren, or to lead their devotions. His example in this respect is much to be commended, and I trust that

it will be generally imitated. It may be said, that he was peculiarly competent to take the lead in social worship. And so he was. But how did he become so? Mainly by taking pains to qualify himself for the duty, and by never shrinking from the performance of it. True, he was endowed with vigorous intellectual faculties ; he inherited much of that strong sense and clear discernment which characterized his illustrious father ; true, that system of theology which now forms the opinions of so large a portion of the Christian world, was with him familiar as household things. Yet he was not a man of collegiate education. Well informed as he was, he acquired much of his information as he went through life from day to day, by a careful husbandry of time. It was pains-taking rather than genius which made him thus competent to be the guide and counsellor of others. And I may say here, for the encouragement of many who shrink from praying or speaking in public, that Mr. Dwight, not having made a profession of religion till late in life, experienced all that embarrassment in first attempting to lead in social worship, which deters so many from it altogether. Yet how limited, comparatively, would have been his enjoyment and usefulness, if he had abandoned the effort because it was painful ! Christians know not what they lose, when they refuse to employ the talent of public speaking which God has given them, for his glory. They should endeavor to develop that

talent fully. They should take time even from their *business* to discipline and improve their minds, and thus qualify themselves for more extended usefulness, and redeem religion from the reproach of weakness and ignorance. We have no sympathy with any system which prescribes no duty to the laity but that of servile obedience to ecclesiastical superiors. Congregationalism itself should be made to give a still wider scope to the talents and influence of the brethren of the church. I hope that many who have been edified and excited to their duty by our departed friend, will hereafter be themselves sons of prophecy.

I need hardly remind you, that benevolence was a prominent trait in the character of our departed brother, as it was in that of Barnabas; benevolence in the broad sense of the term. He may not always have agreed with others as to the most feasible mode of doing good,—but “to do good and to communicate” he never forgot. No plan of usefulness which commended itself to his judgment, ever failed to enlist the sympathies of his heart. He was ready to further every such enterprise by his counsel, his substance and his prayers. In him the poor, especially those of the household of faith, found ever a friend and benefactor. Among the great benevolent undertakings of the day, none interested him so deeply as the distribution of the word of God, the cause of Home Missions, and that of the education of young

men for the Christian ministry.* In these he was always warmly engaged.

He resembled Barnabas, also, in the *entireness* of his consecration to God. With him religion was not confined to the sanctuary and the Sabbath. It was the practical principle of life. No one could be long in his society, without perceiving that the cause of the Redeemer had the chief place in his affections; no one could mark his deportment for a single day, without perceiving that he aimed at entire conformity to the will of God.

He was characterized too, by the same openness and sincerity which marked this New Testament saint. He was an "Israelite indeed," in whom there was "no guile;" "full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." He had an honorable independence of character which put him above suspicion. You always felt that you could trust him. To this the whole community will bear me witness. Those who are prone to carp at Christians, must find some other charge than hypocrisy to bring against *him*. Never was a man more honored for *integrity* than he. His standard of honesty, and indeed of morality in general, was not only far above the ordinary standard of men of business,

* On page 117 of the Memoir will be found a detailed account of Mr. Dwight's munificent donation to found a professorship of Didactic Theology in Yale College.

but above that of many of his fellow Christians. In this particular he may be safely imitated by all.

Like Barnabas, too, he enjoyed the confidence of his brethren, and hardly in a less degree. That confidence was well deserved. The brethren of this church, but a few months ago, gave him a strong testimonial of their respect and confidence by unanimously tendering him the deaconship—an office which he formerly filled with honor in other churches. Little did we imagine when he declined it on account of the approaching infirmities of age, that we should so soon be deprived of his counsel and prayers. We were permitted, however, to enjoy his valuable services in the standing committee of the church, till the close of his life.

But the most striking resemblance between him and Barnabas is seen in the joy which he felt in revivals of religion. It was this joy which elicited the commendation of Barnabas in the text. It was because of the zeal and pleasure with which he entered into the work of grace at Antioch, that Luke spoke of him as a *good* man. The same thing was characteristic of our departed brother. He loved revivals. They were his element. He prayed for them. He labored to promote them; and was often instrumental in securing the blessing of God on the church with which he was connected. His eye would always kindle at the intelligence of a work of grace. If in the vicinity, he would visit the

scene, to catch the fire and enjoy the blessing. At home, he would forsake business, and give himself up to the work of the Lord, exhorting all around him to do the same. He would throw himself into such a scene, with all the fervor and energy of a soul swelling with the love of God and of his dying fellow men. The honor of the Lord Jesus Christ was especially dear to him. "Brethren," he was wont to say, "brethren, our great duty in this world is to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the end which God has always in view. But the Lord Jesus Christ is most honored in the triumphs of his Gospel; in the conversion of *sinner*s. If we then would honor him, we must labor for the salvation of our fellow-men. If we are not willing to do this, how can we claim to be His?"

