

At its annual meeting early in May, 1879 the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church sought to regain the harmony that it had known prior to the unfortunate developments of recent months. To this end it readily accepted the resignation of the one trustee who had supported the Reverend Borden and elected in his place I. A. Fancher, a chief spokesman for the opponents of the late pastor. After naming Fancher their chairman, the trustees joined with the rest of the congregation in the difficult task of securing a new pastor.

From all appearances there was much about Mt. Pleasant to attract a new minister. The number of new homes and store buildings rising in the town gave it an aura of prosperity. Already the trade center for a rich agricultural region, the village would soon have the advantage of rail communication with more populous places. The Presbyterian Church, in the heart of the town, faced the recently completed Isabella County Courthouse, an imposing structure. Certainly, in this active and progressive village, a minister could find satisfaction in his labor for Christ.

But there were problems confronting the church to give one pause. As a result of the recent dissension some would leave the church and their going probably would reduce the subscription income for the support of the next pastor. The First Presbyterian remained a mission church, but how much assistance would be forthcoming from the Home Mission Board was unknown. The trustees had no money available to paint the building and make needed repairs. In desperation, as on past occasions, they pleaded with the Ladies' Aid Society to do "all the good they [could] in their own way."

The women of the church responded nobly. Scarcely a week passed thereafter that they failed to sponsor some money-raising affair. By year's end, largely as a result of their efforts, the church was painted and again in good repair.

Meanwhile, the Presbyterians continued their search for a pastor. On several occasions during the spring of 1879, their pulpit would have been vacant had not the Reverend J. H. Beardslee, a local Methodist minister, offered his services. In July, after hearing the Reverend William M. Campbell preach, the congregation invited him to serve as pastor. Campbell agreed in writing to a contract for one year with salary terms similar to those offered his predecessor. The trustees hoped that the Home Mission Board could agree to their request for assistance. They unanimously "resolved that the treasurer, Mr. W. Doughty, be empowered to take charge of the subscription list, and to pay over the money collected to the pastor."

At a communion service early in October over which Campbell presided, Minnie Brown along with several others presented herself for baptism and admission to the church. A newcomer to Mt. Pleasant, she was the bride of William N. Brown, a local lawyer and large landowner. After joining the church, the young housewife became one of the most active and influential members of the Ladies' Aid Society. Her father, the Honorable Dwight May of Kalamazoo who once served as Lieutenant Governor of Michigan, and her mother frequently visited the Brown home in Mt. Pleasant. Soon the mother shared the daughter's love and enthusiasm for the simple frame church where they both worshiped when together. In December, 1879, as a token of this regard, the elder woman presented the Presbyterians with a large bell for their heretofore soundless steeple. The trustees expressed by resolution the appreciation of the congregation for this generous gift and engaged Charles Slater—a man of many skills—"to put the belfry in fit condition for the bell." Within a brief time he had everything in readiness, the

bell adjusted and in the "proper position to summon with its iron tongue the communicants to service."

The peal of the new bell sent tremors through the frame church. These vibrations may have been the cause of the mishap the following year when the large chandelier fell among the worshipers during a Sunday morning service. Although broken glass flew about the sanctuary, no one was injured and the spilled kerosene did not ignite.

On December 15, 1879, unfortunately, the "iron tongue" was not yet in place to voice a welcome when the first "iron horse" reached the village over the narrow gauge track of the new Saginaw and Mt. Pleasant Railroad. A large assemblage of townspeople and visitors, bundled against the cold, greeted the train as, steaming and puffing, it rolled to a stop alongside the new depot. Thereafter, to mark the great event young and old paraded behind the cornet band, the new steam fire engine, and the gaily-costumed volunteer fire companies. For the remainder of the day and far into night the people of Mt. Pleasant celebrated this final severance of the isolation which for so long a time had plagued the village. A few days later, on Christmas Day, 115 children and adults of the Presbyterian Sunday School boarded the train for an excursion to Coleman, fifteen miles distant, where the new railroad made connection with the Flint and Père Marquette line. "The feast at the Pierce House in Coleman," an account of the trip states, "was all that a Christmas dinner implies, and the ride there and back was especially pleasing to the children who had never been on the cars before."

