

The Rev. Dr. Green

Don. Auct. 7



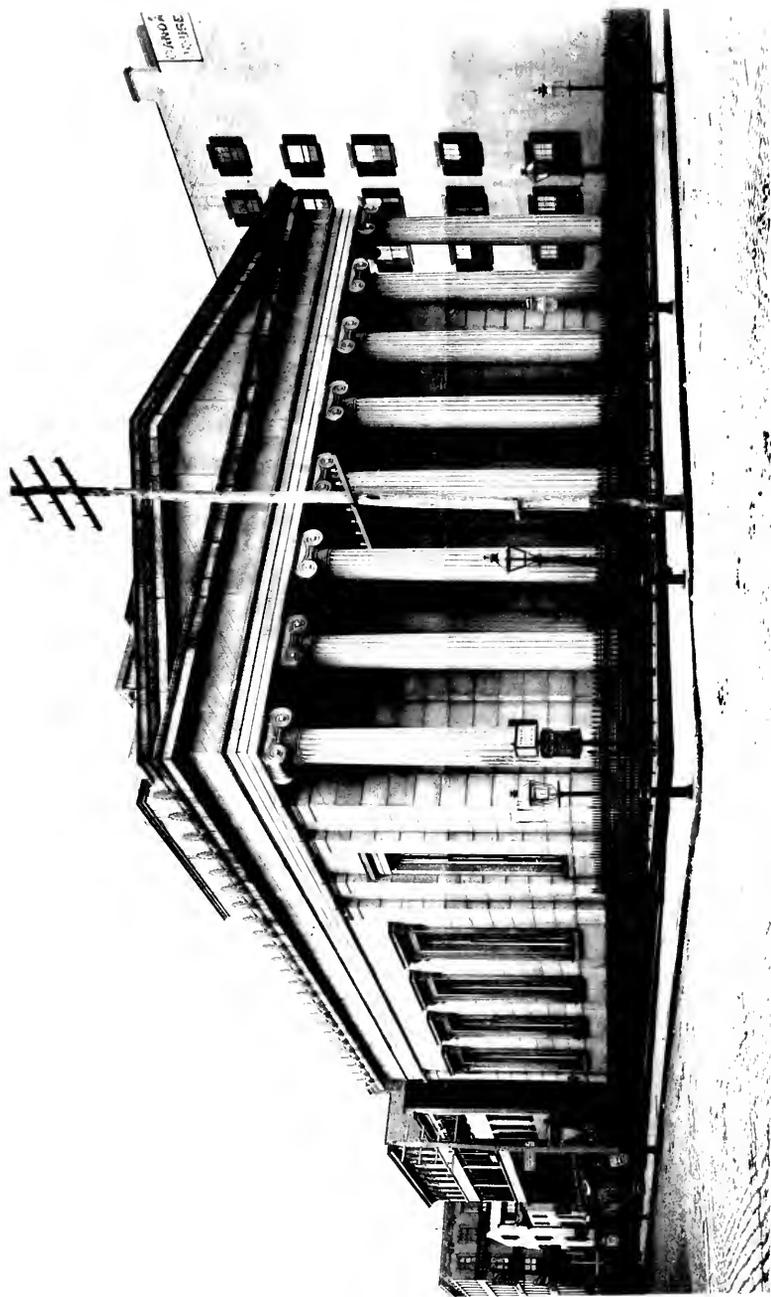
Fifty Years of Church Life

BX9517
.5.N5
M6C43



EX 9511
BIBL
MACC 2

fifty Years of Church Life



A. D. FISH, PHOTO.

MIDDLE DUTCH CHURCH.
LAFAYETTE PLACE.

AIRTYPE E. BIENSTADT N.

fifty Years of Church Life

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

BY THE

REV. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D., LL.D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH

Delivered Sunday Morning, February 20, 1887

IN THE

MIDDLE DUTCH CHURCH

LAFAYETTE PLACE

NEW YORK

IN VIEW OF

The Removal of that Building



PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE CONSISTORY

GILLISS BROTHERS & TURNURE
THE ART AGE PRESS
400 & 402 WEST 14TH STREET, N. Y.

AN unusually large audience was gathered to hear this discourse, not a few having come from a distance to worship once more in the old church.

The order for the Morning Service at present prevailing in the Collegiate Churches was observed throughout the service, and it has been thought desirable to record the same in connection with the discourse.

The last services in the church were held on Sunday, February 27th. At the Morning Service on that day the Lord's Supper was administered to a large congregation.

Order of Service

ANTHEM: "God is a Spirit," etc.

THE INVOCATION AND LORD'S PRAYER

THE SALUTATION

THE READING OF THE LAW

Response

THE PSALTER: Psalm cxxxii.

Gloria Patri

LESSON FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: I. Kings, viii., 1-11

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

LESSON FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT: Rev., xxi., 23-27;

xxii., 1-5

HYMN: No. 1. "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty"

HOLY, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee:
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty;
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! all the Saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea,
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art Holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth and sky and sea:
Holy, Holy, Holy! merciful and mighty;
God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity! Amen.

Immediately after this hymn the Minister, following according to his custom and old usage of the church, delivered the

EXORDIUM REMOTUM

as follows :

“ **I**N the first year of my ministry, and before my ordination, while staying at the house of one of the elders, I happened to see a sermon lying on the table, which, upon examination, turned out to be a discourse delivered by the Rev. Dr. Knox at the dedication of this place of worship. My attention was at once arrested; because I knew him personally, because he had been born in Pennsylvania in a county adjoining the one in which I first saw the light, and because a few months before I had heard him at the house of a friend speak of the solidity of this granite edifice. But the last thought to enter my mind then was that after the lapse of so many years I should be present here to pronounce the closing discourse, corresponding to the opening one which he pronounced in 1839. Yet so it has come to pass, and this is the purpose for which we have assembled this morning. In view of the theme, I trust that you will allow me to tax your time and attention somewhat longer than has been usual.”

PRAYER

HYMN: No. 559. “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”

I LOVE Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The church our blest Redeemer
saved

With His own precious blood.

I love Thy church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her woe,
Let every joy this heart forsake,
And every grief o'erflow.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be
given
Till toils and cares shall end.

OFFERINGS

SERMON

PRAYER

DOXOLOGY

BENEDICTION

THE HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

Lord, I love the habitation of thy house,
And the place where thy glory dwelleth.

Ps. xxvi. 8. (Rev. Ver.)

THE Psalm containing the text is peculiar as being not so much a confession of sin as a protestation of innocence. The singer asks and hopes not to be treated as the wicked because he is unlike them; he has not chosen their fellowship nor frequented their companies, but on the contrary washes his hands in innocency and delights in the congregations of the Lord. Such claims, however, are not assertions of human merit but rather acknowledgments of the divine loving kindness which was ever before David's eyes. The New Testament counterpart of the utterance is found in the Apostle's solemn declaration (II. Cor. ii. 12), "For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God we behaved ourselves in the world." There are times when he who is but dust and ashes before God may, or even must, assert the general integrity of his life and the conscious uprightness of his heart.

In the text the singer declares his attachment to the ordinances of worship. The Revised Version brings out the full sense of the words, which is not only that he has loved, but that he still continues to love the Lord's house. It is an abiding characteristic. And the great reason of this affection for the place is that there the glory of Jehovah dwells. That glory, the visible manifestation of the divine presence, took up its abode on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, and the devout worshipper knew that when he

came to the temple, he had communion with the living God. The ordinary name for the sanctuary was the **TENT OF MEETING**, a name which indicates its peculiar use according to the promise, "There will I meet with the children of Israel, and *the Tent* shall be sanctified by my glory." (Ex. xxix. 43). Hence the devout and earnest desire of God's people for the enjoyment of this privilege as we find it often expressed in the Psalter :

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of the Lord. (cxxii., 1.)

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts !
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. (lxxxiv., 1.)

