


FIRST CHURCH CHRONICLES



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First Church Chronicles

1815-1915

CENTENNIAL HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

BY
CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON

ROCHESTER
THE CRAFTSMAN PRESS
1915

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THE TRUSTEES OF THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“ 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.

“ 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.”

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I

Introduction

It may seem no great thing to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of a church. What is a century of Christian fellowship—one century, when one is dealing with eternal verities in their action and reaction upon a section of mankind? Yet, it takes only nineteen such periods to get back to the time when Jesus was preaching, and even one is sufficient to substitute forest conditions for the splendor, roar and self-confidence of a city.

Measured, then, by the events that may transpire in it, a century is an immensely important span. None of the great businesses of modern Rochester traces its local history back so far; no bank, no newspaper, no typical industry of the city reaches back a hundred years. But the Church—the expression of an eternal relation, of a heart-need and heart-yearning—that,

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changing little, bridges the century easily. Through all the long period lies, clear and shining, the trail of its career.

The simile is not inapt. The path, started uncertainly in the forest, leads, worn by the feet of many, into a city. And still its pilgrims go trooping on, the light of faith upon their faces. As from the beginning, they go with gladness, their burdens lightened by the path,—as the Master promised,—and little children running at their side. Whatever the distractions beside the way, the Path still draws its pilgrims. Under the music of its songs, the hush of its prayers, the admonition of the beloved leader, they hold to the Path. Very beautiful, as one looks back, are the graves of those who died upon the way; very significant and prideworthy are the branching paths, of those who left the Mother-trail in order that they might break new paths that should lead also to the Goal.

It is the history of this Mother-trail of the community,—begun in a forest hamlet and carried thence through village, town and city— which this chronicle would trace.

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II

Beginnings

Rochester in 1815 was a community of about three hundred people. Most of the buildings—small frame structures, one to one and a half stories high—were between the site of Powers Block and the bridge over the river. A frog pond was where the Court House yard now is; east of Clinton Street and north of Main was mostly forest; west from Washington Street there was a swamp, and beyond that lay the forests again. On Washington Street hill, where Mrs. Craig's house now stands, the Seneca Indians had celebrated heathen worship, with the sacrifice of a white dog, as lately as 1813.

In this little frontier community dwelt at least two pious women—Mrs. Hamlet Scramton and Mrs. Wheelock, whom an early history describes as “women of faith and prayer.” Mrs. Scramton had a daughter, Delia, whose attractions won the heart of Jehiel Barnard; and so—we may suppose with no great difficulty, for he seems also to have been a pious soul—his future mother-in-law secured Jehiel's consent to the use of the room, fourteen by twenty-two, over his tailor shop, for religious

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services. The shop was between the Four Corners and the present entrance to the Arcade. The services in this small upper room were conducted by Mr. Barnard himself and by Warren Brown. They consisted of singing, prayer, scripture and the reading of a printed sermon. The singing, we are told, was mainly by Jehiel and Delia, and though the hymns of those days were lugubrious, these duets so prospered their love that theirs was the first marriage to be celebrated in Rochester.

Naturally, first religious services were of a strictly union character. Silas O. Smith, an Episcopalian, had brought out from Massachusetts three Books of Common Prayer, and these were used when there was no preacher. But after a few months of faithfulness on the part of the congregation preachers did begin to come—sometimes a Baptist from Pittsford, and sometimes a Presbyterian, Rev. Reuben Parmelee, from Victor. Those were the gala occasions, and on such days the congregation moved down to the lower floor.

On the first day of May, 1815,—the date we celebrate—these faithful fathers and mothers of the church met in the village schoolhouse, pursuant to a notice that had been given at preceding Sunday services, for the purpose

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of incorporating a religious society. They selected Otis Walker and Hastings R. Bender to preside, and adopted a certificate which recited that the corporation should be known in law as "*The Trustees of the First Presbyterian Society of the Town of Gates.*" The certificate, acknowledged before Gibbons Jewett, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, names Elisha Ely, Otis Walker, Henry Donnelly, Francis Brown, Charles Magne and Orrin E. Gibbs as trustees, and is signed by Messrs. Walker and Bender, in the presence of O. E. and Oliver Gibbs. It is interesting to note, as perhaps a significant sidelight on the character of the times and the people, that the papers were recorded in the office of the County Clerk on July 5th at 6 A.M. The Clerk's office was in Batavia, for at that time Genesee County extended east to the Genesee River.

After these papers had been duly filed, the Presbytery of comparatively metropolitan Geneva appointed a committee to meet in Rochesterville, on August 22d, to consider the expediency of actually establishing the proposed Presbyterian church.

To prepare for the coming of this committee there was called "a meeting of the professors

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of religion and of these desirous of becoming such," to be held at the schoolhouse August 18, 1815. The minutes of that meeting read:

The Reverend Comfort Williams being present was chosen Moderator. Mr. Brown was chosen Scribe.

The meeting was then opened by prayer by the Moderator.

It was motioned and seconded that the church to be formed in this place be upon the Presbyterian plan.

Voted for Presbyterian.

Oliver Gibbs

Mr. Brown

Mr. Magne

Mr. Ely

Mr. Lay

Voted for Congregational.

Capt. Donnelly

Mr. West

Voted to meet on Tuesday, 22 August, 1815, at 10 o'clock A.M. for the purpose of examining candidates for church fellowship.

At this time the committee of Presbytery would be present. That committee consisted of Rev. Reuben Parmelee, the preacher who had occasionally come from Victor, Rev. David Fuller, and Deacons Samuel Stone and Isaac B. Barnum.

The meeting was held, Mr. Fuller acting as moderator and Mr. Parmelee as scribe; and the Revs. Comfort Williams and Eleazer Fairbanks, who were present, were duly invited to sit in council. The moderator opened

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the meeting with prayer. Then "the articles of faith and covenant contained in the Utica Magazine, No. 4, October, 1813, were adopted, with the addition of two other articles of practice." These were approved by the sixteen persons whose names are hereafter given, and who, "having professed their faith and entered into a covenant with God and one another were incorporated and constituted into a regular church of Christ." To this church was given the title, "The First Presbyterian Church of Gates in Rochesterville." "An appropriate sermon was preached by Mr. Fairbanks, from Ephesians II, 20, 21, 22. After which, Oliver Gibbs and Daniel West were chosen Deacons, and Warren Brown and Henry Donnelly were chosen Elders, and ordained and set apart to their respective offices by prayer and a charge, agreeable to the directory of the Presbyterian Church. Elisha Ely was chosen Clerk of the church.*" These were the first church officers of Rochester. A year later, Dr. Gibbs was chosen treasurer of the church.

Following are the interesting Articles of Faith to which the members subscribed:

* The quotation is from the original minutes, signed by the moderator of the meeting.

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1. You believe that there is one and but one God, who is the creator, preserver and governor of all, and possesses every natural and moral perfection.

2. You believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect rule of faith and practice.

3. You believe that God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one, the same in essence and equal in every divine perfection.

4. You believe that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

5. You believe that God created Adam perfectly holy and made him the representative of all his posterity.

6. You believe that by Adam's fall, all his posterity are born wholly depraved, and they are justly liable to endless punishment.

7. You believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and man, hath by His death made an atonement for the sin of the world.

8. You believe that God hath purposed to apply the atonement to those only who were predestined to be holy and to be heirs of eternal glory.

9. You believe that the foundation of the elects' acceptance with God is Jesus Christ in whom they become interested by faith alone.

10. You believe that in order to exercise any gracious affection a sinner must be renewed by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

11. You believe that God hath covenanted to bring all His elect to His heavenly kingdom.

12. You believe that the church ought to require a credible profession of holy love of all whom they receive to their communion.

13. You hold that adults who have not been baptized and the children of professing believers are the proper subjects of baptism.

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14. You believe that God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, who will then receive the righteous to endless happiness and sentence the wicked to endless punishment.

There were, also, twelve Articles of Practice, to which the first members had to put their names. These were:

1. You believe that a church consists of a number of visible saints, united and bound by a covenant to walk together according to the Scriptures.

2. You believe the members of a church are bound to watch over each other with great care and tenderness; and to admonish, reprove and discipline such as trespass.

3. You believe heresy and unchristian conduct to be trespasses against the church.

4. You consider the church has a right to determine what is heresy and unchristian conduct.

5. You believe that none ought to bring a complaint against a member before the church unless they think there is ground of complaint and evidence of the offence, nor until they have taken the private methods to convince and reclaim him.

6. You believe that a church ought not to receive a complaint against a member, unless it be brought by two or three who testify that the private methods to reclaim him have been taken and that he will not hear them, and that he ought to be called to account by the church.

7. You believe the church ought to excommunicate every member who persists in heresy or unchristian conduct after dealing with him according to the Scriptures.

8. You believe that excommunicated persons may not

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be restored but upon a public confession of his sin, a profession of repentance and a reformation of his conduct.

9. You believe that family prayer is an indispensable duty of believing parents and guardians and all those who have the direction of a household.

10. You believe that parents and guardians are under solemn obligations to labor to restrain their children and dependents, especially those who have been baptised, from all sinful and unlawful amusements, and both by precept and example to instil into their minds a sacred observance of the Lord's day and the worship of His house.

11. You believe the church ought to direct in singing the praises of God.

12. You consider it expedient for the church to obtain the advice and judgment of other churches in important and difficult cases.

After these Articles of Faith and Practice the candidates entered into the following covenant:

You do now, one and all, in the presence of the heart-searching God and before angels and men, choose the Lord Jehovah to be your God and portion, and you heartily receive the Lord Jesus Christ for your Redeemer and Saviour, and the Holy Spirit for your Teacher and Sanctifier. You do wholly renounce the services of Satan, and you covenant to yield an universal obedience to all the divine commandments. You do submit yourself to the government of Christ in His church and to the regular administration of it in this church. You do covenant to attend the worship and the ordinances of the gospel with this church so long as God in His providence shall continue you in this place. And you

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promise to be accountable to this church so long as you live unless you be regularly released from your relation to this particular church. Thus you covenant and promise to do so far as God shall give you light, opportunity and ability.

Sixteen persons subscribed to these Articles and Covenant, and by so doing became the first members of the First Presbyterian Church. These members, seven men and nine women, were: Oliver Gibbs, Daniel West, Henry Donnelly, Warren Brown, Elisha Ely, Charles Magne, Aaron Lay, Jane Gibbs, Elizabeth West, Hannah Donnelly, Hannah Ely, Huldah Stoddard, Polly Magne, Sarah Lay, Sibel Bickford and Arbela Starks.

The population of the village at this time was exactly 331, so that a membership of sixteen appears to have represented only about one in twenty persons. In fact, it represented an even smaller proportion, for the parish was not confined to those who were gathered in the forest clearing beside the Genesee. The society was the only religious organization in a tract of four hundred square miles, though not in the center of that tract, and no church meeting could be legally called unless notice had been sent to the settlements on "the ridge" in Gates and in the

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east part of Brighton. Indeed, the second meeting of its Session was held on the "Brighton ridge."

The sixteen original members represent only ten different names. Of these there are to-day descendants of one in the Brighton Presbyterian Church, and a descendant of another in the Central—both churches that are ecclesiastical children of the First. Most interesting, also, is it to observe that, out of the sixteen, one was subsequently excommunicated, another "dropped from the rolls at her own request," and that only four remained in the church until their death. Yet the church grew steadily in numbers and in power.

With the beginning of the new year, on January 17, 1816, the First Presbyterian Church of Gates, in Rochesterville, installed a regular pastor. The choice was Rev. Comfort Williams, who had had a church in Ogdensburg paying him the princely salary of \$600 a year, and who had been invited to sit in the council which decided that the Rochesterville church should be established. He had preached in the village several times during missionary journeys through Western New York in the preceding two years.