From the standpoint of harmony and good will between pastor and congregation, the Reverend Campbell's three-year pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church was highly successful. On several occasions, at the urging of his people, he repeated timely and thought-provoking sermons. An archenemy of "the liquor men", he opposed them in court as well as from the pulpit, thereby winning the regard and gratitude of the "temperance" people in the town. Although the trustees had encountered the usual difficulty in raising funds to pay his first year's salary, he yielded to their plea to serve a second and even third year. Fortunately, he received \$300 each year from the Home Mission Board, but the local church could never raise enough by subscription alone to pay his contracted salary. Still dependent upon donations to supply the difference, the church now took care not to misrepresent such an affair. The announcement in 1881 of a "Valentine Donation Party for the benefit of Rev. William Campbell" further stated, "The proceeds of this donation will be applied to make up a deficiency in our minister's salary, otherwise unprovided for." Surely, after three years in Mt. Pleasant, Campbell must have believed that Christians of all breeds in the town preferred to eat their way to salvation at "donations," ice cream socials, and oyster suppers rather than pay a minister's salary in full when due.

During these years, the Ladies' Aid Society continued to support the church with the proceeds from a rich and varied program of entertainment for the diversion of the townspeople. In addition to the usual dinners, musical offerings, and drama, it sponsored a lecture series that brought nationally known personalities to the village. Among these were Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who spoke to capacity audiences. Schuyler Colfax, a former vice-president of the United States, arrived in town soon after the tragic death of President Garfield and spoke feelingly from the Presbyterian platform on the subject, "Our Martyred Presidents."

The Society put its hard-garnered funds to good use. It hoped to provide the church with stained glass windows, but in view of the constant shortage of subscription money, settled for "blinds" and shutters instead.

Often the trustees turned to the Society as the only source of ready funds. On one occasion, for example, frantically seeking to make a quarterly payment to the pastor, they resolved "to pay all incidental money on the Salary [sic]," and then, as a last hope called upon "the Ladies' Aid Society to aid us in the amount of \$25.00 or more."

In addition to the many contributions of the Ladies' Aid Society, the church received gifts from unexpected sources. To the surprise and delight of the congregation, at Christmas time in 1881, Mrs. May made a second welcome and munificent present to the church--a complete pipe organ. By the first week in the new year the instrument was installed and ready for use. On the 6th of January an organ concert with Mrs. D. S. Partridge at the instrument attracted a "full house" and added \$12 to the coffers of the Ladies' Aid Society, sponsor of the event. The next month Mary L. Mitchell of Waterbury, Connecticut, gave the church an eight-piece silver communion service, a gift which Campbell did not reveal until May when a surprised congregation saw it in use for the first time.

At the annual meeting in 1881, the congregation, recognizing the need to provide better care for the church and its new equipment, authorized an expenditure of \$50 yearly to employ a church sexton. Shortly thereafter Charles Slater--elder, trustee, Sunday School superintendent, and sometime church carpenter--took over as janitor as well and served in that role for many years. An oddity relating to the general maintenance of the church at this time was the resolution of the trustees that "anyone wishing to cushion a seat could cut them down and do so if they wished." In light of this resolve, one can well understand why the church a year hence was in the market for new pews.

Late in March, 1882, the Reverend Campbell announced his resignation, effective at the expiration of his contract. Surprised and disheartened by their pastor's decision, the trustees appointed two of their number to explain to him how matters stood "in regard to the prospect of his salary being raised." By dint of much searching and scraping, however, they were able "to settle" with Campbell when he left the town late in June. At the same time the trustees voted to raise sufficient funds to satisfy all church indebtedness. Now the search for a new pastor was again under way.