The same experience was renewed under the Christian dispensation. It is true there was then no longer one central place of worship to which all the tribes should go up, as indeed there could not be when the Church had spread itself from the River to the ends of the earth. But provision was made for this state of things. Isaiah declared (iv. 4), that in the latter days the Lord would create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night. No longer should these striking insignia of God's presence be confined to a single locality, but they should pervade the whole extent of the Church. The full substance of this blessed promise is given in the brief and simple words of our Saviour—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." His disciples have taken him at his word, and in every age have sought the fulfillment of this promise by joint worship, whether in small companies or large. The earliest heathen account of them (Pliny's letter to Trajan) tells of their regular meetings for worship on a stated day. And they persevered in this habit even when it was at the peril of liberty or life. The Catacombs of ancient Rome, the mountain valleys of Piedmont, the dense woods of the Netherlands, the scattered refuges of the Huguenot Church of the Desert, and the glens of Scotland echoed with prayer and praise while a sentinel was constantly on the watch to

sound an alarm if the enemy came in sight. In peaceful times the same tendency is apparent. Throughout the vast extent of our own country, the progress of population has always been accompanied by means and appliances for public worship. From every new settlement there arises a modest spire or belfry to indicate the place where men have erected a house for God, and propose to seek his face and behold his glory. Believers have learned by experience that the Lord never says to his people, Seek ye my face, in vain. Often amid surroundings as rude and desolate as the rocky plain where Jacob laid himself down to sleep, they have received such disclosures of the divine love and faithfulness as induced them to exclaim with the patriarch, "Surely this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Still more is this the case when men meet in a fitting and well-appointed temple, where for scores of years the voice of prayer and praise has been heard, and the very walls recall a thousand tender and sacred associations. One cannot but think of the holy men who in former days ministered here; of the sainted dead who nourished their religious life, of the young whose feet were taught to tread the paths of wisdom and peace, of the recent converts whose first confession of Christ was made in this place, of the countless multitude whose earliest religious impressions date back to the time when they occupied these seats. The full results of the maintenance of a house of worship where the word and ordinances have been faithfully administered, never can be known on earth or in time, but must await the disclosures of the great day. Still, what is known is of such a character as to awaken profound and lasting interest. And it is not possible to contemplate the abrupt sundering of these ties without sadness and regret, especially when the edifice is to be removed, and the place that once knew it is to know it no more forever. Devout worshippers feel as if a part of themselves were taken away, and an immedicable wound inflicted upon their sensibilities. The house endeared to them by memories of past years, sometimes running back to childhood, where they have

often been made to sit in heavenly places, where they have found comfort in sorrow and strength in weakness, where they have received many a mighty stimulus in the Christian life, is to pass away like the shifting scenes of a drama and leave not a trace behind. It is not in human nature to be conscious of this without feeling a shock and a pang.

This is the present experience of many of you whom I address. This solid and stately edifice which for so many years has been, even when its doors were closed, a mute witness for the claims of God in the heart of our great metropolis, and which in its day has been so effective a factor in the church life of the city, is to be taken down and the ground it occupies to be given over to secular uses. For the reasons given and others that might be mentioned this circumstance is to you a very painful one. It could not be otherwise. Let us see, however, if there are not things that may mitigate the sense of bereavement. The case is not unprecedented. The holy and beautiful house which Solomon built on Moriah, which was rich beyond calculation and was honored by the manifest indwelling of the Most High, and which therefore had a glory the like of which no earthly structure ever enjoyed, was utterly destroyed, after standing for centuries and accumulating through successive generations a store of sacred associations. When the time came in the providence of God that its purpose was accomplished it ceased to exist. In like manner the second temple, which although at the beginning a feeble reflection of the first, was so enlarged and adorned by Herod that it rivalled in splendor the proudest fanes existing elsewhere, was in its turn razed to the ground. The Lord Jesus had walked in its porches, had twice cleansed its area, and often taught in its courts, yet none of these memories saved it from the hand of the destroyer. Even as He predicted, not one stone was left upon another. And the ground was still further desecrated by the erection of a pagan temple. Now both these destructions were necessary; one to preserve a godly seed by transplanting it for seventy years, the other to signalize the change of dis-

pensations and show that the Church was no longer national and local. Both were very painful measures, yet both accomplished the objects aimed at. And they concur to show that any material structure, no matter how solemnly consecrated to God, or how enriched with tokens of his presence and favor, may yet come into such a condition as that its removal may be no damage to the Kingdom of God, but rather the contrary.

Appeal may be made in like manner to the history of our own city. The first place of worship on this island was erected in 1633, and since then scores and even hundreds of churches have been built, yet of all these now existing only one, St. Paul's Chapel, dates back to a period anterior to the Revolution. Indeed not a few have had their beginning and their end within the present century. Nor may we doubt that in all or nearly all these cases there was a great deal of reluctance in surrendering an old and honored temple of worship. The trial was felt to be very sore. Yet the surrender was made. It was done, not wantonly, not capriciously, but simply because in the deliberate judgment of those who made it the best interests alike of the individual congregation and of Christ's cause in the city, required that the sacrifice should be made. The peculiar configuration of the island upon which New York is built, no doubt has largely contributed to this result. Yet the same thing has been seen in other cities otherwise situated. For example, a few months since in Cincinnati a new building was dedicated by a church which had so recently as 1851 erected a "splendid edifice" a mile or two distant, in what at the time was deemed to be a very eligible location. Less than forty years had rendered the change from the heart of the town to one of the suburbs an absolute necessity.

Similar was the state of things here. In the year 1769 the North Church was erected for English preaching. For the long period of sixty-eight years from that time, nothing was done in the way of providing new places of worship, although the subject had frequently been presented to the Consistory. At length in the year 1836 it was found that so

many of our congregations had removed their residence to a considerable distance from the existing churches, that it was deemed necessary to make provision for them, and accordingly on the 9th of November in that year, the cornerstone of this house was laid by Dr. John Knox, the Senior Minister. In his address on that occasion he remarked, "A new erection in this part of the city has been called for by the convenience of many of our own people, thrust out of their former abodes by the ever-encroaching spirit of commerce. * * * The ploughshare of commerce has broken up the foundations of their former dwellings in the older parts of the city, and indeed has already invaded places greatly hallowed in our associations. It has been called for by the state of this particular church, if she will continue to sustain her wonted numbers, and vigor and efficiency—called for by the duty which we owe to the denomination of which we form a part." These words are true and weighty. They justify the erection then, and at the same time explain the removal now. The house was built to meet the wants of a definite class of people then living in the neighborhood, but that class has now almost disappeared. Of the families that occupied the pews when the doors were opened, not one remains. Their successors have in a great measure followed them. And the regular congregation now is not larger than that of the old Middle Church in Nassau street, or that of the North in William street when they were closed. It may then with reason be said, that the people for whom the structure was reared having as a body removed, the structure itself may take the same course. To this the objection is sometimes made that the existing congregation although small is very harmonious, spirited and active; that in proportion to its numbers and means it compares favorably with the others of our Communion; that its Sunday-school and Industrial school are carried on with as much efficiency and success as at any former period of our history, and that therefore it would be unwise to break up so useful an organization. The answer is that no such dissolution is intended, but that accommoda-

tions have been provided across the street,* whither the whole plant of the enterprise will be transferred at once and without a break. It is true that the missionary work † carried on here during the last four or five years, has not accomplished the end aimed at so far as respects any considerable increase of the morning congregation. But there can be no doubt that a great deal of good has been done, that many young people have been brought into full communion, and that a restraining and elevating influence has been exerted upon the children belonging to a large number of families. And at the same time the putting forth of these efforts has been a great blessing to all of those, old or young, who have taken part in this excellent form of Christian work. In watering others they have been watered themselves. But it is hoped and believed that all this can be continued after the transfer. The place will be new and limited, but the work and the workers, the spirit and the aim, will be just what they have been for years.

But let us return to the past. The occasion invites us to the review of a half-century—just that period having elapsed since our standard was planted here. Fifty years of church life! The period is small compared with the roll of the ages, yet how much is involved in it! The building itself is a creditable monument of the taste of a former generation. It was designed to be a simple, solid structure that would endure for ages. Its exterior, a granite of a light grayish color, and its octastyle † portico of monolith columns, are as staunch to-day as when first set up. The Ionic front resembling that of the temple of Erectheus, a part of which still stands on the summit of the Athenian