It is worth while to note at this point that

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the wise Providence which guided the growth of Rochester not only caused the organization of the first religious society in the same year that the first tavern was opened, but brought to the community its first settled pastor in the same year that its first lawyer came and that its first newspaper (the weekly "Gazette") was published! It cannot be said that the community did not start fair.

III

The First Pastorate

As may be imagined, the installation of the first pastor in a frontier settlement was a great event. The exercises were under the auspices of Geneva Presbytery. Following is the program which was carried out, in an unfinished frame store belonging to William Noble, on Carroll Street: Rev. Aaron C. Collins presided; Rev. Joseph Merrell made the introductory prayer, Rev. William Clark the installing prayer, Rev. Reuben Parmelee of Victor, who so well knew local conditions, gave the charge to the pastor, and Rev. James H. Hotchkin, who afterward wrote the history of the churches of Western New York, delivered the charge to the people. The sermon (from

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Colossians IV, 17) was preached by the Rev. Ebenezer Fitch, D.D., of West Bloomfield, who for twenty-two years had been first president of Williams College. The concluding prayer was made by the Rev. F. Pomeroy. Half a dozen other ministers, including Messrs. Fuller and Fairbanks, were present besides those who had places on the program. The service was held at 11 A.M.

On the day preceding, i.e., on January 16th, the Presbytery of Geneva had met to receive Mr. Williams into its membership. The proceedings appear to have been enlivened by an undertaking to examine him "as to his soundness in the faith"—a course, the Session Book notes, to which "Mr. Williams strongly objected, as being 'unpresided.'" However, the fathers of Rochester Presbyterianism proposed to run no risk, and the prospective pastor was compelled to give "a reason of his hope" and to read "a part of a discourse." After that he was received.

The date of the installation missed by only five days the pastor's thirty-third birthday. Comfort Williams was a graduate of Yale, in the class of 1808, and then had attended Andover Theological Seminary for two years. His grandson, Charles M. Williams of Roches-

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ter, has pictured him as youthful in appearance and rather small in stature, with a prominent aquiline nose, thin sensitive lips, a smooth face, high forehead, brown eyes, and brown-black hair. His father had been of the little company who responded to the alarm at Lexington and had fought at Bunker Hill. Doubtless there was something of that spirit in the son, who left effete Ogdensburg to come to infant Rochester.

The new pastor preached at first in Barnard's tailor shop, and occasionally at the residence of Enos Stone, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the barn. Stone was the local agent of Colonel Rochester, and his residence was on South Avenue, about where the New Osborn House now is. Later the people met in the First District Schoolhouse, on Fitzhugh Street opposite the present Court House. The congregation was summoned by a tin horn, and for the hymns a tuning fork gave the key.

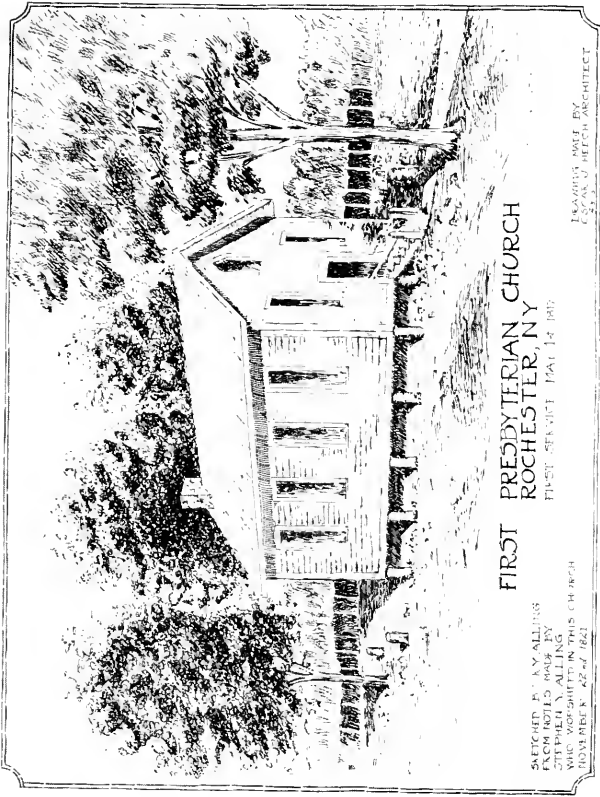
It was naturally desired to secure a church, but as the money for this purpose (about \$2000 for building and lot) could not be raised in the ordinary way, a stock company was formed to advance it. This money was "to be repaid from the yearly rent of the slips," so

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insuring "comfortable seats," and relieving the independent little community, much to its credit, from asking that assistance from outside for which, as a missionary enterprise, it might have made a claim.

In January, 1817, just a year after the pastor was installed, Moses Chapin, acting as agent for the company, which was an association of thirteen members called the Rochester Meeting House Company, made a contract with Col. Rochester for the purchase of a lot. This was located on what is now State Street, where the present American Express office is. Possession was immediately secured and a frame building, 40 by 50 feet in size, was erected so promptly that in May, 1817, only four months later, Mr. Williams was able to preach the inaugural sermon in it. As the site of the building was low and wet, the structure was placed on posts, or blocks, and these having no walls between them, services were frequently enlivened by the grunting of pigs and the barking of dogs beneath the floor. The pigs especially, it is said, delighted to rub their backs on the joists.

The Session records of these early days contain many items to which a quaint phraseology and the lapse of time lend interest:



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

FIRST SERVICE MAY 14 1842

SKETCHED BY J. V. ALLINGS
FROM MEASUREMENTS BY
STEPHEN V. ALLINGS
FROM BLUE P. 42 of 1842

DESIGNED AND DRAWN BY
E. S. OGDEN ARCHITECT

ROCHESTER'S FIRST CHURCH EDIFICE

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At a meeting held March 18, 1816, a long list of rules was adopted. Among them were the following:

That the regular meetings of the church shall be holden on the first Monday of each month at 3 o'clock P.M.

That members from sister churches shall not have the privilege of communing with us more than *nine* months, without uniting with the church by taking upon them the covenant, after an examination, unless some satisfactory reason shall be given why they should not thus unite.

That the expense of the communion table shall be defrayed by a voluntary contribution from the members at each communion season.

An entry of August 2, 1818, reads, "Everard Peck was appointed a delegate to the synod to be held at Auburn, on Wednesday, to consult about establishing a Theological Seminary." The ordeal of examination by the Session before joining the church is indicated in a typical minute dated April 1, 1816: "Azal Ensworth from the church in Palmyra, Nancy Elliot from the church in Rome, Lucy Williams from a church in Wethersfield, and Patty Stone expressed their desire of becoming members of the church in this place. They gave a reason of their hope, were examined as to their experimental and doctrinal knowledge of religion, and approved." An entry of March 25, 1819, is, "The church

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resolved to observe the recommendation of the General Assembly, and once a quarter assemble with their baptized children to enforce the mutual duties of parents and children, and explain the obligations resulting from the ordinance of baptism."

In September of 1817 the Brighton Church was formed as an offspring of the First,—a quarter of the original membership of the mother church leaving the original trail to break this new path. The four who went were Daniel West, Warren Brown, and Henry and Hannah Donnelly,—one of the two first Deacons and the two first Elders of the First church; but they went with their pastor's blessing and he even helped them to start the church. Donnelly and West were at once made Deacons of it.

On the opening of the first Sunday School, the session records contain this entry: "April 26, 1818, a Sunday School was opened to-day for the instruction of children in the first principles of religion. About sixty attended." The school met in the summers, in the district school house on Fitzhugh Street; but it was suspended in winter, when the roads were bad. Yet the teachers took their work most seriously as the "Bye-laws and Regula-

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tions," adopted "in full meeting of teachers, May, 1818" shows:

1st. Any person may become a teacher in this school upon being recommended by one of the teachers and signing his or her name to the bye-laws and pledge annexed.

2d. Every teacher shall consider him or herself bound to use every exertion to increase the numbers and promote the general prosperity of the school.

3d. The teachers attached to this school shall meet weekly for prayer, examining and conversing upon the lesson and attending to any business which the interests of the school may require, and each member shall consider it their duty to attend promptly and prepared to contribute to make the meetings interesting and profitable.

4th. The teachers at their first meeting in January in each year shall elect by ballot a superintendent, secretary and librarian.

5th. Any teacher who is found sabbath after sabbath with only one or two scholars in his or her class, or in idleness with a larger number, or leaves the school frequently before the exercises are closed, shall be deemed to merit censure.

6th. Any teacher who shall be absent from his or her class two sabbaths in succession without having provided a substitute, or informing the superintendent that he may provide for it, shall be considered highly censurable, and if thus absent the third sabbath, shall no longer be considered a teacher, unless satisfactory reasons for such neglect are given to the superintendent, nor ever afterward admitted without giving evidence of reformation.

7th. Neither teachers nor scholars shall be permitted to visit the library during the school, the books shall be

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distributed once in two weeks but no scholar shall be entitled to receive a book who has not returned all previously taken.

8th. It shall be considered the indispensable duty of every teacher, when any of their scholars are absent from the school, to visit them previous to the next sabbath, and endeavor to ensure their prompt attendance in the future.

9th. Teachers shall consider it their duty to become acquainted with the parents of their scholars and endeavor to secure their cooperation.

10th. When a scholar intends leaving the school, it shall be the duty of his or her teacher to inform the superintendent, that a certificate may be given.

11th. Every teacher shall make up a report of the state of his or her class and furnish it to the superintendent previous to the first teachers' meeting in each month.

12th. A summary of the teachers' reports shall be entered upon the records of the school and from these a regular written report shall be made up by the secretary for the monthly concert.

13th. The librarian shall make a monthly report of all books not returned to the library and the names of the teachers in whose hands they were last placed, who shall either have the books returned forthwith or pay their value to the librarian.

14th. Each teacher shall be considered responsible for order and decorum on the part of their pupils during school and shall endeavor to secure their attention to the remarks of the superintendent or any other person who may address the school.

15th. The superintendent shall give out on the first sabbath in each month, "a subject to be proved from scripture" by the scholars, which proofs shall be called for on the last sabbath in the month and each teacher shall endeavor to secure his or her pupils' attention to this subject.

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16th. The secretary shall keep a correct record of the number of teachers and scholars present on each sabbath and of additions to and dismissions from the school, conversions, names of scholars united to the church, sickness or deaths in the school, names of visitors and other interesting circumstances, and also of the attendance and proceedings at the teachers' meetings.

17th. The names of teachers absent from sabbath school or teachers' meetings shall be entered on the records and the reasons for their absence when ascertained shall be entered opposite their names.

18th. The exercises of teachers' meetings shall be commenced by prayer and reading the record of the previous meeting.

The vow which the teachers took was as follows:

“We, whose names are hereto affixed, ‘having enlisted in the Sabbath School Cause for Life,’ and feeling the importance of system,—in order to produce concert and uniformity of action in the discharge of our responsible duties,—do, depending upon the Great Head of the Church ‘for grace and strength,’ solemnly pledge ourselves to adhere to the regulations adopted for the government of this school and while connected with it to do all in our power to promote its prosperity and usefulness.”

These names are signed to it:

Mrs. Samson, *Ex. 8th article* George A. Avery
Miss Strong T. B. Hamilton

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Miss Jack	C. H. Graham
E. B. Smith	Courtland Avery
Miss Susan Sedgwick	Horace Winslow
G. Biden	C. H. Sholtus
Mary A. Leonard	W. S. Bishop
Clarissa Smith	Sam D. Porter
Emily Hills	W. S. Griffith
Jane Wilson	Erastus B. Smith
Eliza Schellinger	E. Cook
Charlotte Black	DeWitt C. Hollister
Amanda Green	S. Davis
Miss Ward	Jno. F. Bush
Margaret Case	Joel F. Weed
Margaret C. Heney	Hiram Brown
Chas. J. Hills	Wm. A. Reynolds
Samuel Miller	

The instruction in the Sunday School was undenominational, all distinctive views of doctrine being carefully avoided, for the community Sabbath School was able to maintain its union character longer than the church. The first Superintendent was Elisha Ely.