On October 9, 1882, the congregation issued a call to the Reverend Eugene G. Cheeseman of the Lyons Presbytery who promptly accepted the invitation and began his duties on the 28th of the same month. Although the trustees again requested assistance from the Board of Home Missions, the church's financial position appeared brighter. At the annual meeting the following spring, its indebtedness totaled only \$120, an amount liquidated immediately by personal subscription. Apparently the trustees had managed to pay Cheeseman his salary without the usual last minute struggle. As a further indication of solvency, the congregation authorized the sale of the present seats to the Calkinsville church and the expenditure of \$360 for new pews.

During Cheeseman's first year as pastor the members of the church adopted a rotary system of eldership. Slater won a three year term, Bouton two years, and Wilkinson Doughty, new to the session, one year. At the annual meeting a year hence the congregation voted to enlarge the number of ruling elders to five. Doughty was elected for three years and David M. Switzer and H. B. Pierson to two and one year terms respectively.

As moderator and for some time its clerk as well, Cheeseman made frequent calls for the Session to meet. A reading of his meticulous and detailed records reveals that to his view church membership should not be

taken lightly. He made a distinct effort to correct the many errors in the church rolls and to supply missing entries in the record book. Although many gained admission to the church during his pastorate, others were removed from the rolls because of absence from church or for unseemly conduct. Perhaps the high point of this latter effort was the Session's formal excommunication of a woman member who had recently dared to divorce her husband in a local court.

Cheeseman's rather puritanical approach to religion may have antagonized some who had long supported the church. During the first year, too, the Episcopalians erected a beautiful new church and attracted to it many substantial citizens who had formerly worshiped with the Presbyterians. Indeed, the lot on which the Episcopal Church stood was the gift of the Dwight May family and the well-designed and finely-constructed building was paid for by William N. Brown, the Mays' son-in-law. Perhaps Mrs. May, whose love for the Presbyterians had previously been demonstrated, feared that their church, much in need of repair and situated far back from the street amid the unkempt back yards of neighboring business houses, now suffered in comparison with the advantageously located and spanking new Episcopal Church. Whatever her motive, she informed the Board of Trustees that if it would select a new site for the church building, she would purchase the lot and hold the mortgage. Nothing came of the offer at the time and some years were to pass before the subject of moving the building to another site again arose.

The congregation tendered Cheeseman a contract for a second year, and then a third. The decline in church attendance during his second year was understandable, but when more and more of the stalwarts failed to appear for Sunday morning services, the trustees knew that they had to act. At a meeting of the Board on January 2, 1885, all present agreed that for the good of the church, Cheeseman must at once resign his charge. The pastor complied, although the suddenness of the request must have surprised him. Only a month before, he and his wife had hosted an evening social described as "the largest and most enjoyable gathering of the kind of the season." Indeed, on the day prior to the Board's decision many church members attended a New Year's Day "open house" at his home. To pay the remainder due on his salary, the trustees once again sought the assistance of the Ladies' Aid Society, and, in addition, raised \$82 by means of a "donation." On March 5, 1885, Cheeseman and his family departed for the East and a new pastorate at Skaneateles, New York, where death took him less than a year later.

The Presbyterians sought for months to find a new pastor. In November the congregation issued a call to the Reverend F. A. Bissell, of Armada, Michigan, a member of the Kalamazoo Association of Congregational Ministers, with the understanding that he unite with the Saginaw Presbytery at its next meeting.

Bissell, a young man only recently ordained, was the son of the Reverend L. B. Bissell, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Caro, Michigan, and a former missionary with thirty-five years of service in India. Indeed, the younger man had been born and reared in India and was well versed in the Hindu language and culture. When he arrived in Mt. Pleasant he found quarters in the home of Rachel Nott, sister of the Reverend Luke Nott, first pastor of the local church who through the years had continued his out-county missionary work. Soon young Bissell was either assisting Nott in this work or had actually assumed responsibility for a number of rural charges. By the first of the year, in addition to his Mt. Pleasant service, he preached on weekday evenings to small Presbyterian assemblages in Coleman, Calkinsville, and Whiteville. Returning from one of these engagements on a cold December night shortly before Christmas, the young pastor

was surprised and pleased to discover that during his absence a group of church women had provided furniture for his heretofore rather barren bachelor quarters. Perhaps their gift served as a gentle hint and accounted for his next move. A month later after an absence of a few days the pastor returned to town with a bride.