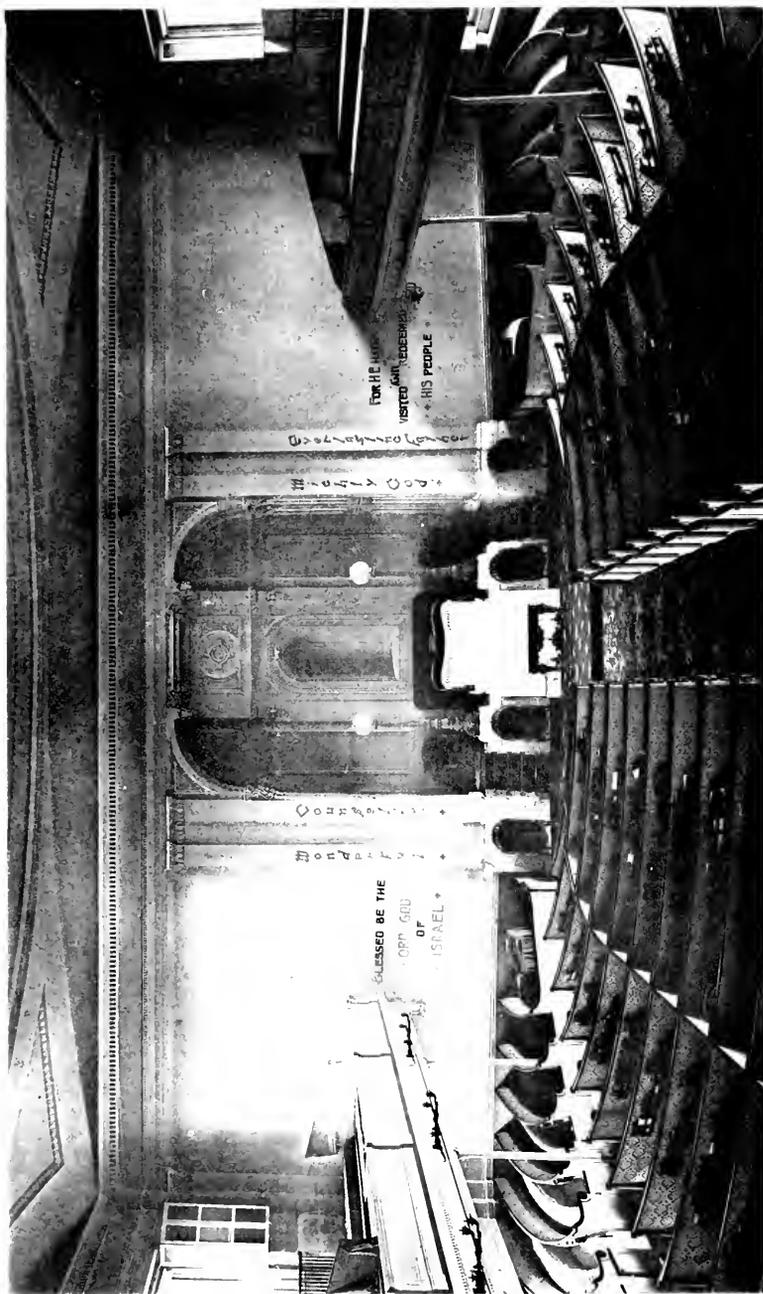
* No. 14 Lafayette Place.

† The origin of this work is as follows: In May 1882, the Consistory appointed a committee "to seek for a suitable person to conduct special services in the Middle Church, and to perform such duties as may from time to time be required of him." This was intended to operate upon the contiguous population of non-church-going persons. In November the same year, the Rev. HENRY DE VRIES commenced services under the direction of this Committee, and continued for about eighteen months when he was succeeded by the Rev. LIVINGSTON L. TAYLOR, who still acts as the missionary of the church. He officiates regularly on the evening of the Lord's day and on Friday evening, and also renders much other useful service.

Acropolis, is an admirable expression of classic purity and beauty. Unfortunately after this plan had been adopted, there were those who could not endure the thought of a Christian temple without a steeple, and accordingly one was erected admirably fashioned after ancient models and terminating in a lofty and well-proportioned spire, yet so incongruous with the style of the building and so repugnant to correct principles of architecture, that it was felt to be a great relief when after some years the timbers were found to be so decayed that it had to be removed. The interior of the edifice well corresponds with the severe simplicity of the outer walls. The roof is a single span sustained without the aid of columns, and the ceiling curved and enriched with appropriate panelings which radiate from a central star enclosed in a triangle. The pews are arranged in a circular form so as to bring every occupant in full view of the speaker, and the acoustics of the building are such that no one has difficulty in hearing what is said from the pulpit. Indeed the audience-room is one that in point of convenience for Protestant worship has not been, I might say cannot be, surpassed. The pulpit of white statuary marble, designed with simple beauty, is a fair outward expression of the purity of the doctrine which they who use it are expected to set forth. As the church was built at a time when men did not feel that the Creator had made the earth large enough to spare the necessity of living underground, a basement extends under the whole building, intended for Sunday-school and other purposes. It has on three sides a deep and wide area so as to secure ventilation, as well as a sub-cellar eleven feet in depth, and yet it was always objectionable on the score of health and comfort, although handsomely fitted up and commodiously arranged for church uses.

The church was dedicated on the 9th of May, 1839, Dr. Knox preaching the sermon* and the Rev. Dr. Milledoler,

*This discourse was printed and a notice of it in the *Commercial Advertiser* said that it sustains the reputation its author has so long enjoyed for sound theological learning and enlightened and elevated piety, and that it shows the catholicity which has always distinguished the Reformed Dutch Church.



MIDDLE DUTCH CHURCH
T. VAN NELLE, 1911

FOR THE HONOR
OF THE REFORMED
CHURCH
• HIS PEOPLE •

WOLFFHART

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

1704

BLESSED BE THE
GOD OF
ISRAEL •

one of the former ministers, offering the dedicatory prayer. It was very soon filled with worshippers, and so continued for many years. Indeed the pressure for seats became so great that in 1855 an alteration was made, removing two stately pillars which stood on either side of the main entrance supporting a portion of the steeple, and two similar columns on either side of the pulpit sustaining the interior entablature, and thus a number of additional sittings were secured. At this time the church stood in about the centre of the church-going population of the city, and it was in great demand not only for its own people, but also for union meetings and the anniversaries of various religious and charitable societies. Nine ministers have officiated in this house—Drs. Knox, Brownlee, De Witt, Vermilye, Duryea, Ludlow, Ormiston and Coe, with the present speaker. The three first named have finished their course, the rest still remain, two of them, however (Drs. Duryea and Ludlow), having transferred their relation to other ecclesiastical bodies. The preaching, although varied in consequence of varying personal gifts and training, has always been sound in doctrine and evangelical in spirit. Of the three departed worthies I may say that the hearers of the first, Dr. Knox, sat under him as a man whose practical wisdom and perfect equipoise of character, made men of all classes in need of counsel instinctively resort to him as the best human source of direction; that Dr. Brownlee's glowing rhetoric and argumentative force, especially in all phases of the controversy with Rome, made him always a power in the pulpit; and that Dr. De Witt by his union of fervent piety with an unstudied but soaring eloquence captivated old and young, and oftentimes transported his hearers to the third heaven. All three of these venerated men were buried from this church, and the numbers that were gathered to the solemn service testified to the esteem in which they were held. This was particularly the case with Dr. Knox, who had grown up with the city from his youth in 1816, was very widely known in various relations, and was suddenly cut off in the fullness of bodily health and the maturity of his

powers. The outpouring of all classes of the population on the occasion was something wholly unprecedented and is not likely to occur again, for the city is too large for any one man in private station now to be identified with all its social circles. It is an interesting fact that the last time that Dr. Brownlee officiated in public, was in the pulpit where I now stand. His text was the brief utterance in Revelation xx, 7: "Behold, I come quickly." He closed an impressive and searching discourse with the words, "And who will be called next, you or I?" They seem to have been prophetic, for on the next day or the day after that he went to Newburgh to fulfill a pulpit engagement, and while he was on his way to the church suddenly sank down with paralysis and became unconscious. He afterwards recovered and his life was prolonged for many years, but he never was able to resume his place in the pulpit.

The Sunday-school has always been one of the most efficient factors in the church's life. It began under the superintendence of James C. Meeks, at that time the New York agent of the American S. S. Union, a man of rare discernment, tact and sympathy, who gave himself wholly to the work and attained wonderful success. He was aided by a body of teachers embracing such men as the late Chancellor Frelinghuysen, and Judge Foote, afterwards of Geneva. In the course of years there was a constant though gradual change of officers and teachers, but rarely did the *personnel* fall below the high standard set at the beginning. The School was conducted on the old-fashioned plan of relying for success upon Biblical teaching and the personal influence of devoted teachers. Every scholar was made familiar with the Bible and taught how to use it, and the only premium ever offered was a pocket copy of the Book of books. Among the ladies engaged in the work there are two whose pre-eminence in character and devotion was such as to require specific mention. These were Mrs. Charlotte Peck Amerman and Miss Esther Sophia Hyde. For a long period the scholars were all children of the congregation (save a large class of colored people, who enjoyed unusually faith-

ful instruction), but now for twenty years they have all been drawn from families not connected with any Christian congregation. A large infant class having been successfully maintained, its members as they grew in years were from time to time transferred to the main school and helped to keep its ranks full. In the earlier period the active persons of the congregation not only manned their own school, but also cared for an English department of the German Evangelical Mission School, in Houston street, there being at that time a number of young persons there who preferred English teaching. The late Mr. Calhoun was, while his residence remained in the lower part of the town, very active in forwarding the Houston street enterprise. It only remains to say that the Sunday-school taught in this place is as efficient as at any former period, if not more so, although the constant diminution of the congregation during the last fifteen years has materially curtailed the funds required to carry it on. Indeed the spirit and enterprise of the officers and teachers leave scarce anything to desire, there being a thorough system, entire harmony and an unsparing consecration of time and energy to the needs of the work.