In the scenes of religious interest through which this community has passed in the last thirty years, Mr. Dwight was always conspicuous. He was especially known, not only here, but throughout the State, in connection with the memorable revivals with which Connecticut, and in fact New England, was favored a little more than twenty years ago. The Conference of the churches, at a later period, brought him into contact with numerous bodies of Christians, especially in the western part of the State, who retain to this day an affectionate remembrance of his glowing and powerful exhortations, and his faithful visits from house to house. One of

the latest public acts of his life, was an attempt the past winter to revive those seasons of harmony and usefulness to which he always delighted to refer.

Perhaps he was never so much engrossed in any revival of religion, as in that with which this church was favored about a year ago. Every evening, fair or stormy, found him in his place in the lecture-room; putting many younger members of the church to shame by his constancy and zeal. You can all bear witness to the importunity of his supplications, and the peculiar tenderness of his addresses. When he rose to speak in our conferences, it seemed that his soul was melted; his strong voice would quiver with emotion; and he would sometimes sit down with his remarks unfinished, himself and all around him bathed in tears. You will never forget those weekly conferences at his own dwelling, in which he poured his own fervor into the hearts of others, and took the lead in those plans of usefulness which God was pleased to crown with such rich success. The spirit of that revival he never lost. It raised the tone of his piety—made his walk and conversation more eminently spiritual—brought him into closer communion with God—prepared him for that event which God then saw to be just at hand. In the last winter and spring, he was again forward in every good work among us, hoping and praying for yet another outpouring of the divine Spirit. And during his sickness, when told of some recent instances of

conversion to Christ, he rejoined with evident satisfaction, "This is always good news." He was "a good man," for he loved Christ and his cause more than any thing else.

Nor is it too much to say of him, as was said of Barnabas, that through his godly example, his persevering efforts, his earnest entreaties, his importunate, believing prayers, "much people was added to the Lord." Great good was accomplished by his direct efforts, especially in the revival of 1820, and in the Conference of the churches; perhaps even more by means of those plans of usefulness which he devised and furthered. Doubtless his entrance into the world of glory was welcomed by many who but for him had not been there; doubtless many more will yet rise up and call him blessed. With what delight will he hereafter look upon those scenes of mercy in which he loved to mingle here below! And if the spirits of the departed are permitted to re-visit earth unseen, how joyfully will he convey to us the blessings he so often sought while here! It is a pleasing fancy—it may be a sober truth.

There were one or two points in the life of Mr. Dwight, not exhibited in the sketch given of Barnabas, upon which it may be profitable to dwell for a moment.

He was a man of uncommon force of character. He had great strength of principle, and great decision. What he believed to be true, he honestly avowed and fearlessly maintained. Nothing could

turn him aside from what he knew to be right. He was made to be a pillar. He would have been a Hambden, had he lived in Hambden's day. He would have stood alone against the usurpations of a tyrant. He would have gone to the pillory, to the prison, to the stake, rather than have wronged his conscience, or forsaken his God. His tenacity of opinion in respect to what he believed to be right, may have been sometimes misunderstood. But nothing was in reality farther from him than pride. I know from his own lips that there was nothing which he more deeply abhorred. Would that such Christian independence was not so rare as to be *singular*! Though strong in the expression of his own views of right, he granted others the same privilege, and was too good a Congregationalist to resist the will of the majority.

He was moreover a man of great simplicity; simplicity of manners, of dress, of speech, and above all, of religion. He would have been a Puritan two hundred years ago. He was formed in this respect for an age which has unhappily passed away; yet was not the less needed in that in which he lived. He abhorred all ostentation. You need not be told that he was a great admirer of our system of worship and government. He understood it thoroughly, and loved it for its Scriptural simplicity, and its tendency to promote spirituality and Christian activity.

This simplicity of character was pleasingly exhibited during his last sickness. He had no over-wean-

ing confidence in his own piety. He was remarkably free from spiritual pride in his most zealous days. But now he was willing to rest as a little child in the arms of his heavenly Father. He said to me one day, in his peculiar style of terseness and brevity, "How strange it is that people should be proud of their religion!—yet they sometimes are; perhaps I have been so,—but it is altogether *wrong*. We have nothing to be proud of. We can do nothing to commend ourselves to God."

Did time permit, I might specify other traits in the character of our departed friend, equally worthy of our imitation. Enough has been said, however, to establish his claim to the title of a "*good man*." He was likewise "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." He was a firm believer in the necessity of divine influence in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, and was therefore a man of prayer. He was a man of faith. I never knew a Christian who had stronger confidence in God, or a more practical belief in the efficacy of prayer. This faith was unwavering to the close of life. I was much affected with the reply which he made to me a few days before his death, when I asked him if he had entire confidence in God. "I have trusted in the Lord," he said, "and he has taken care of me for almost seventy years, and it cannot be that he will forsake me now." It reminded me of the words of David:—"O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have

I declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength to this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come."