During his first year in Mt. Pleasant, the young preacher received invitations from a number of churches in the Saginaw Valley to address their congregations. In addition to his ability as a speaker and his unusual experience as a member of a missionary family, he had a fine voice and was a skilled musician. When he visited another church his program usually consisted of a lecture, "Life in India," and Hindu melodies sung first in the native tongue and then in English. One of his performances in Bridgeport was billed as "a concert."

During Bissell's ministry, there was some speculation among local Presbyterians in particular and the townspeople generally that the new Presbyterian college which the Michigan Synod had authorized recently for northern Michigan might be established in Mt. Pleasant. Soon, however, news arrived that the college would be located at Alma. It began operation there in 1887.

The people of Mt. Pleasant, however, were not disheartened by this failure to gain the college. Indeed, they were experiencing prosperous times. The extension to the town of the Toledo, Ann Arbor, and North Michigan Railroad promised a bright future. Each train seemed to bring visitors to the village, some of whom, pleased with what they saw, made plans to settle there. Now, too, the citizens of Mt. Pleasant had ready access by rail to the larger towns to the south and east. One of the first groups to take advantage of the new facility was the Presbyterian Sunday School which in the fall of 1886 made an excursion to Alma and St. Louis.

For the Presbyterian Church, however, the times were far from prosperous. Even the Ladies' Aid Society became less active, sponsoring socials and other money-raising activities only once a month instead of weekly as in the past. But it still had sufficient funds available to fulfill a trustee request for \$25 "to pay on the Seats." As another indication of decline, the annual meeting of the church and the election of officers in May, 1887 had to be postponed because there were not enough members present to fill vacancies on the several boards.

After the Reverend Bissell preached his farewell sermon on June 19, 1887, the Presbyterian pulpit remained vacant for more than a year. During this time the Sunday School classes convened regularly and the Ladies' Aid Society continued to do all that it could to keep the church functioning. Lacking pastoral leadership, the church boards nonetheless endeavored to provide as full a program of religious observance as possible. On some occasions they could prevail upon a minister from another town or city to come by rail and preach to the congregation, but often there were no worship services whatsoever. Late in the year, however, the trustees concluded an agreement with the Reverend R. T. Lynd of the newly-opened Alma College to serve the church until it could find a permanent pastor.

In June, 1888 the Reverend Melvin Fraser of Elgin, Illinois arrived in Mt. Pleasant at the invitation of the Board of Trustees and supplied the Presbyterian pulpit on three consecutive Sundays. Evidently all who heard him were favorably impressed, agreeing that "he [gave] promise of faithful and efficient work" and that the four sermons he delivered had "the right ring in them." With the Reverend F. L. Forbes of Midland presiding, the congregation on June 25, 1888 chose Fraser as its pastor-elect and instructed

the Board of Trustees to issue the call. By this time Fraser had already returned to his home in Illinois. Several weeks later he agreed to the terms which the trustees had already discussed with him and returned to Mt. Pleasant late in July to assume his duties.

The church seemed to take on new life during Fraser's brief ministry. When he arrived, church membership totaled sixty-one; a year later it had increased to seventy-three. The program of the church during his ministry was as follows:

Sabbath preaching at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sabbath school at 12 p.m. Young Peoples' meeting at 6 p.m. Young Peoples' Missionary Society concert second Sabbath of each month at 7 p.m., communion service second Sabbath of each quarter at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, prayer meeting at 7 p.m. Standard time. Welcome to all.