In the year 1861 there was established, mainly through the efforts of Julia Plummer De Witt, the youngest daughter of the late Dr. T. De Witt (aided by Miss Cornelia L. Brower, afterwards Mrs. C. H. McCreery), an Industrial School which has enjoyed an exceptional success through more than a quarter of a century. Every year more than two hundred girls were here taught to sew and at the same time put under decided religious instruction. The ladies who in its early years held the position of First Directress were wonderfully well qualified for the work, and they established habits of order, regularity and fidelity, which were continued without any interruption and which have made the school a model one of the kind. In later years the diminished size of the congregation rendered it difficult to procure enough voluntary teachers, but the liberality of some friends of the cause enabled the managers

to employ paid help. Yet even with this aid there are every year from fifty to a hundred applicants denied admission, simply because the teaching force is inadequate. Great thoroughness characterizes all the methods pursued in the school, and those who attend it receive a training in habits of neatness, system, industry and order which cannot fail to affect their entire subsequent life. Repeated testimonies to this effect have been given by the children themselves and by their parents, and indeed every casual visitor has been surprised at the evident tokens of success which met them on every hand.

Some thirty years ago when the success of the Young Men's Christian Association of this city led to the formation of similar associations in individual churches, a society of this kind was instituted here, as I am kindly reminded by Mr. A. A. Raven, of Brooklyn, who at that time was one of our people. This association provided the means for employing a missionary to visit in the neighborhood of the church and gather in scholars from the non-church-going part of the community. And they gave personal supervision to that work. They performed a still more useful and lasting service when they took up the case of young Mr. Merritt, a worshipper in the North Church who was seeking to enter upon studies for the ministry but was hindered by the lack of the requisite means. These were obtained by the Association, and they had the pleasure of seeing him carried through a regular course after which he prosecuted for many years a very zealous and influential ministry.

This building has never been the scene of sensational preaching or tumultuous excitement. Yet there have been times when the Holy Spirit was present in an unusual degree, as was manifested by the increase of the number of those who sought to enter into the full communion of the church. Such periods were 1841-2, 1858-9, 1865-6. But in general the work carried on has been the gradual development of Christian character, the promotion of personal and household religion, the training of the youth of the congregation, and, especially in later years, the ingathering of

those previously neglectful of the ordinances of worship. The church has been regarded not simply as a converting agency after which its function was exhausted, but as a training school in which character is formed, and men and women are led into a deeper knowledge of divine truth so as to grow in consistency, stability and symmetry of life, and thus become more efficient in the Master's service.

The contributions of the congregation to the Christian ministry have not been many, yet one may claim that the defect in quantity is made up in quality. I mention them as nearly as may be in the order of time. 1. The Rev. JAMES H. M. KNOX, D.D., LL.D., a son of the revered senior minister, who, after serving acceptably in several pastoral charges, is now the President of La Fayette College, Pa., an institution of great and growing importance in the educational system of the country. 2. The Rev. ASHBEL GREEN VERMILYE, a son of the present senior minister. He was pastor at Little Falls, Newburyport, Utica and Schenectady, and for a short time chaplain at Antwerp, but has of late years ceased from regular ministration as a pastor, still, however, rendering valuable service in the Board of Direction of our church and in ecclesiastical assemblies. 3. The Rev. HERVEY D. GANSE, who, after prosecuting a most useful ministry in New Jersey and afterward in this city and in St. Louis, is now the secretary of the Presbyterian Committee, charged with the care of their younger and struggling collegiate institutions in all parts of the West, an enterprise whose value is determined by the fact that it is the educated men who are to control this country, and that the way in which they exercise this control depends greatly upon the degree and kind of Christian influence put forth where they receive their education. One cannot well conceive of a work so well calculated as this to make an impression for good that shall be felt by generations yet unborn. 4. The Rev. NATHAN W. JONES. He ministered at Cleveland, Clove, Middleport and Dingman's Ferry, and afterwards, being without pastoral charge, gave much attention to the Indian languages of our country.

He died about 1873. 5. The Rev. FRANCIS N. ZABRISKIE, D.D. He was settled in New York, Coxsackie, Ithaca and Claverack, and afterwards for some years in two of the New England States; and when laid aside from regular service by impaired health, continued and enlarged his influence by the pen, infusing into journalism in various directions, not only Attic salt, but the salt of divine grace. 6. The Rev. J. FERGUSON HARRIS. He has been settled at Cold Spring, Pompton Plains, Hurley and N. Marbletown, and now has charge of a flourishing church at Cherry Hill, N. J. 7. The Rev. ANDREW M. ARCULARIUS, of New Baltimore, N. Y. Born in another communion, he came in early years into connection with the Sunday-school of this church, and afterward entered into full communion. He prosecuted a regular course of study at New Brunswick, and was admitted to orders in 1866. For twenty years he has been in the active and successful discharge of ministerial duties, and is now pastor of an interesting charge in a village on the upper Hudson. 8. The Rev. MATTHEW C. JULIEN. Although reared among our people, he has from the beginning prosecuted his ministry in the Congregational Church, having been for a number of years the acceptable pastor of the Trinitarian Church at New Bedford, Mass. 9. I think that there may be properly appended to this list the name of WILLIAM B. MERRITT. He indeed was never a regular worshipper here, yet he sustained a close connection with the congregation. In his youth he attended the North Church and there confessed Christ. He was led to form the purpose to enter the ministry. His means being limited, the Young Men's Christian Association of this church, as has already been stated, undertook to supply what was wanting, and by their aid he was carried through his entire course of study. After being licensed by the Classis of New York, in 1865, he became pastor of the church at Flatbush, Ulster County, where he labored for eight years, and then was settled over the Union Reformed Church of this city. Here he prosecuted an earnest and successful ministry until his death, in 1879. Few men have wrought so good a work

in so short a time. He was the *beau idéal* of an energetic pastor and was respected and beloved not only by his own people, but by all who knew him, and especially by his brethren in the ministry.

It is hardly possible to look back over the course of the last half-century without at least a glance at the changes that period has wrought in the face of the globe. In Great Britain it coincides with the reign of her present most gracious Majesty, during which the principles of the great Reform Bill enacted in 1832 have been carried out almost to their extreme limit, and the situation of Ireland has been so far improved that there needs only another step to give all the liberty that has been contended for. A corresponding development has taken place in art, literature and every branch of physics; and it is not too much to say that hereafter the Victorian period will be as famous in British annals as the Elizabethan or the Age of Queen Anne. And as to the colonies, the several provinces of British America have been made into the one Dominion of Canada, and the huge island or rather continent in the Pacific, once known only as Botany Bay, a mere settlement for criminals, has been transformed into the five rich provinces of North, West and South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. France, after passing through a prolonged period of personal government under Napoleon III., has settled down into a republic that becomes stronger and more settled day by day. Germany and Italy are no longer geographical expressions, but the states of the former are confederated into an empire stronger than was seen in the days of Charles V., or Barbarossa; while the latter from the Alps to the sea is united under a real constitutional monarch. The temporal sovereignty of the Pope has faded away, but the results are very far from what his friends feared and his foes expected. To all appearance the spiritual control of the Papacy is as thorough and absolute as ever. Austria has been humbled and liberalized, and the oppressed Protestants of the continent have nearly everywhere regained freedom of worship. The rule of the Ottoman Turks has been con-

tracted till only a shadow of its former extent remains, and one of its despised provinces (Bulgaria) has been shown to be its superior in all that constitutes the force of a state. Europe is still cursed with standing armies and some remnants of feudal bondage, but the past fifty years have been years of progress.

The same is true of the other continents of the Eastern Hemisphere. In Asia the immense Indian Peninsula has passed from a company's control and become a fief of the crown whose authority, by the complete suppression of the Mutiny of 1857, has been established for an indefinite period. China and Japan have been freed from their seclusion, and brought into the family of nations under the acknowledged control of international law. Northwestern Asia, by the successful aggression of Russia, alike in war and in peace, has been semi-civilized. Africa has undergone yet greater changes. English dominion at the Cape of Good Hope has expanded to ten times its original size. Egypt has become substantially independent. The Suez Canal has revolutionized the routes of commerce to the East, and above all, the vast interior has been explored in nearly every direction, and the erection of the Congo Free State indicates a permanent gain of this wide region for civilization. No half century, no century, in all previous times, has shown such vast and far-reaching changes as the last fifty years.