Propriety forbids me to expose to public view the scenes of his chamber of sickness and death. They will be sacred in the memory of those who witnessed them. Yet it is right that you should be informed how he regarded the approach of death, and what was his last testimony to the Christian faith. Let me say then, that he was altogether free from agitation or fear; at times, perhaps, distrustful of himself, and cautious in the expression of his hopes, as was his habit through life;—yet never under a cloud, always strong in his Redeemer, and feeling safe in the hands of God. The composure with which he received the announcement of his danger, strikingly verified the divine promise—"he shall not be *afraid* of evil tidings; his heart is *fixed*, trusting in the Lord." He had indeed no enrapturing visions of future blessedness; his temperament was hardly excitable enough for these; but he had that which is more to be relied upon,—a calm, unwavering confidence in God. The holy serenity which marked his countenance, even in death, bespoke a mind at peace with itself, at peace with the world, at peace with God.

So fades a summer cloud away ;
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er ;
So gently shuts the eye of day ;—
So dies a wave along the shore.

He is gone ! His place in the sanctuary is vacant ; and in our social meetings, we shall no longer look upon his benignant countenance, nor hear his voice in prayer and exhortation. To us, as a church, the loss is great ; it is incalculable. We have lost the example, the counsel, the aid, the prayers of a man of God. But no ; they are not lost ; they will live in memory, they are registered on high. *This church* was more dear to him than any with which he was connected in the whole course of his life. He loved to lend his aid to a feeble church. He was one of the *founders* of this church, as well as the largest proprietor in this building. And how greatly have we been indebted to him, under God, for our prosperity ! That prosperity continually filled his soul with gratitude and joy.

When I found that he must be taken from us, I knew not at first how to be reconciled to the will of God. I exclaimed with David, "if the *foundations* be destroyed, what can the righteous do ?" But I seemed to hear an answer from on high, "The *Lord* is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven !" God, the Redeemer, reigns. He fails not. He still loves his cause and will carry it forward. Could our departed brother now address us, he would say, as he has often said—"Have confidence in God, for vain is the help of man."

It is a pleasing thought that the church at large has lost nothing by this removal. One of her mem-

bers has only left his seat below and gone up *higher*. He has not left the service of Christ. He is in the same kingdom, though in a more elevated station of honor and usefulness. His powers, now unfettered by sin, will expand in the same glorious service in which we in our weakness and imperfection here engage. We are yet one—members of the same body. Why then should we mourn? Let us rejoice rather that we, in the person of our brother, have gained a new victory over sin and death, have brought new honor to Christ our king, and have obtained a new interest at the court of heaven.

But who will come forward to occupy his place on earth? Where are the young men who will step into the ranks when the fathers are cut down? I beseech you, brethren, consecrate yourselves wholly to Christ; identify yourselves completely with him and his cause; so that it shall be seen that the arm of the Redeemer is yet strong in the midst of us.

To me personally, the loss of our departed friend, is great indeed. He ever treated me with kindness and with confidence. Notwithstanding his years and intelligence, he was willing to acknowledge me, while yet a youth, as his spiritual counsellor and guide. More than all, he was ever ready to co-operate with me in the great work to which I have been called, and to cheer and sustain me by his counsels and prayers. It is a severe stroke to a pastor when such a member of his flock falls at his side. But I

dare not trust myself to speak—what my heart can scarce contain.

And why should I tell of my sorrow, or of yours, my brethren, in the presence of those who are plunged into a sorrow that we cannot fathom?—Let us not invade the sanctuary of their grief! Let us commend them to the God of grace and consolation. May HE who is nearer than husband, father, son,* brother, friend, be with them in all the fullness of his love! May he remember his covenant, and be gracious to their souls! May they realize that another link in the chain of their affections has been drawn up into heaven, only to shorten the distance between their souls and God. May their sorrow be turned into thanksgiving, that he who was their head, their counsellor, their guide and their support, was spared to them so long; may it be turned into joy, that there remains to them so rich an inheritance in his example, instructions and prayers! The God of Israel has said—“leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.”

In conclusion, let me ask, who does not wish to lead the life of a good man? You have seen what that life is, both as portrayed by the pen of inspiration, and as exhibited by our departed friend. Does

* The venerable mother of Mr. Dwight was present on this occasion—being reserved in the inscrutable providence of God, to share with her numerous descendants this cup of affliction.

it not commend itself to your judgment and your heart? With all its imperfections, it is not far superior to the life of the man of the world—superior in its aims, in its enjoyments, in its purity, in its loveliness, in its usefulness, in its honor, in its reward? Is not this the life which a traveler to eternity ought to lead? Consider then, that it is a life which, by the grace of God, we all *may* lead. But above all, who does not wish to die the good man's death? In that hour when all is dark and terrible to the soul of the ungodly, when the worldling who has hitherto been at ease, becomes like the troubled sea, and there is no voice to calm the anxious heavings of his breast,—the good man is at peace,—serene, joyful, triumphant! No one can contrast the demeanor of these two classes of men in that last hour of trial which comes to all, without exclaiming, “let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” My friends, we must all soon die. He whose loss we mourn, was with us but a little while ago, with a vigorous constitution and robust health, destined apparently to great length of days. He has fallen in advance of many who still linger here in weakness and pain. I had thought that he might stand like the oak, when I should be cut down like the flower. But by what rule God orders the event of death, we cannot tell. We know that it is certain—that it is near;—let us prepare for it.

How, when it shall be,—we cannot foresee;
 But Lord, may we live, may we *die* unto thee!

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