The Saginaw Presbytery convened in Mt. Pleasant for its semi-annual session late in August, 1888 and at that time formally installed Fraser as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. Thereafter the young minister, who had no family with him, became increasingly active in Presbytery affairs. When it met in Mt. Pleasant again the following April, the members of the church were called upon to open their homes and offer hospitality for several days to the sixty ministers and elders in attendance. Fraser frequently traveled to other cities to speak and on most of those occasions there were no services in his own church. When the Presbytery met in St. Louis in September, 1889, it elected the Mt. Pleasant pastor moderator for the ensuing year.

Despite a rise in membership, the church continued to have difficulty raising enough funds for the pastor's salary--\$400 annually with another \$100 contributed by the Board of Home Missions. Only by means of the usual donations and pleas to the Ladies' Aid Society was the total salary forthcoming. In addition to their contribution, the women raised enough money by socials and entertainments to provide three new chairs and a communion table for the chancel.

Fraser had close ties with his family in Chicago and visited there frequently. Returning from that city in February, 1889, he informed the congregation that he wished to resign his charge effective in mid-April. His mother had been seriously ill and he wished to find a church nearer to the family home. The pastor's announcement "caused much regret among the members" and he was asked to reconsider, but his decision was final. He also resigned as moderator of the Saginaw Presbytery. After preaching a last sermon on April 7, 1890, he immediately departed for Chicago. Several years later, however, he had journeyed much farther from his home than Mt. Pleasant for in 1895 he was serving as a missionary in Africa.

The trustees of the First Presbyterian Church again faced the task of engaging a pastor. Complicating their search was the fact that the Presbyterian Society itself appeared far from prosperous, its church building needing refurbishing and major repair. Twenty years before, it had been the pride of a small village, but now, in truth, it was an eyesore in the heart of a progressive city with nearly 3,500 population. Even as they searched for a pastor the trustees deliberated: Should the old building be repaired and remodeled? Should land adjoining the property be purchased to improve the church site? Should the land be sold and the building moved to another lot somewhere in town? The dilapidated building and the apparent lack of resources available to the Board may have been the chief reasons for the refusal of a visiting Chicago minister to accept an

\$800 offer for a year of service and the promise of a larger salary in the future.

The search for a new pastor continued until December 1, 1890. On that date at a meeting "held at the Exchange Bank Parlors," the trustees decided to employ the Reverend William H. Hoffman at an annual salary of \$600-- "with the understanding that he devote a part of his time to the Calkinsville charge." There may have been an agreement, too, that if he accepted the charge the trustees would immediately begin a program to improve the church building. Hoffman accepted the offer and before the year ended had resigned his charge in Muir, Michigan, and had arrived in Mt. Pleasant to begin his five year pastorate at First Presbyterian.

In Hoffman the Presbyterians found a friend and an inspired leader. At his prodding the trustees began making definite plans for repairing and remodeling the sanctuary. Hoffman himself originated the idea of a "repair box" to be attached to the church to receive donations to a repair fund. At the end of his first year he declared that he was "satisfied" with his charge and the "progress" that had been made--but, in truth, improvements yet remained in the planning stage. The next spring, however, the trustees agreed that Hoffman should journey to Grand Rapids to consult an architect regarding plans for remodeling the church. With a few modifications they approved the architect's plans and voted "to rearrange and beautify the building inside and out." In another year the church had been moved to the front of the lot and placed on a new, eighteen-inch stone foundation. Under it, too, was a partial basement where a new furnace had recently been installed. A new roof, exterior painting, and clean-up of the premises comprised the first stage of the plan, much of which had been completed at the time of the annual meeting on May 1, 1893.