A village census taken in 1818 reported 1049 inhabitants, and it was natural that some sectarianism should begin to assert itself. An Episcopal church, St. Luke's, a Friends' Society and the First Baptist Church had indeed been established within the few preceding months. But there was then, as always since, a strong feeling of friendship and co-operation between the churches, and when,

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in 1818, Bishop Hobart paid his first visit to the infant Episcopal parish, he administered the rite of confirmation in the building occupied by the Presbyterian church. In fact, among the subscribers to the first little church which St. Luke's built one finds the names of several of the First Church fathers, as: Abraham Plumb, who subscribed "goods" to the value of \$20; Enos Stone, a thousand feet of lumber; E. Peck, "in books and stationary, \$20," Jehiel Barnard, "in tailoring, \$5." And some of these made further subscriptions at a later date for the erection of St. Luke's "steeple or cupola." Thus is the marked friendship between St. Luke's and the First Presbyterian Church no idle tradition; it may be traced back to their very earliest days.*

Nevertheless, that differentiation which is the law of all growth was now surely developing in the religious life of the community, and on April 6, 1819, in the First Church meeting house, the Rochester Presbytery was organized, as required by an order of the Synod of Geneva, promulgated Feb. 18, 1819.

* In fact, in this centennial year, the bell of the First Presbyterian Church rang to announce the noonday Lenten Episcopal services at St. Luke's, two blocks away, because the bell of St. Luke's was cracked!

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All the ministers of the Presbytery, six in number, were present; but Rev. Comfort Williams, like a veritable "crew of the Nancy Bell," was elected to the full list of offices: first moderator, stated clerk, and treasurer! For the two years preceding, he had been stated clerk of the Presbytery of Ontario.

Yet the Presbyterian church building continued a community center. In it were held the village Fourth of July celebrations. That of 1820, we are told in a diary of the time, was a "great" one which called "a large concourse" to the forty by fifty structure. A. Sampson, later an Elder of the church, was orator of the occasion. On October 31, 1820, the Presbyterian meeting house was the scene of a sacred concert which, as far as the records show, was the first "entertainment" in the growing village. The announcement read that it would "be holden in the meeting-house on Sunday evening; performance at 6; doors close at 7:30; admittance two shillings. A piano forte is expected to accompany the musick." At the First Church, also, was celebrated the first installation in Rochester of Masonic officers.

The next year, 1821, was eventful. There was a revival in the Presbyterian church in

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which Josiah Bissell, Jr., took a prominent part. He had been to Massachusetts on a visit, and “on his return, full of ardor and spiritual enthusiasm, he visited the prayer meeting and surprised the congregation by repeating Dodridge’s hymn:

‘ Grace taught my soul to pray
And made my eyes o’er flow.
'Tis grace has kept me to this day
And will not let me go.’ ”

Mr. Bissell was a forceful person, and as a result of his influence there was a spiritual awakening which led twenty-one persons to unite with the church. In March of that year, the Monroe County Bible Society was founded, with Dr. Levi Ward of the First Church as president. It is of more than local interest, for this Society’s custom of giving Bibles to those who were unable to buy them led later to the formation of the American Bible Society. The Confession of Faith and covenant were modified, and the members of the church “agreed to bind themselves to a greater faithfulness in duty by assenting publicly to certain things.” The new Covenant read:

You do now, in the presence of the everliving and heart-searching God, his holy angels, and this assembly, avouch the Lord Jehovah, the Father, the Son, and the

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Holy Ghost, to be your God, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier, and everlasting Portion.

You give yourself (or yourselves) and all you have to him, confessing that your many sins have deserved his wrath, and building your hope of acceptance only on his mercy, manifested through the atonement.

You do of choice take the word of God as the only rule by which to regulate your faith and practice. You do cheerfully engage, depending on his grace, to lead a life of piety and devotion to God, and of uprightness and charity toward men; to keep yourself (or selves) unspotted from the world, making Christ your example, and the upbuilding of his kingdom your supreme object.

You sincerely dedicate yourself (or selves) to the service of Christ in his church, faithfully covenanting that you will walk honestly and orderly with us, in all the ordinances and institutions of the Gospel, and that you will submit to the discipline and watch of this church of Christ, and do what in you lies to promote its purity, peace and edification.

You also engage, depending on the grace of the New Covenant, not to turn back from your profession, but to walk with God and with his people all the days of your life. Thus you covenant and promise to do, depending on and seeking for grace and strength from God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In that year also a Sabbath School Union was formed; and Jacob Gould and Samuel Graves were chosen Elders of the Church, and Levi Ward, Jr. an "Elder with the designation of Deacon"—though their ordination did not take place for several months.

But the church event of 1821 which most excited the community was the resignation

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of Pastor Williams. On May 11th he asked his people to dismiss him. Action was "deferred to the 15th, at 4 o'clock." The matter was then put to vote "by requesting the members to rise in the affirmative. All arose but three, and no one rose in the negative. So the church concurred in the request."

On the afternoon of June 10th, Mr. Williams baptized fourteen children and preached a farewell sermon, taking as his text these bitter words (Psalms IV, 6, 12, 13, 14):

And I said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." . . . For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked into the house of God in company.

Regarding the cause of Pastor Williams' resignation there is no record in the various histories of Rochester, in the history of the churches or of Presbytery, nor even a tradition among his descendants. In the archives of the church, however, there have been found some papers, browned with age, whose faded ink tell the full story—the reasons why he resigned and why no record of his reasons has been found. After a lapse of ninety years

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there can be no harm now in copying the most pertinent of these papers.

The following, addressed to Presbytery some months after it had received and acted upon Mr. Williams' resignation, states both sides of the controversy:

The Presbyterian Church at Rochester feel it to be an obvious though painful duty, as well out of regard to the opinion of the Christian Public, as in vindication of the characters of their members, to protest against the entry on their minutes of the statements of their late Pastor to the Presbytery when he asked to be dismissed.

His first reason is, "Because his salary is not sufficient to support his family and enable him to devote his whole time to the ministry, without the embarrassment of attending to wordly concerns."—The Church protest against the entry of this reason because, he has been paid a salary of five hundred dollars a year, chiefly in quarterly payments and principally in money; has had a house built for him for his use and benefit, which he occupied until he erected one on his own farm, and has since leased it out for seventy-five dollars a year. He has also received no inconsiderable amount in voluntary presents from individuals of the Society, consisting of money, clothing for himself and lady, provisions, furniture, a horse and a cow, exclusive of a minister's usual perquisites.

His second reason is, "Because the labors required are greater than he can perform under existing circumstances, he not being able, without complaint from individuals, to exchange with neighboring ministers, and to go 20 or 30 miles for an exchange would be no relief to his labors."

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The Church protest against the entry of this reason, because the Church, the Society, nor any considerable number of individuals in either to its knowledge, never expressed the sentiment it contains.

His third reason is, "Because individuals have been disposed to consider him the cause of scattering the congregation, when many have given it as a reason why they have not contributed to support him, that they have no seats in the meeting house and would have none so long as that house was owned by a company and made a matter of speculation." The Church protests against the entry of this reason because, if actually so, it furnishes no excuse for a minister to abandon his flock.

His fourth and last reason is, "Because some individuals, of whom the majority either belonged to the Church or were propounded for admission, have, for some time past, been anxious for a change of ministers, that they may have a more popular man, and those individuals have of late been in a secret or clandestine manner laboring to undermine his influence thus to accomplish their purposes, and this too in the midst of an interesting revival." The Church protests against the entry of this reason, not however, because a change of ministry, under existing circumstances, had not, in their opinion, become necessary, but because in his charge of the secret or clandestine labors of individuals in the midst of a revival, to undermine his influence, he has, in their belief, greatly erred.

Oliver Gibbs } *Presiding Elders*
Azal Ensworth } *of the said*
Dated, October 1, 1821 } *Church.*

Resolved, unanimously, that the Presbyterian Church at Rochester protest against the entry in the minutes of the Presbytery, of the reasons assigned by their late Pastor to that body, for his request to be dismissed; and

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that Hastings R. Bender and Derck Sibley be Commissioners on the part of the Church, to present the foregoing Protest to the Presbytery at Ogden on the second instant and request to have it entered on its minutes.

Oliver Gibbs } *Presiding Eders*
Azal Ensworth } *of the said*
Dated October 1. 1821. } *Church.*

Though doubtless the little community was deeply stirred for a time, Christian charity and a forgiving spirit soon manifested themselves on both sides, as indicated by the following minute of "a meeting of the church at the School house," November 19th, 1821.

Resolved, that whereas difficulties exist between the Rev. Comfort Williams and this Church, and the Church having a sincere desire to effect a reconciliation, the undersigned, the members composing the said meeting, do request that Hastings R. Bender, Elisha Ely, Levi Ward, Jr., and Josiah Bissell, Jr., be a Committee to call on Mr. Williams, to convey to him the feelings of this meeting as expressed this evening.

Oliver Gibbs	Levi Ward, Jr.	H. Ely
Eli Ripley	Wm. Neafus	Samuel Graves
Joseph Stone	J. Bissell, Jr.	Jacob Gould
Azal Ensworth	H. B. Bender	J. S. Green
Elisha Ely	Chs. J. Hill	David Stone
L. Granger	Everard Peck	Geo. G. Sill
Ashley Sampson	Robt. Wilson	Charles Magne

The meeting adjourned to meet again on the 21st at 6 o'clock at the same place—closed with prayer by Deacon Gibbs.

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Nov. 21st, 1821.

The Church met pursuant to adjournment.

Meeting opened with prayer by Deacon Gibbs.

The Committee appointed to call on Mr. Williams reported, verbally, that they had performed that duty, and that all difficulties between him and the Church were removed, it was hoped, by mutual confessions of regret and forgiveness. The report was unanimously accepted. Meeting closed with prayer by Jacob Gould.

It is certain, moreover, that at the time of his resignation Mr. Williams was loved by many. The number of baptisms at his farewell service is surely significant of that, and though only nine of the original sixteen members still remained—four had gone to the Brighton Church—the membership of the First had risen from sixteen to ninety. The Path, to which the course of the church has been likened, was now well out of the forest clearing and had become, though still a frontier trail, prominent and firm.

After his resignation, Mr. Williams continued a resident of Rochester, first opening a school—in which Mortimer F. Reynolds was a pupil. This school was on Exchange Street, where the "Herald" office now is. Later he gave private instruction in his home, on that part of Mt. Hope Avenue where the name of Comfort Street still records his forest clearing, and continually he rode his horse or drove his gig

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to preach in neighboring settlements, clergymen being few. He had done this even during his pastorate, and a little pocket blankbook, which may be seen at the Historical Society, in which are written a number of manuscript sermons, contains after each a list of the places and dates of delivery. One list, for instance, reads: Gates, on Great Ridge, Aug. 1, 1816; Lima, last Sab., Oct., 1817; Carthage, June 13, 1819; Sandy Creek, Aug. 24, 1819; Penfield, Apr. 16, 1820. There appear in this list also two or three other names which are hard to decipher. Another significant memorandum records that when a certain sermon was delivered in Rochesterville, in Nov., 1815, there were none present "from east or west Ridge"—in other words, the sermon was still available for use in settlements on either side of the village.

On August 25, 1825, four years after his resignation, Comfort Williams died. His wife had died hardly a year before, and four little children were left as orphans. He was buried with Masonic honors, having been an officer in the Royal Arch Masons. An obituary of the time said of him, "as a preacher, he was searching of the truly pious; and awakening to those without hope; in his manner,



Compt Williams

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affectionate and humble; in doctrine evangelical. The distinguishing doctrines of grace were clearly exhibited in his sermons, and in his private conversation, experimental religion was a topic of great interest. His mind was highly cultivated and improved; his style as a writer was neat, chaste and pure, and often uncommonly strong and lucid. His whole soul seemed peculiarly moulded to the Gospel which it was his delight to preach."

