

**TWENTY-FIVE YEARS:  
SERMONS AND ADDRESSES IN  
RECOGNITION OF THE  
TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

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Twenty-five Years: Sermons and Addresses in Recognition of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary by  
Alexander McKenzie

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**ALEXANDER MCKENZIE**

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Cambridge, Mass. - First church and  
The first congregational society.  
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

## SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

IN RECOGNITION OF

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary

OF THE INSTALLATION OF

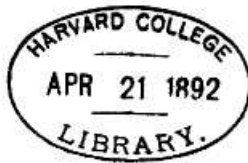
THE REV. ALEXANDER MCKENZIE.

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THE FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE.

JANUARY, 1892.

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# SERMON

BY

REV. ALEXANDER MCKENZIE, D.D.

January 24, 1892.





## SERMON.

FOR CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE, BUT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL;  
NOT WITH WISDOM OF WORDS, LEST THE CROSS OF CHRIST SHOULD BE  
MADE OF NONE EFFECT. — I. Cor. i. : 17.

In these words St. Paul asserts his personal faith and describes the work of an apostle. He separates from his office all which is not essential to it and then lays aside things which are essential, that the central fact in his ministry may be seen and that the purpose of his life may be clearly understood. He separates baptism from his work, for he is to preach the Gospel. He separates from this the wisdom of words that men may see the cross of Christ standing by itself and know that this is the good news of God. In this he gloried and this he preached.

I am led to this definition of the office of a Christian minister by the impression of its largeness, of its sufficiency, which has been borne in upon my mind and heart in the days of silence and absence which have now come to an end.

There are many things which belong in this day. It would be natural and pleasant to tell you the story of the months which have closed and to share with you the lessons learned in other lands. But this is an anniversary. The mind runs past the few months into the many years which preceded them.

As I have anticipated this day, I have been asking myself if it would be possible to bring into this first hour the review of five and twenty years and with it the tale of the six months which have rounded out this prolonged pastorate. In the listlessness of idleness, with the mind wandering from the scenes around me to these familiar

places, with thoughts of home blending with the chance suggestions of other climes; with the gathering up of floating, fleeting impressions that they might be made to do service afterwards; with the force of constant habit asserting itself and making all things tributary to this pulpit; I found, or seemed to find, a meeting-place for all the thoughts which belong in this day.

For beyond all which is personal it is proper and needful to ask what is the meaning of a ministry like this; what is its place in the world; by what methods should it fulfil its intent, and how truly and fully has it kept faith with itself, and with Him by whom it was appointed. It is a part of a larger ministry, even His who came into the world to be its light and its life. It must be measured and judged in its connection with Him and with the truth He taught and the truth He was. There is, therefore, an evident advantage in surveying these years from without, far away from all which is local and individual; separate from certain days and periods and incidents. What seemed at first to make this service difficult came to present itself as timely and fortunate. I became glad to have the distant view; to stand apart from it and to look upon my own work as one not carried on in the rush of its events, nor involved in its process and result.

When I began to set in order the thoughts and words for this first service I was passing quietly along the Nile. The low fields bordering the river that had just receded seemed to feel the weight of the ages which were lying heavily upon them; the groves of palm were standing silently in the soft light against the genial sky, sentinels at the gateway of the past; dreamy memories, history, mystery were upon the swift and placid waters. How remote it was from this life, from this sanctuary, this service, these eager hearts, this busy and exciting present! How far is all this

from the land of the Pharaohs, the land of shattered temples and desolated tombs; of the pyramids in their gloomy grandeur and the man of stone looking with his calm eternal gaze across the sands and the centuries! Yet even there, in the country of the past, while yielding to the fascinations in which Egypt has no rival, it was not hard, it did not seem strange, to think upon this house and those who are greater than the house and to reckon up the years which are as moments in comparison with lost and forgotten dynasties. These centuries are but as moments in comparison with the ancient heavens which still bend over the gray ruins whose infancy they watched. What are suns and stars before Him who is from everlasting, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! His presence is our light; we walk with Him; our service is to do His will; to be like Him is the blessedness for which we hope. This is to-day. The boundaries vanish from between the nations and the limits of time disappear when we stand before Him whose arms were underneath the child who was hidden in the rushes by this river's bank.

He had Himself sought shelter here when His life was imperilled before its time. Out of Egypt He went to redeem the world. The things which were seen have proved temporal, the unseen truths remain. Tradition shows where the Hebrew boy was laid; holy Scripture preserves the words he spoke. Tradition shows the tree where the Virgin mother rested with her child; the New Testament presents His life of mercy and His redeeming death, which lives in His church and in the lives of countless men in earth and in heaven. These are the living truths of the land, which are the truths of the world; for to the world the law was given by Moses, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Is one nearer to these facts by the Nile and the Jordan? But they are the truths which are to be