Reports submitted at the annual meeting seemed to indicate that the church was proceeding with its improvement program without undue financial stress. The plate collections of \$146.97 for the year had been sufficient to meet all incidental expenses and leave a small balance. Contributions to the "repair box" totaled \$27.54 of which all but \$1.82 had been expended. Subscriptions for the pastor's salary amounted to \$555.00 to which was added "donation" receipts of \$53.70. Of the total thus due him (\$608.70) the trustees had already paid \$250.00. For janitor service they had paid Charles Slater \$50.00 for the year and \$19.73 in arrears. The building committee reported that to date it had spent \$87.77 for excavating the furnace room and installing the furnace. In addition it had paid out \$150.94 of the \$152.72 subscribed to the repair fund to move the building and to construct its new foundation.

Despite inconveniences and delays associated with the improvement program, the church carried on a full program of religious observance. With Hoffman as moderator, the Session met frequently, the new elders, Elijah D. Wheaton, George W. Snyder, and Lewis E. Royal, the last the first mayor of Mt. Pleasant, taking active roles in its deliberations. The Sunday School, too, was in a flourishing condition. In June the usual Children's Day exercises on Sunday morning were of "unusual interest" and well attended. Later on the same day the Reverend Hoffman "wheeled" to Calkinsville to speak at the "elaborate program" of Children's Day exercises which on that occasion replaced the usual services for the Presbyterians of that village. On a warm spring day a few weeks earlier, the onlookers in Mt. Pleasant had been much amused to see the local minister "taming an unmanageable bike." He had succumbed readily to the bicycle craze sweeping the country at the time and thereafter used a "safety" bicycle constantly to attend to "his ministerial duties" both locally and at a distance. Indeed, when he had become an expert rider, he thought little of bicycling all the way to Muir,

the village where he had formerly preached, sixty-five miles south of Mt. Pleasant.

A number of the men engaged in formulating plans for the improvement of the Presbyterian Church were at the same time laying the groundwork for a significant contribution to Mt. Pleasant itself. Indeed, seven of the twelve local citizens who joined together in the spring of 1892 to establish the Mt. Pleasant Improvement Company were either presently or formerly associated with the Presbyterian Society. The members of this new organization, perhaps remembering the loss of the Presbyterian College to Alma six years earlier, hoped to advance the prospects of their city by founding a training school for teachers and business students. All went well with their plans and in September, 1892, the Central Normal School and Business Institute convened its first classes. In the years to follow, the new institution was to have a profound impact upon the city of Mt. Pleasant--and upon the First Presbyterian Church as well. Charles F. R. Bellows, the Normal's first principal, along with his wife and daughter, joined the church only a month after the school opened. When the congregation elected him to the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in 1893, he became the first of a long succession of Central men and women to serve the church.

As money became available the Presbyterian Society continued to improve the church. To the dismay of some members the churchyard seemed to be constantly littered with materials and debris. At the annual meeting in 1895, however, the building committee reported that the renovation was completed. Rooms had been added to the rear of the building and the interior had been remodeled and freshly decorated. New carpeting had been laid and some new furnishings added. The old kerosene chandeliers had been removed and electric lights installed. The cost of the renovation was slightly more than the \$731.48 which had been subscribed to a special Church Repair Fund. At the conclusion of the building committee's report, the Reverend Hoffman offered prayer "in recognition of the Divine favor so manifest in raising funds for repairing the church and in the good feeling prevailing throughout the congregation."

The varied activities of the congregation at this time could well inspire a "good feeling." Although its membership total of seventy-three had remained fairly constant during the past five years, the Sunday School enrollment now reached more than 100. Forty of the youth of the church were active in the Young Peoples' Society. The Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society had met regularly for years and had done much to help the poor of the town. Since its founding the Ladies' Aid Society had contributed \$3,500 to the church. Although the organ in the renovated church needed repair, and should be replaced, money for a new instrument was not available. At Sunday services the church had for some years employed "choristers." As an economy move the trustees in 1895 limited all expenditure for church music to fifty cents weekly--the amount paid the organist. During the same year the trustees also adopted the envelope system for the payment of pledges.