Two weeks after Mr. Williams' farewell sermon, the Session voted that the church be asked to observe July 7th "as a day of fasting and prayer on account of being destitute of a pastor." This note, also in the Session records of that year, offers a striking picture: "Public worship was constantly maintained from the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Williams until the settlement of his successor. It was so directed by divine Providence that there was preaching every Sabbath during the whole time, excepting two whole and two half days, at which times service was attended and sermons read. So certain of having preaching did some individuals feel as not to have doubts about it when no minister had come so late as Saturday night, and though they had heard of none that was expected.

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So careful was a most merciful Redeemer to take care and feed the little flock, which was not only seemingly without a teacher, but encompassed with great difficulties, dangers and distresses both within and without." It was during this period, on Sept. 18, 1821, that the Synod of Genesee, embracing the Ontario, Rochester and Genesee Presbyteries, held in Rochesterville its first meeting.

IV

Dr. Penney Takes Hold

Among those who preached during the pulpit's vacancy was Rev. Joseph Penney.* The diary of Mrs. E. Maria Ward Chapin contains these entries: "Sept. 2, 1821. Had excellent preaching from Mr. Penney;" "Nov. 4, 1821. Mr. Penney preached two excellent sermons;" "Nov. 6, 1821. Mr. Penney dined with us; much pleased with him in the family." Others, apparently, had been similarly well impressed by him, for the entry of March 7, 1822, reads: "Mr. Penney, Dr. Stevens and Mr. Bender drank tea with us. Mr. Penney has come on as our settled minister."

* In the histories Dr. Penney's name is frequently spelled without the second "e." The spelling adopted here is that which he himself used.

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Rev. Joseph Penney, D.D., was an Irishman, educated at Dublin and Glasgow, who had been in America only three years when called to the pastorate of the First Church in Rochester. He has been described as of commanding presence, and as having "a warm Irish heart, a masculine intellect, large scholarship, and exceptional ability of utterance." Dr. Penney preached his introductory sermon on March 10, 1822, taking as his text the words: "I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me." Mrs. Chapin's diary records it as "a well written and appropriate discourse." She adds: "The house crowded with hearers."

The coming of a new minister was taken very seriously in those days. April 1st, two days before the installation, was observed by the church with "fasting and humiliation, that God would forgive the sins of this people and bless the labors among them of the Rev. Mr. Penney." At the installation, which took place on the 3d, Rev. Chauncey Cook preached the sermon, Mr. Everett made the installing prayer, Mr. Rawson delivered the charge of the pastor, Mr. Winchester the charge to the people, and Mr. Bliss made the concluding prayer.

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On May 11th, Dr. Penney, in the words of Mrs. Chapin, "set off to New York for a wife." He returned with his bride on June 4th, "a cold stormy day." There is a glimpse of the social amenities of the time—a feature to which the First Church women have ever given thought—in the items, "June 10th, called on Mrs. Penney"; "June 11th, Mr. and Mrs. Penney called." Possibly significant also is the item of June 16th, "Attended meeting three times to-day." Yet it is very likely that such action was not an unusual proceeding on the part of faithful members. The hours of service were: 10:30 A.M. until just after 12; then (or, sometimes, at 9 A.M.) the Sunday School, and then an afternoon service from 2:30 until 4.

In 1822, the Session record says, "Ebenezer Bliss left the country as missionary to the Cherokees." It notes also that the pastor baptized a child at a private residence, on its mother's "particular request," but that he performed the act "in the presence of a number of the church members, called by the Parson for that purpose, he disapproving of private baptisms as tending to superstition." The Sabbath School Union of the preceding year was supplemented by a Rochester Union;

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and on September 17th, Dr. Penney was elected stated clerk of Presbytery. In short, all records indicate that with the coming of the new pastor a very vigorous hand had taken control. It is interesting, by the by, to note that Presbytery on adjourning its evening session in the April meeting arranged to convene "tomorrow morning, the sun an hour high"—which would make the hour sixteen minutes after six!

It was in this year, 1822, also, and largely among the women of the First Church, that the Rochester Female Charitable Society was formed. Mrs. Levi Ward was elected President, and Mrs. Everard Peck, at whose home the meeting was held, was elected Treasurer. In fact, no record of the First Church would approach completeness without chronicling the large part its members have borne in all the forward movements of the community.

During the winter of 1823, Mrs. Chapin's diary repeatedly mentions attendance at "the monthly concert of prayer," and the Presbytery's "narrative of the state of religion" at this time reports "a more rapid progress in the reformation of morals and vital religion than at any former period," with the monthly concert well attended.

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On March 2, 1823, there is a record that Dr. Penney preached a "charity sermon" which resulted in the taking up of a contribution of \$40 for the Female Charitable Society. This charity sermon, preached sometimes by the clergyman of one denomination and sometimes by that of another,—the place as well as the preacher changing each year,—became a custom of the town, continued without interruption until 1850. It is interesting to observe that even to this day the annual contribution of the First Church to the Female Charitable Society is, perhaps invariably, larger than that taken up in any other church.

March 7th was a day of fasting and prayer by the church—"a very interesting day," says Mrs. Chapin. On the 9th, which was Communion, a hundred and fifty communicants were present, and it is evident that the spiritual life of the church ran deep in the months that followed. In May the Session voted "that two-thirds of all collections on Communion days, after first paying for the elements, shall be reserved expressly for the purpose of procuring furniture for the Lord's Table; and that the Treasurer be desired to loan all monies over five dollars to good men on interest."

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In 1824 three Elders were elected, Moses Chapin, Russell Green and Salmon Scofield. A *County* Sabbath School Union began its long life. Josiah Bissell, Jr., and other First Church leaders established a line of stages to run between Rochester and Canandaigua on week days only, in protest against Sunday travel—an emphatic assertion of high principles which did not prove a financial success, though there was a large body of public opinion which did have exceedingly strict ideas as to Sabbath observance. In fact, after the canal opened, the village trustees prohibited the blowing of bugles on any boats which passed through town on Sunday, and at this time and later large and excited meetings protested against Sunday traveling.

There are through this and succeeding years a number of interesting records of church discipline. One of these was for a “violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath.” Late in 1825 the Session held several meetings to hear charges and receive the sworn testimony of witnesses who alleged that J. H. Brown and his “hired man” had drawn wood on Sundays to keep the fire alive in a lime kiln. The defense, in so far as there was any, was that making lime was a business that could

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not be stopped on the Sabbath. The Session finally voted "that for the offense of violating the Sabbath Mr. Brown be required to draw up and submit to the Session a confession of the same," and for a second offense (which was a remark that "Mr. Penney considered regeneration as a progressive work, or not instantaneous") he should receive "a word of admonition and advice from the moderator." Mr. Brown "cheerfully consented" to the judgment when it was made known to him, and the advice having been given "the Session adjourned, with prayer, to meet at the Meeting house on Thursday, the 22d inst., to communicate his confession to the church." The confession was as follows:

Dear Brethren:

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I meet you at this time privileged at the same time with acknowledging my sins and transgressions of the laws of God. To Jesus the divine redeemer and to you, I can with unfeigned sorrow of heart adopt the language of the holy apostle, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death." I am a sinner by nature and practice—I have a number of times broken the holy sabbath in the prosecution of my business of burning lime on that holy day, as if in order to obtain a support for myself and family required a breach of the holy commands of that God who is the giver of Every good and perfect gift both spiritual and temporal, and through fear of loosing that which I was

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in some measure sensible of being the unworthy recipient of and that too as a donation from his fatherly hand I was induced to break his holy day and plead it to my conscience as a necessitous case—how astonishing that one who has for a number of years exercised a scrupulous regard for the sanctity of that day should in so short a time be found in the snares and gins of satan with a half stifled conscience and a benumbed sensibility—the last time that I worked and halled wood on the Sabbath my feelings were indescribable but some of my reflections I can state—I saw my neighbours around me already in the gall of bitterness and my example instead of being abstemious and calculated to impress them with serious reflections would as a legitimate consequence hurl them into destruction but as for myself I must be pressed down underneath them all into the hottest hell. But you can conceive without a fear of being mistaken how completely my comforts had fled and gone—to say nothing of the excruciating pain and misery that possessed my breast—and now brethren I heartily thank you for the course you have taken, for that humble and compassionate brotherly tenderness which actuated your bosoms. I bless God for sending that aged and beloved brother at first to reprove. I sincerely thank him for coming in the spirit and meekness of the gospel to admonish which has served as I humbly hop as an excellent oil to my head to soften my heart and awake my sluggish soul from stupidity. I have time and again asked forgiveness of my compassionate God and redeemer and that he would pour his holy spirit into my heart, direct every energy of my soul, control every thought and action, sit a double guard at the door of my lips, stand by me in temptation, make a way for my escape to his glory and peace, and now again I ask pardon of God. I ask it also of you my brethren—may I expect it, when I have disregarded God, grieved his holy spirit, dishonoured the cause of the blessed Jesus, wounded the

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feelings of my brethren and wronged my own conscience. I ask again may I expect it. O my brethren forgive and pray for me; make me, the companion of my life, and our children subjects of your special and fervent prayers, your ardent supplications at the throne of Grace that God may sanctify us and make us matured temples of his holy Spirit that we may love the truth and walk in it to the glory of God and the honour of the Church that this may be the case is the ardent desire and prayer of your unworthy brother in our Common Lord.

JOHN H. BROWN.

TO THE CHURCH

But the most notable event of the year 1825 in strictly First Church history was the dedication, on October 28th, of a new stone church.

V

The Church Behind the Court House

Early in Dr. Penney's pastorate, the little frame building on State Street proved inadequate to accommodate the numbers who were applying for membership in the fast growing town. After mature deliberation, a lot located immediately in the rear of the Court House had been purchased from Harvey Montgomery, on January 20, 1823. The title was taken in the name of Abraham Plumb, and the consideration was "\$2000 in hand paid." The corner-stone for the new church was laid on the 28th of April, 1823, and ex-

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actly a year and five months later the church was dedicated. Its location was directly across the way from the new church which was being erected for St. Luke's Episcopal congregation. The contract for the latter was entered into in September, 1823; but that edifice was not opened for public worship until almost a year after the dedication of the Presbyterian Church, and it was another year still before Bishop Hobart performed in it the ceremony of consecration.

The First Rochester Directory (1827) contains this description of the new First Presbyterian Church. If it is a bit flattering, let us remember that both the publisher of the book, Elisha Ely, and the printer, Everard Peck, were very prominent in the church.

This building is situated on the south side of Court-square, and fronts the court house. It is eighty-six feet long, sixty-four wide, and thirty feet high above the base. It is built of stone covered with a durable cement, in imitation of whitish free stone; but the water-table, window and door sills, caps and starts, together with all the projectures of the masonry, are of a red-hewn sand stone. The platform and steps extending along the front are of the white Sweden stone.

The front of this building is a design by O'Donell, in the Gothic style. Twenty feet of the center is occupied by a square tower, projecting three feet from the face of the building, and both the tower and remaining part

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of the front, as well as all the angles of the building, are ornamented with pilasters, of full and handsome projections, supporting a bold entablature and cornice, both in the range of the eaves and over the several sections of the tower.

The angles of the tower are so constructed as to give each the appearance of a prism, or cluster of four pilasters, touching each other at their interior angles, the faces of two and the edges of two being visible, reduced as they ascend, from section to section, till they emerge as pinnacles at the top, still retaining their features as composed of four pilasters. The spaces between these pinnacles are finished with an embattled balustrade.