One of the most marked features of this is seen in Christian missions to the heathen. Men now living well remember when the greater portion of the world was inaccessible. A single man was toiling outside the only port of China. Not even one had access to Japan. Northern India and Siam were unoccupied. Persia and Turkey and South America had just been entered. Nothing was doing in Egypt, and a few scattered stations were established along the western and southern coasts of Africa. Now almost the whole realm of heathenism lies open to the Gospel. Explorations in the interest of missions have illumined the Dark Continent from end to end. Even Mohammedan-

ism, which is harder to reach, because it is always allied with the State, begins to show signs of yielding. And the Church has gone on as Providence opened the way. Fifty years ago there were in all Christendom only twenty-five foreign missionary societies; now there are more than a hundred, without including Bible Societies and Tract Societies and Women's Missions and independent organizations. And an income, which was little more than half a million, has grown to twelve millions annually. Corresponding has been the success. Henry Martyn once said: "If I ever see a Hindu Brahman converted to Jesus Christ, I shall see something more nearly approaching the resurrection of a dead body than anything I have ever yet seen." In 1837 the first Brahman convert was ordained, and since then the "resurrection" has occurred often. Besides the great work accomplished in the translation of the Bible, the issue of a Christian literature, the establishment of schools, seminaries and colleges, there has been a large advance in the number of heathen who have confessed Christ. In 1837 these numbered fifty thousand; now a sober estimate puts them at three millions. Foreign missions are no longer an experiment, still less a romantic dream as some say. Every evangelical body in Christendom has put its hand to the work, and all with one consent rally under the motto of the old Latin hymn of the sixth century, *vexilla regis prodeunt*. Forward the royal standards go. Yes, forward, ever forward, and not backward. Here it seems to me that mention may be made of the Revised Version of the English Bible as a great step in advance. Such a thing had often been mooted, and indeed attempted, but never by a catholic movement, originating from competent authority and carried out under appropriate regulations. Now it has been accomplished, and the results of the discoveries, explorations, toils and criticism of more than two centuries have been rendered accessible to the common English reader. The work is not perfect and may even be said to have serious drawbacks, but that it is of the greatest usefulness to those for whom it was intended is questioned

by no competent authority. Even if it never supplants the authorized version it will still serve the purpose of a cheap portable commentary to millions on millions. The highest earthly honor ever conferred upon me was that of being permitted to take a small part of this work as a member of the American Company engaged on the Old Testament.

Nor is our own city or country any exception to the prevailing spirit of progress. The great Civil War marks for us an epoch as significant as Waterloo or Sedan was for Europe. Every day shows that the precious treasure and still more precious blood expended in that conflict were a cheap price to pay for the beneficent results secured. There has been a steady advance in population, in wealth, in agriculture, in manufactures, in literature, in the fine arts and in science, theoretical and applied. Take one instance touching the matter of material resources. A dozen years after this church was dedicated a statesman in his place in the Senate of the United States said that he thought that a careful but fair administration of the government would not involve an annual expenditure of more than thirteen millions. Now that sum is only one-quarter of what is required for the post-office alone. The twenty-seven States of 1840 have become thirty-eight, the territory has been enlarged by at least one-fourth and the population has spread from one ocean to the other. And nowhere on the face of the earth can be found fifty-five millions of people so richly endowed with all that ministers to human peace, comfort and progress. The metropolis, the third most important city in the civilized world, has shared largely in this prosperity. The population has increased from three to over thirteen hundred thousand. Residences which when this church was begun had hardly reached Fourth street have now gone miles and miles beyond it, and a considerable portion of Westchester County has been included in the corporate limits of the city. The wretched huts which covered the hills in the centre of the island have given place to the Central Park, with its lakes and statues and museum. The Cooper Union trains a thousand pupils in science and art every

year. The Croton water has been introduced into every house. The Astor Library offers its treasures to every visitor. The public schools cover the city with a system reaching from the primary class to the baccalaureate, and Columbia College has expanded into an university. The telegraph and telephone, the express companies and the multiplication of railways and steamships have made this city in 1887 altogether another thing from what it was in 1837. Then two-thirds of the inhabitants owned the houses they lived in; now scarcely one-third does. Then immigration was a computable element; now it engrosses whole sections of the city. Then it was a rare thing for a church to be built of other than brick or ordinary stone; now the rarity is to build of other than marble or brown stone. Then the millionaires could be counted upon the fingers of one hand; now they amount to hundreds, while in individual cases there are colossal fortunes, the possibility of which to a former generation would have seemed utterly incredible. When the corner-stone of this house was laid Dr. Knox, who officiated, remarked that "The position, the wealth, the extended intercourse, the power, physical and moral, of New York give her a most commanding attitude. Nor is there another spot on our vast continent, if there is upon the face of the globe, whose influence is felt more widely and deeply. I do not exaggerate when I say that probably millions of immortal beings every year carry with them through the land and throughout the world impressions of good or of evil received here." These significant words, true when they were uttered, are still more true now. As it was said of old every road leads to Rome, so now every important interest in the land gravitates to this imperial centre.

What now is to be said as we turn the leaf of this concluded chapter in our church's history? I call it concluded, for while as has been said the services so long maintained here will be continued elsewhere, yet it will be in new relations and with a more distinctly marked mission character. That is, the aim will not be so much to edify and develope

the existing members of the communion and draw in others of the like character and surroundings as to intensify the aggressive aspect of the enterprise, to carry on the schools with yet more vigor, and to maintain at the highest point all the different services, societies and agencies, which now act so happily upon the contiguous population. This will render prominent what hitherto has been subordinate, and make the life of the concern consist in an aggressive movement upon the immigrant and non-church-going residents of the district. The aim will be not merely to minister to the wants of an established congregation, but rather to gather a new one out of such materials as may be found at hand. One may then justly speak of the past fifty years as a finished work. This building was put here, as Dr. Knox said in the address already referred to, "to meet the wants of the community and the obligations under which we lie to do our share in purifying and preserving this great city, and sending hence a healthful influence all abroad." Has this object been accomplished? Has the elegant and costly structure fulfilled the expectations of those who erected it? What is there to show for these fifty years of church life? A partial answer might be gotten from a list of the persons here admitted to full communion from time to time. Yet, this would be very inadequate. It would not indicate the effect wrought upon existing believers in confirming their faith, ripening their graces and extending their activities. It would not show the effect of a preached gospel, in educating conscience and forming character, even among those who never openly confess Christ. It would not reveal the half of what comes from the teachings and influence of a well-conducted Sunday-school or an Industrial School. It would not set forth the restraining power exerted by the Word and ordinances wherever faithfully ministered. It would not give any information as to the spirit of benevolence and the deeds of self-denial and liberality to which it prompts. Oh no, the full results of a single congregation's existence and activity are to be seen only in the great day when the books are opened and every man's account is to be reckoned.

But we do know even now that this church has been a nursery in which the young of all classes have been tenderly and carefully nurtured ; a school in which the beginners of the Christian life have been taught and trained for the Master's use ; a vineyard in which the inexperienced have been fitted to labor as God's fellow-workers ; a home where the ties of Christian affection have been cemented more and more firmly ; a house where many a vessel unto honor has been chosen and sanctified and prepared unto every good work. Here many a laden conscience has been relieved, many an aching heart comforted, many a mourner's tears wiped away, and many an erring wanderer reclaimed. Besides, there have been seasons of great excitement, social, financial, political, ecclesiastical and religious, which of course displayed their full force in a city like ours. In the midst of these the congregation stood as firm and immovable as the granite walls of the material edifice. When the question of slavery convulsed the nation no place was allowed to agitators on either side, but pastors and people rested upon the ground taken by the fathers, until the tocsin of civil war was sounded, and then the whole body rallied around the flag to a man, and there was no abatement of zeal and effort in the pulpit or the pew until the final surrender at Appomattox. The year in which the corner-stone was laid was signalized by a disruption in the Presbyterian Church, which was not healed for a generation, and which was attended by much bitter controversy. But the church here, while all its sympathies were with soundness of doctrine and the maintenance of a proper polity, refused to swing from its moorings or meddle in a strife not belonging to it, believing, as the result showed, that, in ecclesiastical as in household broils, the parties themselves can effect a reconciliation better than any outsiders. So in periods of awakening, memorably the one which occurred just thirty years ago, the reliance was always upon the stated means of grace, which at that time meant three services on the Lord's day, and a lecture and also a prayer-meeting during the week. (Afterwards the two latter were

combined into one, as was done by nearly all the evangelical churches, on the ground that so many other meetings of a religious or charitable nature were held that the claims of an individual congregation must give way in part to those of the general cause of Christ.) The only exceptions I can remember were when prayer-meetings were appointed at a convenient hour in the afternoon, sometimes for our own people alone, at others in connection with neighboring congregations. Here opportunity was afforded for such counsel and direction as was needed, and at the same time no occasion given for factitious or unwholesome excitement; for while the Church is undoubtedly an evangelistic agency, this is very far from being its only, or even its chief function. Every minister is indeed a herald, but the aim of his office is as the apostle declares, "for the perfecting of the saints, unto the building up of the body of Christ." It is that all the body, according to the working in due measure of each several part, may make increase unto the building up of itself in love. The development of the church, its growth in knowledge, in grace and in consistency, its completeness as an organism, its steadiness as a moral and spiritual force, its efficiency toward its own members, as well as toward them that are without; these are the aims proper to a congregation of the faithful. And looking back over the half century, one can truly say that these have been largely attained, alike in the beginning, in the days of prosperity, and in the years of decline in numbers and resources.