The "good feeling" that had existed in the spring, however, did not long persist. In September the trustees voted unanimously to end "the pastoral relationship" between the Reverend Hoffman and the church at the close of the current pastoral year, May 1, 1896. Shortly after learning of the Board's decision Hoffman resigned as pastor and accepted a call to a church in Flushing, Michigan.

In expressing the sense of their meeting the following December, the trustees declared that it was "desirable to secure a pastor as soon as practicable." After reviewing the applications of a number of ministers, they invited the Reverend I. A. Shanton "of Ohio" to come to Mt. Pleasant in

January and occupy the pulpit.

Shanton arrived in town in time to partake of the fifteen-cent supper prepared by the Ladies' Aid Society in recognition of its 27th anniversary. In reporting his acceptance, the local newspaper commented: "Mr. Shanton comes here with the finest recommendations and [the Presbyterian Society] is to be congratulated in securing such a pastor, and that church has every prospect of advancing in its several features as a religious organization."

Shanton preached to large congregations on consecutive Sabbaths in January, delivering a special sermon for the young men of the town on the second Sunday evening. Following this latter service the trustees and other members of the congregation met in the church parlor and expressed their approval of the visiting clergyman. At a meeting the next day the trustees voted to engage him as pastor-elect "looking to his installation" as pastor of First Presbyterian and as "supply" for the Calkinsville church. A month later Shanton accepted the call.

Shortly after the pastor-elect assumed his duties, the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society contributed enough money for starving Armenians "to feed 73 people for three months." Within a brief time, however, the church itself would have welcomed relief money. Shanton had taken over the Presbyterian pulpit at the onset of another period of national economic stagnation. Indeed, at one of his first Sunday evening services he selected as his subject, "Some Practical and Helpful Things from the Present Hard Times." In view of the situation, he called upon the congregation to provide the church with a more efficient financial structure. At the annual meeting in May, the members agreed to his three proposals:

1. That the trustees hold a business meeting once a month.
2. That the church and Society hold a business meeting once in three months.
3. That there be formed a financial committee of twenty members of the church and Society whose duty it shall be to solicit and collect funds for the carrying on of the work of the church.

In addition to subscribing funds for church operation, members might also contribute when special collections were taken for the Board of Home Missions, the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of Church Erection, the Board of "Sustentation," the Presbyterian College Fund, the Freedman Fund, and the Ministerial Relief Fund.

Shanton's sermons continued to attract large audiences. He spoke on "modern, vital themes," said the local editor. When the city's fire equipment failed to operate properly on the occasion of another disastrous conflagration, the townspeople packed the Presbyterian sanctuary to hear the new minister's denunciation of those responsible for the malfunction. He delivered a "patriotic" sermon in celebration of the Fourth of July, and the next week was the chief platform speaker and chief attraction--except for the successful balloon ascension--at the Calkinsville celebration of the "Battle of the Boyne." Despite his popularity and the best efforts of the new financial committee, subscriptions to the pastoral salary fund totaled \$200.00 less than in former years. Undoubtedly, a large measure of this decline in support reflected the current "hard times," but to Shanton it was evidently an indication of the congregation's inability or unwillingness to provide for a full-time pastor. At his suggestion the society terminated his contract at its half-year mark in August. On his last Sunday in the

Presbyterian pulpit he may have revealed more of the circumstances relating to his sudden resignation. At the morning service his sermon was entitled, "The One Thing Needed by this Church;" in the evening for his farewell sermon he chose the subject, "Mind Your Own Business." Three months later he left Mt. Pleasant in response to the "unanimous" call of a large Congregational church in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Presbyterian pulpit had been vacant only a week when the church suffered a sudden, heavy loss. On the 24th of August, 1896, death took Mrs. Mary F. Doughty, a co-founder of the Sunday School, one of the twelve original members of the church, and one of its staunchest supporters. Severe as was the loss of this devoted servant of Christ, the church and the community could find some compensation for their sorrow in the seemingly providential arrival in town of such dedicated Christians as Professor and Mrs. Charles McKenny.