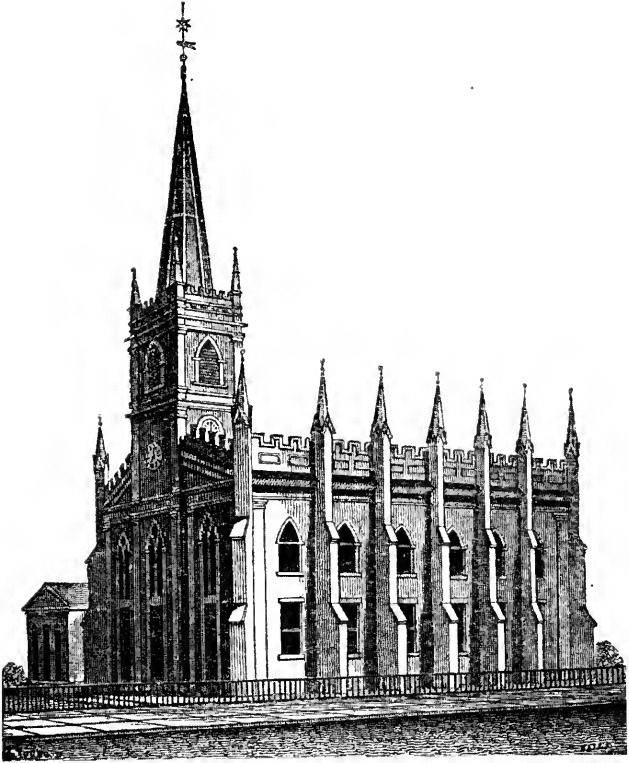
From the tower arises an octagonal spire, 79 feet high, divided into sections by bold astragal bands, showing the several faces conspicuously pannelled. The whole height of the steeple is 150 feet.

The interior of the building combines great convenience with good proportions, and a light airy appearance rather than laboured ornament.

The vestibule is entered by three doors, one in the tower and one in each wing. The stair case is opposite the center door, and under it is a furnace, from which heated air issues into each pew in the body of the church.

The pulpit, which is low, is situated between the two inner entrance doors, and occupies, together with its stairs, a slightly recessed arch of 20 feet wide and 33 feet high. From the pulpit, the floor has a gentle ascent to the opposite extremity, and the pews are arranged as the chords of a circle, so that all directly face the pulpit. The galleries are much inclined, and supported by Ionick columns.

The steeple is furnished with an excellent bell, of 1800 pounds, and an organ of 14 stops has been lately erected in the gallery. The whole expense of this building, and the lot on which it stands, including the cost of the bell, amounted to about \$16,000.



THE CHURCH BEHIND THE COURT HOUSE

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From this description, it will be noted that those who entered the church had to face the assembled congregation—an arrangement which no doubt made for punctuality. The capacity of the church is given as about 850, and it is well to emphasize the fact that the front of the building was not on Fitzhugh Street, but north toward the Court House, so that the structure backed upon the canal. The Directory description can be further supplemented by these words from a book by Captain Basil Hall, an eminent officer in the British navy, who passed through Rochester in 1827 and says in the volume describing his travels: "In the center of the town the spire of a Presbyterian church rose to a great height, and on each side of the supporting tower was to be seen the dial plate of a clock, of which the machinery, in the hurry-scurry, had been left in New York." The "hurry-scurry" appears to refer rather to the general bustle of the town than to the haste of the church.

It is possible to add also, from the reminiscences of those now living, some further details as to the interior of the church. On each side of the pulpit, which in later years at least was not low, there was a tall column, with a "big round oil lamp." Other lamps were

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upon side brackets on the walls, and in a central chandelier.* The woodwork throughout the church was painted white with mahogany trimmings; and the three chairs on the pulpit were upholstered in red plush.

On the auditorium floor, at each side of the pulpit, there was a large square pew. Dr. Ward and his family occupied the pew on the one side; and Dr. Backus and his family that on the other. The corner seat of the latter was always occupied by the mother of Dr. Backus. It is told of her that once, feeling a mouse beneath her skirt during service, she sat with quiet dignity until it had made its way to a point which she could reach, and that she then closed her hand over it, holding it in captivity until, at the long sermon's close, she could go out without disturbing divine worship. Of such stuff were the mothers of the First Church! Behind each square pew there were two straight pews. Those back of Dr. Ward were, at least in 1848, the seats of H. A. Brewster and Mrs. Blossom; those behind Dr. Backus the seats of Elias Pond and Wm. A. Reynolds. The front pews of the central tier were occupied by, among others, Dr. Chester Dewey, S. Y.

* Gas was put in the church in 1849.

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Alling* and P. W. Jennings. A long table was placed in front of the pews that faced the pulpit, and upon this the men of the congregation placed their hats. All the pews had doors, and on the doors were silver name plates. The furnace, of which the Directory speaks so proudly, was supplemented by two large stoves at the back of the auditorium; and there were stoves in the vestibule. The big wood fires in the latter became the centers for social intercourse on cold days for those who had driven far to service. The large sleighs, drawn by four horses, picked up passengers as they traveled into town.†

Through a mistake in surveying the church lot, it was found that the new building was so placed as to encroach several feet upon the county property adjoining on the north. On advice of the supervisors appeal was made to the State legislature, and on January 16, 1824, an Act was passed (Chapter 6, Laws of 1824)

* May 31, 1851, it was resolved by the Trustees "that S. Y. Alling have leave to put a Gutta Percha tube into the pulpit to extend down under the floor and up into the slip occupied by him."

† The contractor for the woodwork of the church was John Biden, and for the stone work Andrew Ward. The latter had a contract on the new canal, and he was able, by utilizing stone taken from the canal excavation, to give the church a low figure.

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which read: "That it shall and may be lawful for the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monroe, or their successors in office, to grant and convey to the First Presbyterian Society in the Town of Gates, in the said County of Monroe, for the use and benefit of said Society, such part of the public square or ground contiguous to the Court House in Rochester as is covered by the new stone church of said Society." And then the Board of Supervisors, on February 24, 1824, did give to the church a deed for the county ground which "the stone church" covered. Meantime, arrangements were made for the sale of the old church property on what is now State Street, and on the 14th of April, 1825, its transfer was effected at auction to Josiah Bissell, Jr., the trustees of the stock company which had made the original investment signing the deed of conveyance. The Second Presbyterian Society (now the Brick Church) used it for a time, and in February, 1827, Mr. Bissell sold it to the First Baptist Society.

Dr. Penney's dedicatory sermon, preached Oct. 28, 1824, was based on the text, John IV, 21, 22. It makes very heavy reading now, but it was so highly considered at the time of its delivery that the Trustees requested a

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copy for publication. This was given readily enough, though in the letter accompanying it Dr. Penney modestly declares, "Did I consult for the reputation of fine or finished sermonizing, I should certainly refuse to submit this hasty sketch." Some clauses outlining the hope of the church, read:

My friends, if we only adopt this day, and continue to cultivate, every man according to his own circumstances, the spirit and practice of true and spiritual worshippers of the Lord our God, what a Bethel indeed will this house become to us! Truly, we shall find it "none other than the house of God—than the gate of heaven." *Here* shall we experience the presence of the Lord in the midst of his sanctuary, and we shall "flourish in the courts of his house," under the influence of "dews from on high." *Here* our old men shall be as "pillars in the house of our God," and our young men as "plants of the Lord's planting." . . . From the influence of this house our civil institutions shall be purified, and we shall "prosper in the work of our hands;" for "judgment shall run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Hither shall we repair each sacred sabbath morn, to "crowd his gates and sound his praise;" *in our prosperity*, to express our gratitude and joy, and to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving; *in the day of our trouble*, to pour out our sorrows, until the Lord shall hear and send us help out of Zion. *Here* shall we assemble to commemorate the death of Christ, and dwell with holy rapture on his *living*, his *endless* love. *Here* shall we derive from faith and love the very soul of *social affection*, and the very spirit of *brotherly kindness*, of *genuine friendship*; and while from "sabbath to sabbath" we witness here the look of honest estimation

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and undissembled love, reflecting from face to face, and learn to look upon the whole goodly multitude as our friends, we shall say of our Zion, for the sake of these brethren and kinsmen, peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces!

Finally, when on a bed of languishing, we shall claim and receive the sympathy and prayers of *this* assembly; and when our spirits have gone to their rest, our earthly remains shall be brought *hither* to remind you of mortality—to claim a salutary sigh and a parting tear.

Following the printed sermon are several pages in small type of Notes and Scripture references; and in these Notes it appears that a scornful reference to “divine right,” in the course of the sermon, had been seized upon “by a minister of the Episcopal Church as an occasion for a publick expression of resentment.” At great length Dr. Penney endeavors to make clear his wish “to avoid censuring the religious principles of other denominations,” and “never to solicit controversy.” There is printed, too, the brief address which had been spoken at the laying of the corner-stone, when—“Standing on this spot, glancing on that forest that lately sheltered its wild beasts here, and has scarce yet retreated beyond the limits of our habitations; and then turning to this populous village, this busy multitude, those publick channels of commerce and wealth, that hall of justice, and these

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temples of the living God; and putting our hands, as we now do, to the foundation of another edifice to be dedicated to the cause of morals and religion, the best interests of man and the glory of Jehovah—a feeling of solemn yet pleasing interest comes over us from the years that are gone.”

VI

Some Important Events

The year 1825 was marked by the opening of the Erie canal. The event was made the occasion of a great celebration, during which Governor Clinton and the committeemen, who had come from Lake Erie by boat, disembarked beneath an arch and, forming a procession, marched to the First Presbyterian Church. Behold them, says Mrs. Parker, “all Rochester and the country round about falling into the line, even if the majority of them must wait in the rain outside, while the Rev. Mr. Penney offers prayer, and Timothy Childs makes a stirring address, which the newspapers report as ‘full of words that breathe and thoughts that burn.’”

In this year also General Lafayette visited Rochester; and though it does not appear that he entered the First Presbyterian Church

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it is certain that the men of that church had most to do with his reception. Dr. Levi Ward headed the general committee, Hon. Jacob Gould and Judge Ashley Sampson were on the reception committee, and Judge Sampson delivered the first greeting to him on behalf of the town.

For all these outside interests, the church life continued very active. The Session papers of 1825 contain voluminous documents referring to charges which Dr. Penney brought against a member of his congregation who, he alleged, had been guilty (1) of "rash judging"; (2) of evil speaking and detraction; (3) of slander; (4) of bearing false witness against him. The Session, after hearing and weighing all the testimony and proofs, dismissed the first and fourth charges, while Presbytery set aside the third. But the Session, though declaring that the fourth charge was not sustained, judged that the defendant required "censure" under it, and ordered that he be suspended from the church until he read, or caused to be read "in public church meeting" an acknowledgment of his errors and a statement of his repentance. The culprit appealed to Synod; but Synod sustained the Presbytery, and then he made his

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public repentance and was restored. It is right to add that in bringing the charges Dr. Penney stated that his purpose was not to gratify "any feelings of a personal kind. I have already tendered him my forgiveness. But it is to bring him to such confession of his errors and contrition for them as may enable me, and others who know his conduct, to restore to him our charity and fellowship as to one who had erred and repented and might be hoped to do so no more."

The population of Rochester had grown by this time to about 5000—4274 by the village census of February, 1825, and 5273 by the State census of August. So there was room for another Presbyterian church, and the Second, later known as the Brick, was organized—the second child of the Mother church. It is interesting to find that the membership of the First that year was 188; that in the next year, in spite of the new church to which fourteen members were immediately dismissed, it rose to 195, and 1827 had risen to 278.