During the greater part of the fifty years the services here were conducted by all the pastors in turn—a system which Dr. Knox, in his dedicatory discourse, spoke of as "calculated to secure a greater variety of pulpit talent, and in various ways a moral power and a stability greater than can easily attach to a separate charge." My own judgment confirms this opinion. There was a loss in abandoning the organization which had come down from the seventeenth century, and though it doubtless is impossible to restore it, it is not improper now that all personal feeling has long

since abated, and one can view the matter in the dry light of reason, to express a regret that this house of worship did not continue to have, even to the end, the varied ministrations which it enjoyed during the first thirty years of its existence. All change is not progress, and sometimes people think they are advancing when they are only marking time. The same thing may be said of another alteration, which, however, was made in the face of a protest from our Consistory, viz. : the dropping of the word Dutch from our denominational name. One of the objections made to this change was that it would prepare the way for the absorption of our Church into other bodies. This was vehemently denied. Yet within ten years this very thing was attempted and vigorously urged, but by God's blessing thwarted. At this moment there is talk of another union,* which, however, if consummated, would still leave us our standards, our polity, even our ecclesiastical nomenclature unaltered. Meanwhile the Consistory still stands, and, I think, will continue to stand, under the name by which it obtained its charter from William III., the oldest existing ecclesiastical charter on this continent—the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in the city of New York. Others may deride or disparage the national portion of this title, the word DUTCH. But to us it is precious, as representing one of the brightest pages in human history, sacred or secular; as a symbol of heroism, constancy and self-sacrifice that have never been surpassed. Holland is a very small country on the map of Europe. So is Attica, not much larger than one of our river counties. But their fame has no bounds, and will have no end. Indeed we may say of Holland's repute, that it constantly increases. Every new historian of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brings a fresh tribute to the patriots and martyrs of the Low Countries, who for four score years withstood the Emperor

* This is with the Reformed (German) Church in the United States. Whereas the absorption into the Presbyterian Church, which some advocate, would in the writer's deliberate judgment be an unmitigated calamity, and a serious injury to the general cause of Christ.

and the Inquisition, and after achieving freedom for themselves, made their land an asylum for the oppressed of all countries and every name.

On the coming Lord's day, if spared, we shall sit down for the last time at the table of the Lord in this sacred place. There is something touching in this to us all, however recent our interest here may have been; but it is especially so to such as have had no other church home than this, or have been for years identified with the work carried on here. But we may get profit from the sadness if we turn from it with a quickened appreciation of the blessing to that higher home to which no change ever comes, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. One temple after another on the earth may pass away amid tears and heart-burnings, but the golden streets and jasper walls and pearly gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, are like their Maker for ever and ever. That holy and beautiful house can never be moved, nor can they who once enter in, ever be taken out of it.

APPENDIX.

I.—Letters of Reminiscence from the—

1. Rev. JAMES H. M. KNOX.
2. Rev. ASHBEL GREEN VERMILYE.
3. Rev. HERVEY D. GANSE.
4. Rev. FRANCIS N. ZABRISKIE.
5. Rev. ANDREW M. ARCULARIUS.
6. Rev. J. FERGUSON HARRIS.

II.—Officers of the Schools.

III.—The Organists and Sextons.

IV.—The Corporation in 1837.

V.—The Corporation in 1887.

I.

LETTERS OF REMINISCENCE.

I. THE REV. A. G. VERMILYE, D.D.

MY knowledge of the Fourth Street Church began in 1839, when my father became a collegiate pastor and I a Senior in the New York University. I united with that church on profession, but after the first year as a theological student was only an occasional hearer. Still, I remember well its unique white marble pulpit, which in that day excited much attention; and I remember well the men who in turn stood behind it. At that time a short "exordium remotum" was customary, the "remotum" giving all needed latitude of remark, after which the pastor would say, "To a subject connected with this your attention will be directed this morning." Then followed the prayer, and then (after singing) the sermon. It might be Dr. Knox, the gray-haired Senior, plain and practical in discourse, without a particle of oratory, but whose long pastorate and character, his kindly nature and admirable judgment, gave him influence everywhere; or Dr. Brownlee, with his black wig, large-eyed gold spectacles, his perceptible Scotch brogue and rotund form, who seldom failed to give due notice of the end by saying, "but, my hour is up"—his hour being the measure not of his power of (always extempore) utterance, but as he judged it, of a people's capacity profitably to receive truth—a capacity that has since dwindled to minutes. It was always pleasant to hear something of what he had been reading about during the week, and to see his graceful use of a handsome hand. Graceful and courteous always, when he went through the streets on Sunday (as the ministers then did) in gown and bands; if he passed a Roman Catholic church he would bow right and left, with hat off, and the people would say, "There he is; there he is," he being to them the very arch adversary of Romanism. Or the minister might be Dr. De Witt, piling adjective on adjective, each with its own shade of meaning, and sometimes (as I have heard him) losing the end of his sentence; boring away, with his finger as the symbol of mental action, not for thoughts, but expression; of a dark day rubbing his hands, talking low and doing his best, and perhaps finishing his last sentence at the sofa; in manner indescribable it was all his own, but in matter experimental,

practical, with a halo about it of imagination and poetry. My father, now in the closing days of his eighty-fourth year, was then the black-haired Junior, with a style and manner of his own, different from all. These four, rotating in turn, gave to the service a wholesome variety, each in something supplementing the other; but they did more besides giving unity to the Collegiate churches by their joint action, influence, reputation and abilities—they made their church a power in the community.

When I knew it, the Fourth Street Church had a large congregation, and one of the best in the city, stable, intelligent, attentive. I remember among the elders in the front side pew Chancellor Frelinghuysen, and can still see him rub his face up and down whenever a child was baptized; Theodore Frelinghuysen, Alderman Mandeville (for a man might then—*i. e.*, forty years ago—be an alderman and yet an elder), keeping keen watch upon the minister's doctrine; Dr. John Neilson, tall and alert, and Abraham Van Nest, who, though small in stature, wielded great influence. The people were the cream of the old Dutch families, some of whose names are yet prominent. And we sang with unction out of the old hymn book; perhaps (I remember one verse):

“Now back with humble shame we look
On our original;
How was our nature dash'd and broke,
In our first father's fall;”

if the doctrine was sound, the poetry sometimes limped badly.

My father saw the first service in the church, shortly before he became one of its pastors. Next Sabbath (February 27), when its services are to close, will be his birthday, the senior pastor and sole survivor of his earlier distinguished colleagues. When I first saw it, the twelve great pillars of its front, each in a single piece, were being chiselled in the street, a wonder of their day; for which (by the way) the Consistory paid twice over (through failure of contractors and prepayment), although now the lessees would give them away for cartage. Contrasting past and present, by no means far apart, I can apply Shakespeare's words and say,

“Since I saw you *first* there is a *change* upon you.”

Very truly yours, A. G. VERMILYE.

2. THE REV. J. H. MASON KNOX, D.D., LL.D.

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE,
EASTON, PENN., February 16, 1887.

MY DEAR DR. CHAMBERS:

The relinquishing of the Middle Dutch Church (as the Lafayette Place Church has been called in the latter years) recalls a remark I was

led to make on the day of dedication in May, 1839. I questioned the wisdom of the large outlay on a building which, in the onward growth of the city, could avail for the purposes of its erection perhaps not more than a generation, certainly for not more than a half century. My own years then had been very few, and my father, to whom the remark was made, bantered me somewhat for my display of wisdom. The event proves perfectly that at that moment the gift of a seer was in my hands.

