

**A DISCOURSE PREACHED AT  
BARRE, JANUARY 11, 1854, AT  
THE END OF A MINISTRY OF  
FIFTY YEARS IN THAT TOWN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649529698

A Discourse Preached at Barre, January 11, 1854, at the End of a Ministry of Fifty Years in That Town by James Thompson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JAMES THOMPSON**

**A DISCOURSE PREACHED AT  
BARRE, JANUARY 11, 1854, AT  
THE END OF A MINISTRY OF  
FIFTY YEARS IN THAT TOWN**



A

# DISCOURSE

PREACHED AT BARRE, JANUARY 11, 1854,

AT THE END OF

## A MINISTRY OF FIFTY YEARS

IN THAT TOWN.

BY JAMES THOMPSON,

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH.

---

With an Appendix.

---

BOSTON:  
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,  
111, WASHINGTON STREET.

1854.

h 62

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

✓

REV. JAMES THOMPSON, D.D.

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, constituting the Committees of your present and former Parishioners, respectfully request, for publication, a copy of the able and interesting Discourse delivered by you this day, on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of your Ordination as Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Barre.

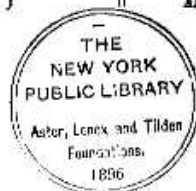
WILLARD BROAD,  
HIRAM WADSWORTH,  
J. W. JENKINS, JR.,  
ABRAHAM LAWRENCE,  
DANIEL CUMMINGS,  
LEMAN F. ROGERS,  
LEWIS P. RICE,

Barre  
Committee.

MARSHALL S. PERRY,  
DANIEL HARWOOD,  
SAMUEL WADSWORTH,  
J. HENRY HILL,  
TIMOTHY JENKINS,  
ALDEN B. SMITH,  
ARA HAPPOOD,

Committee of  
former  
Residents.

January 11, 1864.



311-4

WILLIAM WALKER  
OLIVER  
WALKER

BOSTON:  
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,  
22, SCHOOL STREET.

## DISCOURSE.

---

Ps. lxxi. 9: — "CAST ME NOT OFF IN THE TIME OF OLD AGE; FORSAKE ME NOT WHEN MY STRENGTH FAILETH."

THE psalm from which these words are taken was composed by David, after he had descended into the vale of years, and began to feel the infirmities and anxieties of old age. It breathes the pious trust of a heart deeply impressed by the remembrance of the care and goodness of God, and rejoicing in being able to make him still its refuge.

It was probably about the time when this psalm was composed, that David took measures to rid himself of all the cares, labors, and perplexities of his high station, — calling together all the princes of Israel and the priests and the Levites, to give them his parting counsels, and blessing them in one of the most sublime and affecting prayers ever uttered by mortal lips, — his mind, in all, looking only to the glory of God, and the welfare of them that should come after him.

The Scriptures describe him as "full of days," "stricken in years," and "ready to die," when these things took place. Yet he was not so old by several years as the speaker who now addresses you; for he was but seventy when he ceased to be numbered among the living, while I, having obtained help of the Lord, continue to my seventy-fourth year; and through his grace I am what I am.

The occasion on which we now meet is one, as you may suppose, of the deepest and most solemn interest to me, while, at the same time, it awakens many tender and pleasing emotions. I have looked forward to it, since it has seemed probable that I might live to witness it, with mingled satisfaction and solicitude, — with satisfaction, in view of the opportunity it might afford for exchanging Christian salutations with so many whose kindness I have so long enjoyed; with solicitude, from a painful sense of my inability to meet your just expectations. "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The thoughts and recollections, the pleasures and anxieties, which, you might conceive, would express themselves without an effort on an occasion like this, come with a rushing confusion to my mind, as if the experience of fifty years were thrown together into a single hour; and the power to arrange them into method and order, such as a proper respect for my hearers requires, I find not. Yet this is my confidence and hope: I can cast myself upon the God of my life; and say unto him, with particular reference to the humble service I have now to perform, "Now,



also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God! forsake me not." And, still more, I can stand up here before you in the Lord's house, and thank our God that he permits me to behold your faces in the land of the living; that he has given to me such "length of days;" that he has mingled so many mercies in the "cup of my life;" that, while he has "weakened my strength in the way," and put away "mine acquaintance" far from me, and "mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction," I am able to appear in his courts with those of my family still alive around me; that, while the greater part of the congregation who received me fifty years ago are "fallen asleep," yet some "remain unto this present," and that others have come up, the children succeeding the fathers, to "keep the ark of the Lord," and to "inquire in his holy temple;" that the town in which our lines have fallen has steadily increased in population, in wealth, in fertility, in beauty, till, in these respects, few surpass it, and that there has been manifested here a growing interest in the cause of general education, and a very decided improvement in the morals of the community; that sound principles of private and public virtue, how much soever they may be opposed by the selfishness and the ignorance of men, are gradually gaining the ascendancy around us; that, notwithstanding changes of opinion and feeling which mark the present time, the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, shorn of none of its original power and authority, and in each succeeding generation better understood in its spirit and application, is

still preached among us, to the edification and comfort of them that hear ; and that the future, for you who are in the midst of your days, though darkened by some clouds, has yet so many aspects of encouragement to cheer you on in the way of your duty as citizens and as Christians, and, for us who are ready to go the way of all the earth, so many signs in the heavens of "pleasures for evermore." Yes, I can thus thank him devoutly, and with an overflowing heart ; for it is a gracious ordinance of Heaven, that, while the mental powers lose their activity as the outward man fails and sinks under the pressure of years, those sentiments which lead the soul up to the Almighty in gratitude and trust find fewer hindrances in the narrowed sphere of old age than in those periods of life when the world is all open around the heart, and its temptations are strong to refer the blessings enjoyed to second causes, instead of tracing them, in a deep sense of dependence, up to the only real Cause of all things.

" Bless the Lord, O my soul ! and, all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul ! and forget not all his benefits. For he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth we are but dust. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and those that remember his commandments to do them."

This day, my friends, completes the fiftieth year of my settlement in this place. Fifty years ! As we

look forward over such a period, how long, how almost endless, it seems! As we look back upon it, how brief, how like a dream, how evanescent! Fifty years! In that period, how many, even in the limited sphere in which my days have been spent, have come forth into life; how many been cut down as the flower in childhood and youth; how many gathered to their fathers, like shocks of corn fully ripe unto the harvest! Fifty years! Within that period, I have seen both my parents, — hallowed be their memories! — to whom I owe more than heart can conceive or tongue express, — go down, in a good old age, — though neither of them so aged as myself, — beautiful in holiness, to the house appointed for all the living. Within that period, what removals from my own family, from this parish, and from the pulpits of the neighborhood, with whose occupants I had long and sweet fellowship, and frequent exchanges of professional services! Where are the kind-hearted, apostolic Goodrich, of Rutland, and Foster, his successor? the social, affectionate Bascom, of Phillipston; and the logical, witty, eloquent Foster, of Petersham? Where are Estabrook, of Athol; Gay, of Hubbardston; Wesson, of Hardwick? All, all gone; and the places that knew them shall know them no more. Fifty years! In this period, what changes have taken place all around us! The population has nearly doubled. Tracts of wood, swamp, and wild land, have been brought under cultivation, and divided into farms of unsurpassed fertility. Dwelling-houses and barns have been greatly improved. The old