VII

The Sunday School

The Sunday School development also was now rapid, as might be expected in view of

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the spirit shown by the pledge-taking teachers. The schools were now under their respective denominations; but the County Union, which had been organized in 1824, held an annual meeting each October, when the schools from nearby villages and towns came to Rochester and assembled with those of Rochester in the Court House yard, or wherever the exercises were held. An account of the second anniversary meeting, which was probably typical, says, "The schools attached to the First Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, and the Second Presbyterian churches assembled at Johnson's Square at half past nine o'clock A.M., from whence they went in procession with their teachers to the Presbyterian Church, Court Square. The schools nearly filled the lower part of that spacious house. The number of scholars was rising 700 and and teachers 100. The Court of Common Pleas, then in session, the Grand Jury, and the Board of Supervisors of the county, having been invited to attend the celebration, were present, together with a collection of friends of the institution from the village and from several towns in the county." The program included, not a prayer merely, but an "address to the throne of grace" by the pastor of the

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Methodist Church; an address by Judge Ashley Sampson, of the First, who was president of the Union; and the reading, by Dr. Penney, of a hymn, which had been composed for the occasion and which then was sung by the congregation and children.

The Sunday Schools had continued as yet to meet only in the summers, except that of the First Church. In 1826 that had become a year-round school, and one of such success that in that year the session of 9 A.M. was supplemented by another service at noon, following the church service! This, however, soon proved more than even good little First Church children could stand, and the custom was then begun of holding Sunday School in the mornings during the summer months, and at noon during the winter months.

But it must not be imagined that the children of the church were lazy. A note recording Dr. Penney's presentation of books to those children who recited the greatest number of Bible verses gives the following figures, among others that are equally impressive, for 1823: Emily Strong, aged eight, 1070 verses in seven days; Mary Ann Bissell, aged seven, 1496 verses in twelve days; Amelia Ely, aged nine, 2127 in ten days; John Living-

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ston, aged twelve, 1394 in eleven days; Samuel Livingston, aged ten, 1548 in eleven days; Priscilla Wilson, aged twelve, 4002 in eleven days. After poor little Priscilla's name the word "dead" has been entered, in an ink that seems no fresher than that which recorded her triumph.

The composition of special hymns for special occasions seems to have been popular, for in addition to the record of that used at the Sunday School Union anniversary we have records of several others, as of one with which the children welcomed Dr. Penney, June, 1828, after his return from an absence; and later of a hymn especially composed for a missionary event.

VIII

Subjects of Thought

In 1826 the Franklin Institute of Rochester was founded. This is of interest here because Dr. Penney of the First Church was one of its original projectors and a dominant force in it. The Institute later was known as the Athenæum, and was the first important literary association to be organized in Rochester. Much later still it was absorbed, as respects its funds and charter, into the Mechan-

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ics' Institute, with which the First Church of to-day maintains such neighborly relations, while its books formed the nucleus of the Reynolds Library. In fact, it has been well said of Dr. Penney, by one of his contemporaries, that "whatever aimed to advance the people intellectually, as well as religiously, received his cordial sympathy and earnest co-operation"; and there is general tribute to the vigor of his intellect, to his scholastic attainments and to the charm of his conversation. He had a special interest in the natural sciences and often visited the village schools, cheering the pupils in their studies, attending the examinations, and offering prizes for excellence in study. It was he, also, who constructed the sun dial which stood from 1825 to 1870 on the green between the Court House and the church. As there were few public clocks in the early days, the accuracy which Dr. Penney gave to the famous sun dial's setting meant much to the community. Dr. Penney has been also described as "quite a genius in mechanics," who might have won distinction as an inventor. His portrait, painted at public expense by the famous Gilbert, long adorned the walls of the Athenæum; and in the study of it one can

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easily believe all the good things that were said of him.

In the last days of 1827, Abraham Plumb and Patty, his wife, transferred to the "First Presbyterian Society of Rochester" the deed for the church property which they had been holding in trust. The event is interesting as being the first use of the title by which the society has ever since been legally known. In this year the Third Presbyterian Church was organized, twenty-two persons taking letters to it from the First. Among those who went from the First were Elisha and Hannah Ely, who had been of the original sixteen and always prominent in the church. Other very important losses were Josiah Bissell, Jr., and Elder Salmon Scofield. These latter two were elected Elders of the new church.

The strength which at this time went out of the Mother Church to her third daughter is representative of that which, throughout all her long life, she has given to her children. But their success is her success; in their joy is her joy; and she realizes that through their ministry her service to the community has been far larger than it could have been through efforts of her own. So we see the forest trail branched into many parallel paths,

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and these becoming the religious highways of the town.

In 1827 also, two members of the church, Rev. Jonathan S. Green and Miss Delia Stone (later Mrs. J. R. Bishop) sailed for the Sandwich Islands to be missionaries; and in 1828 the First Church elected new Elders in the persons of Charles J. Hill and Frederick Starr.

The subject of intemperance began strongly to agitate the community at this time. In the summer of 1827, Presbytery adopted a resolution to the effect that "the intemperate use of ardent spirits is an evil which the friends of the Redeemer ought to unite in suppressing," and it urged, with an explanation which surely was needed, "that the *temperate* use of ardent spirits ought, in all ordinary cases, to be conscientiously avoided and discouraged." In the following year, the first public temperance meeting was held in Rochester; and it was in part, perhaps, because of this agitation, that when, in 1829, Dr. Penney "left the care of his people for a season and went to Ireland to visit his aged mother and friends," he took with him a zeal for temperance which resulted in his having a large part, perhaps the leading part, in organizing the first efforts

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made in Ireland, and some say even in Great Britain, for the suppression of intoxication. He held public meetings, made many speeches and organized societies.

It may be well imagined that after his return the First Church took a prominent part in temperance propaganda. One member, indeed, Col. A. W. Riley, not only attained in this country a nation-wide reputation as a temperance advocate, but spent two years in Great Britain, and many years in travel through other countries, lecturing to crowds upon total abstinence, and always at his own expense; and one of the missionaries of the church, Rev. Dr. Ward, "edited the first paper in any language of India devoted to the cause of total abstinence."

But other public matters than temperance were agitating the community and the First Church in these days. It was the time of "the Morgan Affair." With Rochester as the center of the anti-Masonic feeling, many clergymen renounced the order and an overture on the subject of Masonry was introduced in Presbytery. It was a time of strong feeling also on the subject of public amusements, a feeling that was much intensified by the actual opening of a theatre.

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The First Church was never far from the center of any public affair, and late in December, 1829, Dr. Penney preached a sermon entitled "The House of Mirth" which went straight to the hearts of a large number of the community. Two days after its delivery, four young men—Seth D. Chapin, George A. Avery, Thomas J. Paterson and Levi Burnell, addressed the following letter to him:

Reverend and dear Sir:

Believing that the subject of your discourse, preached in the evening of the 20th inst., is one which should be frequently and forcibly pressed upon the minds of all, and especially the young, the undersigned, with other *young*, as well as elder members of your congregation, feeling desirous that the impressions which we hope and trust were produced by the preaching of said discourse, may be more widely extended, respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

Dr. Penney replied at once, his note beginning, "Young Gentlemen and Friends." After disclaiming thought of publication in the preparation of the "discourse," he sent it to them, with the words, "It is herewith submitted to your disposal with ardent wishes for your temporal and eternal welfare. I am, etc., Your friend and Pastor, Joseph Penney." E. Peck and Company promptly

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printed the sermon in a pamphlet, which, with other published discourses by Dr. Penney, may be seen in the rooms of the Rochester Historical Society. It pictures the dangers of frivolous amusements and asks what the community is doing in the way of offering counter wholesome entertainments.

A few words will suffice to indicate Dr. Penney's pulpit style. "See," he said, "the youth of fair and early promise. Genius sparkled in his eye, and an honorable ambition sat upon his manly forehead; his heart was yet warm with tender emotions of filial and domestick love." Then he pictures his gradual downfall as a result of indulging in commercialized amusements, and says:

Yes, the theatre, the circus, and the billiard rooms, of our own village, that many look on as harmless amusements, have been, to my own knowledge, the beginnings and effectual and rapid promoters of deep corruption, infamy and ruin to some promising young men; and there is reason to fear that others . . . are, by frequenting these places, now insensibly sliding into the paths of destruction.

His peroration is:

What provision, we ask, is made for meeting and improving this unalterable law of nature in the character of the young? None! One class of the community proscribes and frowns upon all youthful amusements, provoking those under their care to hypocritical con-

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cealment or upon disobedience. Another class has no particular scruples. Both agree to withdraw their presence and patronage from this whole department of the publick interests, and leave the matter to the direction of the strolling, irresponsible and mercenary panders of pleasure. . . . We leave these thoughts for your reflection. . . . We leave you to answer this to your conscience, as you shall to God.

May God direct you to such a sense of truth and duty on this subject as shall issue in your final comfort and joy, and in that of your dear children. Amen.

It may be well to remark at this point that Dr. Penney was given to long sermons. The practice of course was common, sermons of an hour's duration being quite the expected thing. But Dr. Penney went even beyond the customary limit, so that on one occasion a delegation of First Church people waited upon him and with some trepidation asked him whether, in mercy to the children, he might not somewhat shorten his discourses. He heard them through with perfect courtesy and then, tradition says, he answered, "Brethren, I should be glad to do so, but I have not time."

During this period also the church was not without some differences of opinion in regard to doctrine. But tolerance and good feeling prevailed, and in the catalogue of members which was printed in 1829, there is included

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a brief form of Christian doctrine for the acceptance of those who found the full Confession of Faith more than they could wrestle with. This does not mean, however, that the church was taking itself less seriously. A member was tried by Session at this time, and suspended, for having said, "Devil!" and "I swear"; and for having stated that "he had united with the church because a certain young lady was a member of the church,—to the great reproach of his own sincerity in his Christian profession, and the scandal of the church of Christ."

IX

A Revival and an Accident

It seems clear, as one looks back, that the popular mind was ready for a religious revival; and in 1830, in response to an invitation of Presbytery, Rev. Charles G. Finney came to begin his preaching. He commenced about the first of September and continued for a full six months. For a while he preached each week two sermons in the First Church, two in the Second, and two in the Third, and in addition there were three sermons on Sunday.

Of those sermons, usually an hour long,

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but sometimes lasting for two hours and a half, we have striking descriptions: "First," says one writer, "came his clear, searching awful sermons to a dead church. Sometimes he scarcely preached a word to the impenitent for a week or ten days. But false hopes were torn up by the roots. Backsliders and worldly professors were brought trembling and astonished to the feet of the Savior. . . . The church being aroused and praying fervently for God's blessing, he was then prepared to preach to sinners. Beginning with the law, he showed how just are its requirements, how fearful the violation of them. . . . As the preacher's clear shrill voice rose to its highest pitch, and penetrated every nook and corner of the vast congregation with that terrific sound, it was almost enough to raise the dead—there were no sleepers there. And yet, that same mighty man, when speaking of the love of Christ, or the peril of the soul, was not wanting in tenderness. At times, indeed, he was moved to tears and entreaties enough to break the stoniest heart."

It has seemed worth while to give this description somewhat fully, for the period of Mr. Finney's visit was one marked by revivals that spread throughout all Western New York,

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so that Dr. Hotchkin in his history has called it, the "year of the right hand of the Most High."

Presbytery reported accessions of 635 members to the three Presbyterian churches of Rochester—a truly remarkable record in a town of 10,000 population. Of this number, the First Church received, in the year ending April 1, 1831, "one hundred and fifty persons from the world—ninety-two at one time." "The grandeur of that revival," it has been stated,* "is not to be estimated by numbers alone. The whole community was stirred, the highest and the lowest. Religion was the one topic of conversation. . . . The change wrought by that revival in the whole face of society was simply amazing. Noise and confusion, rowdyism and lawlessness passed away. Sobriety and order, industry and thrift had taken their place. The only theatre, with which the village had been dishonored, was closed. So the meetings continued, week after week, and month after month, rising in interest and deepening in solemnity. . . . It is worthy of special notice that an unusually large number of the leading men of the place,

* Rev. Charles P. Bush, D.D., in Historical Address at the semi-centennial of Rochester Presbytery, 1869.