Less than fifty years have elapsed since that day, and the massive, elegant building has served its whole purpose as a sanctuary, and is to be taken down and its site devoted to business uses. The title of the sermon preached at the dedication was *The Church Glorious*. In a mere popular use of the adjective that church was glorious at the time of the dedication of the building and for many years afterward. The attendance was equal to the capacity of the building, and in character it was certainly not surpassed by any congregation of the city. Names and persons come to my mind very numerous which will prove this assertion without comment: Abraham Van Nest, Theodore Frelinghuysen, John Oothout, Dr. John Neilson, C. V. S. Roosevelt, C. R. Suydam, James Suydam, L. De Foreest, Jacob Brouwer, John I. Brower, Mrs. Isaac Heyer and her daughters, Mrs. Whitney and Mrs. Black, John S. Heyer, George Abeel, A. H. Muller, James Myers, David Graham and his son Thomas, James Bogart, Cornelius Bogert, Mrs. James Strong, Peter J. Nevius, Mrs. Livingston, Joseph Kernochan, Dr. S. Hasbrouck, James Forrester, Nathan Jackson, Henry Haven, etc., etc., and the pastors Drs. Knox, Brownlee, De Witt (Dr. Vermilye had just come or was about to come). Three men—how different in disposition, in manner, in gifts, yet of one spirit, and bound together in lovely unison. The Collegiate system was still in full practical working and in its results was shown to be most useful to both pastors and people. The change in arrangement made afterwards was called for by the changed condition of the city and of the church, and I am not venturing a criticism of it. But up to the time of the opening of this church and for many years after, the old arrangement of rotation of pulpits and general pastoral supervision was, I think, greatly enjoyed by both pastors and people, and was eminently blessed to the congregation in all its interests. I believe I am right as to the date when I give December, 1841, as the time of my admission to the full communion of the church. In the following October I went to New Brunswick to pursue my theological studies. After that I was in the church only when I might be passing the Sabbath at my home. I was licensed to preach by the Classis of New York in July, 1841. My personal connection with the church life was thus limited to a brief time. With the Sabbath-school I had no connection, excepting that for a time, immediately before going to New Brunswick, I was a delighted member of a

Bible class taught by the Hon. Theo. Frelinghuysen, of blessed and fragrant memory. I recollect that the Sunday-school was well attended and well ordered, and that the new things introduced of late years "to interest the young" were conspicuous by their absence. But there was faithful instruction and earnest effort to do good, and it was not in vain. Truth to say, I did not go very steadily to Sunday-school in my younger days; my mother was a Sabbath instructor of her children. She held that the Sunday-school was an institution for otherwise neglected children. Had she not been a pastor's wife, and therefore yielding something for example's sake, I doubt whether her children would have gone to Sunday-school at all. She had been trained at home and well trained, and certainly she was the best theological instructor I ever had.

It grieves me to think that the church of so many holy memories—where I first testified to my Saviour's grace at His own table; where my sainted father for many years held forth the Word of Life, with a sincerity and unction seen and known of all—aye, often felt in the inmost heart of the hearer—and where the Lord blessed him so abundantly in the home given him, as it has been given to few, in the affections of the people—is to be removed. I regret that that place in which our mother used to be surrounded by her children—shedding upon them most gracious influences, such as only a mother of such saintliness of character could—is to stand no longer, to call up from the past the most precious recollections. I regret it from the bottom of my heart. For these reasons and for others—more general and less personal—but why should I? The men and women of fifty years ago, the pastors and their people, are gathered into a better house—eternal in the heavens! And thence there is no going out forever; another generation has come in their place. The former house has done its work. Rather let it be razed to the ground than stay to be despoiled, and its beautiful, God-honoring history, be tarnished, and dimmed of its glory. I am reconciled to its going, and I trust that the present and succeeding generations, whose is and shall be the inheritance of the fathers, shall be as worshipful and reverent and holy in their places of assembly in the service of God as they were whose house of God is to be seen no more of men.

Yours, fraternally,

JAS. H. MASON KNOX.

3. THE REV. HERVEY D. GANSE, D.D.

CHICAGO, ILL., February 21, 1887.

DEAR BROTHER CHAMBERS:

You ask me for my recollections of the services in the church on Lafayette Place. My recollections are, in many particulars, not only very vivid, but, to myself, of the greatest interest. Till I was about

thirteen years old, our family had attended Dr. Brodhead's Church in Broome street. The ending of his pastorate and the beginning of services in Ninth street, by the Collegiate Church, allowed my parents to return to the ministry of Dr. De Witt upon which they had for many years attended, with great affection, in Dutchess County. Not long afterward the church on Lafayette Place was completed, and the congregation was transferred to that solid and beautiful edifice. I remember my boyish admiration of the columns of single stones, which I had not yet Greek enough to know as *monoliths*, and of that wonderful panelled circle of the wide ceiling, kissing the three walls at the sides and rear. I think the church was full from the first. My impression of the galleries, entirely filled from week to week, is very distinct.

Of the four ministers, Drs. Knox, Brownlee, De Witt and Vermilye, and their most obvious and different characteristics, I do not need to speak. But in one thing they were alike. From these men, and especially from Dr. De Witt, to whom my inherited admiration and affection give as high a place as a mortal could hold, I gained the ideal of Gospel preaching which has ruled my purpose at least these many years. How serious and tender, how substantial with Bible meaning and language, and how full of Christ and the Holy Ghost should be the sermons and the prayers of a true minister I learned before my nineteenth year in the church that is now to be removed. It was there that when seventeen years old I was received into full communion by Dr. De Witt, who had baptized me in my infancy, guiding my steps. Less than a year later, with a letter from him in my hand, I met the Board of Superintendents at New Brunswick, and began the study of theology. I do not claim to be at all like those men. Indeed if they themselves were reproduced to-day, they could hardly live their former lives over. But I am sure, in spite of changes, that if there has been any steadfast good thing in me, it dates, under God, first from home, and next from what we used to call "the Fourth Street Church."

Yours sincerely,

H. D. GANSE.

4. THE REV. F. N. ZABRISKIE, D.D.

PRINCETON, N. J., February 3, 1887.

MY DEAR DR. CHAMBERS:

I am glad to comply with your request, and regret that I have so little to contribute to your record.

My recollections of the "Fourth Street Church" (as our family always called it; Dr. De Witt, I think, used to call it "The Lafayette Church," omitting the "Place") are all bright and pleasant, but every-

thing went on with such clock-work regularity there that I do not recall any abnormal or sensational events. It was an eminently conservative and respectable church. A new singer in the choir, or a strange minister in the pulpit, or a special feat of absent-mindedness on the part of Dr. De Witt, or a Sunday-school anniversary, were the most vivid excitements which I recall. Of course the day when I confessed Christ there was to myself a deeply moving and memorable occasion. But it seemed to be a matter of course in that church, that the sons and daughters should take their places at the Lord's table as they grew up. Except this, I recall no event as striking as Dr. Knox's funeral. The building was crowded to suffocation, and the tribute of respect and affection was universal. I never saw anything like it till years after a like scene was presented at Dr. De Witt's funeral. The regular Sabbath services were always impressive to my young mind. The "rotation" of the Collegiate pastors added a mild sensation and an element of novelty. The ministers usually entered by the front door and swept down the middle aisle in full canonicals. The graceful limp of Dr. Knox, the sailing or gliding and slightly swaying motion of Dr. De Witt, especially impressed me. In a different way was I impressed with the entrance of Dr. Brownlee as he came in leaning upon his daughter's arm, one whole side of him helpless and swinging, and took his seat with no little difficulty in the elders' seat. The *Exordium Remotum* was an interesting feature of the morning service, and is identified, in my mind, with this church. Dr. Knox had a regular formula in closing it, which, I think, was in these words: "To a subject connected with these remarks your attention will be directed this morning."

It could not fail to be a conservative and dignified church with such a congregation, probably as select and "Knickerbocker" as ever met in this city. Immediately around my father's pew (on the side aisle, too) there sat in successive seats such people as Theodore Frelinghuysen, Judge Samuel Foot, Judge Gilbert M. Spier, Augustus Schell, William M. Vermilye, and others as reputable if not as well known. And to sit in the middle aisle was quite a charter of nobility.

When we came to "Fourth street" I was on the verge of Freshmanship in my educational career, and accordingly did not become very closely identified with the Sunday-school; but as I remember it under the efficient superintendence of Mr. Meeks, it must have been one of the most progressive and wide-awake schools of that period. My sole experience was as a member of Mr. Frelinghuysen's Bible class. Among my classmates there were several who have since been prominent in the Consistory and membership of the church. Once a year the school assembled in the galleries, sang Sunday-school hymns, and a collection was taken for its annual expenses. We big boys would probably have shrunk from exhibiting ourselves among the girls and "infants," if Mr.

Frelinghuysen—whom we regarded as one of the greatest of men—had not accompanied us. We thought that if he could stand it, we could. I have an impression that he once led us in a street Sunday-school procession, grandly humble man that he was!

F. N. ZABRISKIE.

5. THE REV. A. M. ARCULARIUS.

NEW BALTIMORE, February 16, 1887.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :

When I entered the Lafayette Place Sabbath-school it was as Assistant Librarian, Mr. Howard Hoffman being the Librarian. The Superintendent at that time was Mr. Samuel F. Clarkson. Afterwards I took a class. During the last days of my connection with the school, the Superintendent was Mr. Wm. B. Hayward.

I also remember the Young Men's Christian Association connected with the church. This, though not definitely attached to the Sabbath-school, was somewhat a growth from it, the officers and principal members all, with one or two exceptions, coming from the school. Its officers were: A. A. Raven, President; George Lynes, Vice-President; Peter De Witt, Secretary; and, I think, Dr. H. M. Brush, Treasurer.

During its existence it was instrumental in doing some good. One prominent feature of its work was the establishment of a prayer meeting in East Houston street, which was held on Sabbath afternoons. This meeting was continued through one winter and spring, after which it was discontinued. But while in operation the evidence of its usefulness was unquestionable. The service was well attended, and much interest was manifested. We who had it in charge were helped and strengthened in our Christian life, and many who had been regular attendants on these services parted from us with many expressions of regret.

This is all that I can now recall of any striking interest in my connection with the Lafayette Place Church. But the days then and there spent were pleasant and profitable days, and I look back upon them with a great deal of delight.

Yours, fraternally,

A. M. ARCULARIUS.

6. THE REV. J. F. HARRIS, D.D.

CHERRY HILL, N. J., March 31, 1887.

MY DEAR DR. CHAMBERS :

My early associations with the Lafayette Place Church caused more than ordinary regret that I could not be present at the closing services

so recently held. It is truly sad to think that the beautiful and substantial edifice is now only in the memory of the past. I remember well, when a boy, watching with childish interest and curiosity the progress of the building in its erection, and particularly the placing in position the massive granite columns which added so greatly to its beauty and solidity. It was my privilege to be present at the dedication of the church, and some instances in connection with the services are still fresh in mind. I was also present at the services of your installation on Sunday evening after hearing "the new domine" in the afternoon.

My only church home before entering the ministry was the Collegiate Church, and for a number of years before entering college at New Brunswick, I attended regularly the Lafayette Place Church, and there are many very pleasant reminiscences of those years. The church then was at the height of its prosperity. The Sabbath services were very largely attended, not only in the morning, but also in the afternoon and evening, as for a time, if I remember correctly, three services were held on the Sabbath. It was not an unusual occurrence for the afternoon audience to be nearly as large as in the morning. I love to think of the men of precious memory who preached in that marble pulpit, so suggestive, in its pure white, of the purity of the gospel preached from it for so many years. At that time Drs. Knox, Brownlee, De Witt and Vermilye were the Collegiate pastors, and preached in rotation, and were regarded as among the first pulpit talent in this city. I remember also hearing in that pulpit such men as Drs. Bethune, Ferris, Fisher, Hardenbergh, Hutton, Lillie, Milledoler, and others of good report, who, in their day, were of the more prominent of our city clergy.

The prayer meetings of the church, although not as largely attended as they should have been, were always interesting and profitable. Well do I remember some of the leaders of those meetings, abundantly qualified to conduct the services to the edification and profit of those who were present. The Hon. Theodore Erelinghuysen, with his few words of exposition or exhortation, we were always glad to see in the leader's chair. Then we had Jacob Brouwer, Thomas Jeremiah, Mortimer De Motte, and others, men of more than ordinary gifts, who contributed much towards making the meetings attractive and edifying.

My recollection of the Sabbath-school, although I was not identified with it, is that it was in a very prosperous condition, composed altogether of the children of the church. An aunt of mine, Miss Marie Ferguson, who died at my house about a year and a half ago, at the advanced age of eighty-four years, was a teacher in the school for a time, and manifested a great interest in its welfare, as well as in the prayer meetings of the church. She always retained her membership with the Collegiate Church.

I have written you thus fully, my dear brother, because of the in-

terest I have always felt in the Lafayette Place Church growing out of these early associations, and to assure you of that sympathy and regret that I feel with yourself and so many others that circumstances, apparently unavoidable, have brought about the giving up as a place of worship the consecrated House of God, in connection with which there will always be so many pleasant and precious memories. With best wishes and great respect,

Yours very truly,

J. F. HARRIS.

II.

OFFICERS OF THE SCHOOLS.

The Superintendents of the Sunday-school, so far as can be traced, were as follows:

JAMES C. MEEKS,
 CHARLES DEVOE,
 THOMAS JEREMIAH,
 THOMAS EARLE,
 WILLIAM B. HAYWARD,
 SAMUEL F. CLARKSON,
 JAMES W. HAMILTON,
 HENRY DEMAREST,
 ARTHUR P. STURGES,
 ALEXIS A. JULIEN,
 WILLIAM H. VAN ARSDALE,
 NEILSON OLCOTT,
 ALLAN C. HUTTON,
 WILEY J. CANFIELD.

FIRST DIRECTRESSES OF THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

1861. Miss ANNA A. HOFFMAN,
 1862. Mrs. HELENA ROGERS,
 1863. Miss JOSEPHINE OOTHOUT (afterwards
 Mrs. JAMES BOWEN),
 1877. Miss KATE FRELINGHUYSEN.

III.

ORGANISTS AND SEXTONS.

The music of the church during its first years was under the charge of the accomplished organist, Mr. GEORGE W. MORGAN. Afterwards it was committed to one of his favorite pupils, the late JOSIAH N. KING, who served the church with great fidelity and success for twenty-seven years. He was about to enter into its communion when a sudden and severe attack removed him after a few days' illness. His loss was long and sorely lamented, for he not only performed well his duties in the organ loft, but rendered very efficient and willing service during the week, and whenever called upon by any of the Associations connected with the congregation. The size and character of the attendance at his funeral in January, 1884, was a fair expression of the esteem in which he was held.

It may justly be said that the Middle Church has been unusually favored in the character of the persons who have filled the position of sexton. They were only two in number. Of the first, ARCHIBALD C. BRADY, who was in office when I came to be one of the ministers, I remember to have often heard my colleagues speak in the highest terms in respect to his ability, efficiency and courtesy. They said that he left them nothing to desire. Similar testimony will, I am sure, be cheerfully borne to his successor, THOMAS DE WITT DUNSHEE, by all who have had occasion to meet with him in his official relations. Nor should I omit to make kindly mention of PHILIP BAXTER, who for thirty years has been the faithful and attentive assistant sexton.

IV.

THE CORPORATION IN 1837.

MINISTERS.

The Rev. JOHN KNOX, D.D.

The Rev. WILLIAM CRAIG BROWNLEE, D.D.

The Rev. THOMAS DE WITT, D.D.

ELDERS.

SAMUEL ALLEN,
 PETER BROWER,
 LAWRENCE V. DE FOREEST,
 DAVID L. HAIGHT,
 CORNELIUS HEYER,
 WILLIAM MANDEVILLE,
 JOHN NEILSON,
 PETER SEBRING,
 JAMES VAN ANTWERP,
 JAMES WARD,
 WILLIAM WESTERVELT,
 JOHN WRIGHT.

DEACONS.

THEOPHILUS ANTHONY,
 DAVID BOARD,
 JACOB BROUWER,
 JOHN I. BROWER,
 JOHN W. COOPER,
 HENRY DOUGHERTY,
 GEORGE C. SATTERLEE,
 JAMES SIMMONS,
 JAMES SUYDAM,
 REUBEN VAN PELT,
 PETER R. WARNER,
 DOW D. WILLIAMSON.

OFFICERS.

CORNELIUS BOGERT, *Clerk.*

ISAAC YOUNG, *Treasurer,*

Office, 192 Broadway.

Of the foregoing there are at present only two survivors : one, Mr. James Simmons, now of Paterson, New Jersey ; the other, Mr. Peter R. Warner, for many years the Treasurer and afterwards the President of the Board of Direction of the corporation of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America.

V.

THE CORPORATION IN 1887.

MINISTERS.

The Rev. THOMAS E. VERMILYE, D.D., LL.D.

The Rev. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D., LL.D.

The Rev. WILLIAM ORMISTON, D.D., LL.D.

The Rev. EDWARD B. COE, D.D.

ELDERS.

HENRY W. BOOKSTAVEN,

ROBERT BUCK,

JOHN S. BUSSING,

PETER DONALD,

JOHN GRAHAM,

FREDERICK R. HUTTON,

LEWIS JOHNSTON,

FREDERICK T. LOCKE,

EBENEZER MONROE,

RALPH N. PERLEE,

HENRY TALMAGE,

CHARLES H. WOODRUFF.

DEACONS.

GERARD BEEKMAN,

WILLIAM L. BROWER.

WILLIAM C. GIFFING,

WILLIAM P. GLENNEY,

FRANCIS T. L. LANE.

CHARLES STEWART PHILLIPS.

WILLIAM V. V. POWERS,

CHARLES A. RUNK,

CHARLES H. STITT,

CUMMINGS H. TUCKER, Jr.,

JOSEPH WALKER, Jr.,

FREDERICK F. WOODWARD.

OFFICERS.

GEORGE S. STITT, *Clerk*.THEOPHILUS A. BROUWER, *Treasurer*,

Office, 113 Fulton street.

PAMPHLET BINDER
PAT. NO.
877188

Manufactured by
GAYLORD BROS. Inc.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

BX9517.5 .N5M6C43
Fifty years of the church life : an

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00043 2361