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the lawyers, the judges, the physicians, the merchants and master mechanics were among the converts. . . . That most of them were truly converted is attested by their lives. . . . And, to his honor be it said, that Rev. Dr. Penney, then pastor of the First Church of this place, although highly conservative and cautious, both by nature and foreign education, took Mr. Finney by the hand when he first came, and stood by him to the last. His church was open for a part of the meetings until that disaster, the separating of the walls, by which it came so near falling on our heads. . . . The revival of 1831 did not end suddenly. It seemed to run on for a series of years, 1832, '33, '34 and '35 all being distinguished by special effusions of the Spirit." In fact in 1833 another revivalist, Rev. Jedediah Burchard, visited the village with notable results.

As to the disaster to the First Church building, it occurred on the evening of October 1, 1830, when the structure was crowded with people who had gathered to hear Mr. Finney. From the auditorium, no columns supported the roof, and when the pressure spread the walls, a scantling or rafter fell over the ceiling and broke through the plastering.

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There was immediate panic. Dr. Penney at the moment was making the first prayer, and Mr. Finney was kneeling behind him, "in front of the sofa." It appears from Mr. Finney's "Memoirs," "written by himself," that in the crisis the First Church pastor did not act with that assurance and calmness which might have been expected of the leader of a flock, in the attitude of prayer before a crowded house. On the contrary, he "leaped from the pulpit," almost jumping over Mr. Finney, and ran into the street. Mr. Finney, however, got to his feet and then, to quote his own words, "put up my hands and cried at the top of my voice, 'Be quiet, be quiet!' Directly a couple of women, rushing up into the pulpit, one on the one side and the other on the other side, caught hold of me in a state of distraction. . . . The scene looked so ludicrous to me that I could scarcely refrain from laughing."

But it was no laughing matter, and though no one was seriously injured everybody tried to get out of the building at once. There is a tradition that one of the ladies of the church raised a window and was about to jump into the canal, when she saw "one of

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the most stately gentlemen of the city " jump through an adjacent window. The results to him led her to prefer to take her chances at the door. But many persons did go through the windows. It is also said that many women had come to the church that evening directly from a meeting of the sewing society, their needlework and sewing bags with them. Next morning a collection of these articles, together with bonnets and other things, was displayed in the windows of a store, where owners were invited to come in and identify their property.

The fact is, the church had not been considered safe for some time, so that for the three preceding weeks the Sunday School had met in the Court House. It was now necessary to close the auditorium, until supports for the roof could be set up in the middle aisle and the outer walls strengthened. The latter was done by constructing buttresses between the windows. These, rising above the eaves, were surmounted by spires, the aspect of the church being thus quite altered. Dr. McIlvain, a later pastor, has left in a newspaper interview this reminiscence of its changed appearance: "It was a queer old church. The outside was of stucco, and upon the roof

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were eight battlements—turrets, I guess you would call them—and capping the summit of each turret was a bright tin star.” If Dr. McIlvain’s counting of the stars was correct, we may now, from the end of the century, look back upon their number as prophetic. For the Mother-church gave birth to seven children, the one church growing into eight. It might be said of it, as in the vision of John, “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.”

The vestry of St. Luke’s and the vestry of St. Paul’s offered their church buildings to the congregation of the First, during the making of the repairs. As St. Paul’s was without a rector, the latter invitation was accepted, Dr. Penney preaching there until the latter part of the winter. It is interesting to note that the First Church congregation took their bell and organ with them. But the Communion service of January 2, 1831, when the First Church received a hundred new members, was held in the building of the Second Church; and a year after the accident, when a fire damaged St. Luke’s early on Sunday morning, Dec. 23, 1832, the Presbyterians were able to reciprocate the courtesy which the vestry of that church

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had shown them—an invitation which St. Luke's accepted.

The year 1831 made history for the church in various ways. Besides the repair and strengthening of the edifice, a brick chapel was built on the east, or Irving Place, side, separated from the church building by a walk. The Sunday School was held in this structure, in which a striking feature of the interior decoration was a tablet on either side of the Superintendent's platform, bearing in gilt letters the names and ages of the children who had died—the girls on the one side, the boys on the other—an impressive reminder to youthful exuberance that Death seizes upon the young as well as upon the old. Directly back of the platform was a map of Palestine.

The first Mission School was started in 1831 by Mrs. Penney and Miss Harriet Hatch. "They made," says the History of Rochester Presbytery, "special efforts to gather in the neglected little children from the highways and resorts of dissipation. The lady members of the church furnished a band of devoted helpers, while the church sustained the enterprise with liberal contributions, so that the work was prosecuted with much vigor and success." In that year also there was a wonderful

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temperance meeting in the (old) Brick Church. Theodore D. Weld, who delivered the address, spoke for two hours to "a vast and breathless audience." When the speaker had finished, Dr. Penney, who was present, waited for a moment and then, advancing to the front of the platform, asked those to rise who, being in the "habit of using, manufacturing, or vending ardent spirits," were willing to pledge publicly that they would do so no more. Several rose in response. Immediately afterwards several bars closed, and demijohns and liquor casks were emptied on the ground.

The year 1832 was marked by the first cholera epidemic in Rochester. The committee appointed to deal with it was mainly made up of First Church men, and the gruesome story of the year is illumined by the special heroism of one of them—Ashbel W. Riley. It is recorded of him that he went day and night fearlessly and tirelessly among the sufferers and with his own hands laid eighty of them in their coffins.

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X

Dr. Penney Leaves

On November 22, 1832, Dr. Penney addressed a letter of resignation "to the Elders and Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church." The letter, which is still extant, is a most affectionate document. It states that he had contemplated the step for some time, and had "hitherto been prevented only by the remonstrances of some of your number who urged that such a step would seriously injure the interests of the congregation." He adds, "The late distracted and scattered state of the Society, in consequence of the failure of the Church Edifice, seemed to bind me to the Society. . . . This is now past, and I know of no embarrassments now remaining." He gave as his reasons for the step his great interest in education and wish to devote himself more fully to it; and, especially, the injurious effect of the climate upon his health. He said: "I shall part with every member of the congregation as from a dear friend and shall never, never think of this people but with affection, gratitude and esteem. . . . I shall leave them with many precious recollections and retain no painful ones."

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Very regretfully, his people accepted the resignation. They adopted resolutions which record the feeling "that in losing him they have lost an able advocate of the cross and a firm and confiding friend; and our village, as a man of service and sound judgment, one of its leading ornaments." A personal letter which was written at the time says, "His leaving will be a great source of sorrow to other congregations as well as our own."

Dr. Penney preached his farewell sermon April 28, 1833, taking as his text the words (Second Corinthians, XIII, 11) "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

The church was, as he had said, in a highly prosperous condition. Its membership had risen to 477, the highest figure it had ever reached; for the fiscal years of '31 and '32 there was reported a total of 251 additions, of whom 205 were by confession, and in one of the years there were 85 baptisms. The Sunday before Dr. Penney left, Ashley Sampson and James K. Livingston were ordained as Elders, having been elected, in accordance with custom, by "the male members of the Church." The letter in which they

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accepted their election to that office breathes a spirit that must have meant much to the church. Stating themselves to be "deeply sensible of incompetence and unworthiness," they say: "Of ourselves we can do nothing. We need the Holy Spirit's influence. The peculiar circumstances of our church seem to call for increased effort, prayer, faith, humility, brotherly love, and every Christian grace. Shall we not rally around the standard of the cross, renew our covenant vows, draw closer the chords of Christian love?"

In connection with Dr. Penney's interest in education, it is interesting to note that in 1832 the church made its first contribution to educational purposes, so far as the records show. The sum was the very substantial amount of \$675.

After leaving Rochester, Dr. Penney went to Northampton, Mass., as pastor of the First Congregational Church. Two years later, he accepted the presidency of Hamilton College, remaining about four years. During this period, some of the members of the First Presbyterian Church in Rochester made themselves responsible for his salary, offering to be thus responsible for ten years. Brief residences followed at Nyack and Grand Rapids,

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and then Dr. Penney returned to Rochester, the place which seems always to have been nearest his heart. For some years he suffered greatly from a nervous affection, and finally, in 1860, died. His wife had died a few years earlier, and both are buried at Mt. Hope.

It is significant of the affection and esteem in which Dr. Penney was held that the congregation looked largely to him to choose his successor. He strongly recommended D. H. Riddle of Winchester, Va., saying of him, in a letter written to Dr. Backus, from New York in May, 1833, "I am perfectly confirmed in the good impressions I had previously received of Mr. R. He is, I think, the *very man* for the First Church of Rochester in all respects—amiable, talented and well balanced." He arranged for Mr. Riddle to come on at once to Rochester, saying that he had assured him that it would be possible to "convene a congregation—say on Thursday evening, or on any week evening, when he may arrive." The letter adds, "I hope Bostwick will have the church lamps in order and that a good congregation will be convened. Also please to place a good psalm book in the Pulpit. There is none."

Mr. Riddle came, and at a meeting of the

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congregation shortly afterward an unanimous call was extended to him. Mr. Riddle declined it. In fact, notwithstanding the earnest efforts of Dr. Penney and in spite of other calls that were extended, the pulpit remained vacant for several months, largely, it seems, because of a widespread fear of the severity of the climate.

There was, however, preaching almost every Sunday; and the Session kept very strict watch of the congregation, as several trials attest. One of these, for instance, was of a woman of the congregation who "did on a Sabbath in the summer of 1833 (particular day not known) go on board a canal boat at Rochester for Buffalo, and she traveled in the boat on that Sabbath."

XI

Tryon Edwards Comes

In August or September, 1833, the Session invited Tryon Edwards, a young man of twenty-four, who had been graduated from Yale, and was then completing his theological studies at Princeton, to come to Rochester to supply the pulpit for three or more months. Mr. Edwards replied that he would not receive

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his license to preach until about the middle of October, and that after that "I shall wish a rest from study for one or two weeks, before entering upon the discharge of duties such as you propose." He promised, however, to come in November if the church could wait until then. This was agreed to.

Mr. Edwards apparently gave much satisfaction, for he remained until late in March. He then returned to his home in Hartford; and on the assembling, a few days later, of a church meeting, to ascertain the view of the people in regard to asking him to become their regular pastor, only three votes were recorded in the negative.

There is a letter written April 29, 1834, by Dr. Penney to Chas. M. Lee, telling of a visit he had just had in Northampton from Mr. Edwards, who then had under advisement the First Church call and who apparently desired to consult Dr. Penney before deciding. In part, Dr. Penney's letter reads: "My deep interest in everything which pertains to your good, as a people dearly beloved, leads me in this way to express the hope that there will be a cordial and *unanimous* compliance" with any reasonable conditions Mr. Edwards names. "I would suggest in addition

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to what he proposed that, considering his easy circumstances and consequent scale of expenditure during his education—the rising expenses of a *city* life and the pretty certain prospects of a family to support—the sum of \$1000 without a Parsonage will be found a small allowance. Nor do I think you will find it as economical to pay him this sum as one more competent. I do not in this suggestion forget that you always paid me more than your engagements, as well as more than my dues. But that surplus may better be included in the salary now as the hospitable habits of a new village give place to the business formalities of a city. I need not say after these remarks that I think Mr. Edwards the right man—I do firmly believe that he will do better for that church and congregation than the generality of that class of ministers to which all our eyes have been turned.”

So Tryon Edwards, who was grandson and great-grandson of the two Jonathan Edwards who were presidents of Princeton, was installed in the pulpit of the First Church on July 22, 1834. He commenced the labors of his pastorate by preaching a sermon which was so well liked that when the city celebrated, fifty years later, the semi-centennial of its

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incorporation, he was invited to return and repeat it in the First Church pulpit.

The installation exercises were described as of "a most interesting and impressive character." Rev. Dr. Hawes of Hartford preached the sermon. Dr. Penney was present and gave the charge to the people; Rev. Mr. Wisner, of the Brick Church, gave the charge to the pastor—describing him as "an ambassador from the court of Heaven to a rebel-world." Rev. Mr. Eddy made the ordination prayer, and several other clergymen assisted. As on the previous occasion, the installation was preceded by "a day of fasting and prayer for the blessing of God on the connection about to be formed."

We have two contemporary pictures of Tryon Edwards. One is in a letter written by a member of the church some two months after the installation. It says: "Were he of more robust frame and had better health, he would please us well." The other, which has the advantage of looking back over his pastorate, says: "Enjoying and improving the advantages of our best seminaries of literature and theology, with a mind well and successfully trained to habits of thought and expression, his discourses (especially a series addressed to young

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men) coupled with courteous manners out of the pulpit, made him popular while a resident here and will give him a long-continued place in the memory of those who attended his ministry." During most of his pastorate, he lived, it is recalled, with Mr. and Mrs. Lee. But near the end of it, soon after he had followed the example of Dr. Penney and gone East for a wife—who is described as having been very attractive—Mrs. Lee wisely thought it best that the couple set up house-keeping for themselves.

Another paragraph in the letter first quoted above, says, "Religion does not receive the attention from our citizens which could be expected. I have observed that we are reluctant to heed the judgments of God, and few are converted during the ravages of a pestilence." The reference is to the cholera, of which Rochester had renewed outbreaks in 1833 and '34. Yet the church kept a strict watch upon the spiritual welfare of its members. During this period one of the oldest of its number was excommunicated, and another member was brought before the Session in trial for an "over indulgence in ardent spirits" on the Fourth of July. Witnesses testified that they saw him walking in a line

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that was not straight, one woman stating that she watched him from her window until he was out of sight.

A prominent member of the church, Jacob Gould, who for eleven years had been an Elder, was elected mayor in 1835—the second mayor of the city. In 1836 he was re-elected; and with him there began a remarkably long list of mayors chosen from the First Church congregation, and even, to considerable extent, from its Session! The list includes: Jacob Gould, Thomas Kempshall, Charles Hill, Isaac Hills, Levi A. Ward, Hamlin Stilwell, Maltby Strong, Charles J. Hayden, John C. Nash, Nehemiah C. Bradstreet, and George W. Aldridge. Of course in the old days the trustees of the village had also been largely First Church men—as Moses Chapin, Frederick F. Backus, Charles J. Hill, H. R. Bender, A. W. Riley, O. E. Gibbs, etc.

In 1836, also, Rev. Henry Cherry and Rev. F. D. Ward of the First Church were ordained as missionaries to Southern India and departed for their post; and Mr. Edwards preached, on Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 15th, a sermon entitled “Reasons for Thankfulness” which so gratified the congregation that the trustees published it in pamphlet

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form. As the sermon was historical, most of the cited reasons have been already given here. One other, however, may be quoted, viz., that “the first white person born in the village is now a member of this congregation.” He mentioned with gratitude, also, “three charity schools sustained by our ladies—one by the young ladies of the First Presbyterian Church, one by the young ladies of St. Luke’s church, and one by the Rochester Female Charitable Society.” They are “educating 250 orphan or destitute children.” Meanwhile, it should be added, the First Church Sunday School was extremely flourishing. It is recorded that out of an enrollment in March, 1835, of 232 pupils, there was an average attendance of 202—“more, by twenty or thirty, than any other school in the city.”

XII

Troublesome Questions

The most stirring church event of 1836 was the movement to organize Bethel (now Central) Presbyterian Church, which it was proposed to locate on the west side of Washington Street, between the canal and Main Street, on the very lot upon which stood Dr.

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Penney's house. The plan was consummated, thirty-nine members from the First Church taking their letters to it, but it was much against the wishes of the First Church Session and pastor. The records contain a list of those who proposed thus to go out from the Mother Church; a series of resolutions passed by the Session, and signed by Mr. Edwards as Moderator; a reply from those who favored establishing the church, proposing arbitration of the subject by a committee of forty, representative of all the churches; the Session's reply to that; and then a letter to Presbytery, by those desiring to start the new path, in which they promise to act in accordance with Presbytery's judgment. The first resolutions of the Session, which are dated March 29, 1836, are very interesting. They read:

UNANIMOUSLY,

Resolved,

1. *That we regard the formation of a new church in this city, at the present time, inexpedient.* Because

1. There is *now* no church in the city which is *filled*.

2. The same effort which will be demanded to gather a *new* congregation, would, as we have no doubt, bring at least an equal number of persons under the power of the truth in congregations *now* existing; and *that*, without the proposed expense of time and money.

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3. We deem it wrong to station any more ministers in places as well supplied as this, while the call is so loud from the destitute parts of our own land, and especially from the *heathen*, for hundreds and hundreds of ministers who cannot be found; and when all the funds that *can* be raised, are at this moment *needed* to send the gospel to the ends of the earth.
4. We are satisfied that a large portion of those whom it is designed to benefit by the proposed effort, will be more successfully provided for by the efforts of the city missionary recently appointed, and also by the churches now established, which in their formation had this end before them.

If, however, these reasons are not sufficient to satisfy the brethren that the proposed undertaking is inexpedient, then

Resolved,

II. That the *LOCATION* which they have in view, is, in our opinion, *DECIDEDLY* an *IMPROPER* location
Because,

1. It is not needed, as proposed, for the *boatmen*, etc., as full provision already exists for them, in the churches which have already been alluded to.
2. The proposed situation is too near to churches already erected, while there is still a portion of the city within which no church is located.

Such being the *unanimous* views of the Session, although we regret that the proposed enterprise has been projected and especially that it has been so far matured without consultation with the Session of the Church, and although we rely on the correct Christian views of those concerned, to remain in churches already organized;—*still*, as we believe that our brethren are actuated by a desire to advance the cause of the Redeemer, if they

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determine to leave us as proposed, we now see no reason why we should not dismiss them.

In behalf of the Session,

T. EDWARDS,
Moderator.

Dated, March 29, 1836.

One can well understand the reluctance of the First Church Session in this matter when one finds, in the Record book of the Sunday School, a memorandum that the withdrawals to form Bethel Church included, on one Sunday alone, "the estimable Superintendent, twelve male and five female teachers," and that more were expected to go!

The church had another trouble about this time. It seems to have been brewing for a considerable period—in fact, the seeds of it were sown in 1801, long before there was a settlement at Rochester. In that year the General Association of Connecticut, representing the Congregational Church, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, had agreed that in the missionary work in Western New York—for it was all missionary work in those days—there should be co-operation between the two bodies, so that a Presbyterian might be pastor of a Congregational church, or *vice versa*.

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With the development of important towns and flourishing churches, it was inevitable that a break should come, and apparently with a view to bringing the matter to a head and securing a definite alignment, the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1837 passed the famous Excinding Act. By this the two Synods in Western New York, together with the Synod of Utica and that of Western Reserve, Ohio, were "declared to be out of ecclesiastical connection with the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America." The resolutions added that there was no intention to affect, "in any way, the ministerial standing of any members of either of said Synods, nor to disturb the pastoral relation in any church;" and "all such churches and ministers as wish to unite with us are hereby directed to apply for admission into those Presbyteries belonging to our connection which are most convenient to their respective locations." Nevertheless, the action, which seemed to Western New York high-handed, unreasonable and cruel, sorely hurt the feelings of the churches, especially as there was attempt to justify it by references to irregularity of doctrine and action.

Mrs. Chapin, in a letter of 1837, writes,

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“you have read that our General Assembly have cut off this Synod from the Presbyterian Church. Their proceedings have been disgraceful.” The sentiment thus expressed was widespread among members of the excluded Presbyteries, and thereafter that of Rochester stood aloof for fourteen years. Commissioners were, to be sure, appointed to the General Assembly in 1838, and they went. But in a few days they came back again, and, making no statement as to the diligence of their search, briefly and pointedly reported that they had been unable to find it! In 1839 appointments were made again, but the delegates found only the “New School” Assembly, which had then developed as a result of the Excinding Act. No further attempt was made until 1854 to send Commissioners from Rochester to either of the two rival General Assemblies.

Of course the First Presbyterian Church was no more seriously involved in the dispute than was any other Presbyterian church of the Synod, but its prominence and natural leadership brought the matter especially close to the hearts of pastor, Session and people. In fact, Mr. Edwards was Secretary of the convention of ministers and laymen from the

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excinded Synods, which was held in Auburn in the summer of 1837 to protest against the constitutionality of the Assembly's action.

XIII

A Vigorous Church

It must not be inferred, however, that those troublesome matters decreased the energy and effectiveness of the First Church itself. Perhaps they resulted in a stronger loyalty. Certain it is that in 1836 the membership had risen to 512, 35 more than the high record under Dr. Penney; and that its contributions for home missions, which had reached \$1000 in the last year of Dr. Penney's pastorate, rose to \$2500 in 1836, and to \$3839 in each, 1837 and 1838. For the same three years the gifts for education were, respectively, \$2090, \$5900, \$5900. In the book containing a compilation of statistics, made up from records of the General Assembly, the comment, "Strange but true" is entered after the record of those years. The large gifts are the more significant because 1837 was a year of exceptional financial depression.

Two new Elders were ordained in 1838, Charles W. Dundas and Marcus Holmes.

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The letter in which Mr. Dundas accepted his election suggests the spirit which then animated the church. Addressing Mr. Edwards, he says: "Having, as I trust, prayerfully considered the election of myself to an Elder-ship in the First Church, and in view of all the circumstances and relations existing in this Branch of Our Beloved Zion, I cannot permit myself to decline accepting, and taking upon me the solemn responsibility, which Our Brethren have laid upon me." Levi A. Ward, elected Superintendent of the Sunday School the year before, remained in that position for fifteen years.

In 1838 the Anti-Slavery Society of Rochester, in which some leading members of the First Church—as Moses Chapin, David Scofield, S. D. Porter, etc.—were very prominent, were hosts for a State convention, and in that year Presbytery appointed a commission of four, of whom Tryon Edwards is first named, to organize the "Fifth Presbyterian Church in the city of Rochester." The church, subsequently called the "Fourth," lived only ten years.

The event of 1839 was an unprecedented snowfall on January 26th-27th, which compelled the omission of the Sunday School on

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the 27th, and the cancellation of the afternoon service in all the churches.

In 1840 a semi-centennial celebration of the settlement of Western New York was held, and Tryon Edwards was selected to make the prayer. In that year, too, a member of the church signed a confession, obviously written by the pastor, admitting imprudence in the "use of stimulating and exciting substances." The words "intoxicating drinks" were written first, and then, perhaps at the culprit's request, marked out for the more euphaneous substitutes. The act, however, is agreed to have been "wrong and sinful, injurious to my Christian profession."

Later in the year, "a sister of this Church," whose name is duly entered on the Session records, was stated to be charged by "public rumor" with cherishing "erroneous and unscriptural views," and with having abstained from attending worship. The minute, in conformity with the custom on such occasions, then reads: "Scriptural measures having been tried without effect, to restrain her from these errors of doctrine and practice,

"Voted, That the Clerk cite her to meet the Session on the 18th day of August instant, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon at the Session

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Room, to consider and act upon the aforesaid charges." Later the Session records that the sister herself gave "painful and conclusive proof that both charges were true," and "further measures" to "reclaim" her having been taken without success, she "has by vote of the Session been excommunicated from the church"—a verdict that was by no means rare. The quotation is taken from a paper which, apparently, the pastor read to the congregation, for immediately after it, and before he announces in formal words her sentence, he has interlined these notes which formed, we may suppose, the framework of a parenthetical address:

Time when errors abound. All shd. take heed. Error is subtle.

It is very clear that exclusion from the General Assembly meant no laxity of discipline as far as the First Church was concerned. The Session records of the period abound in trials. There is found also this interesting paper, probably read from the pulpit, for it bears the notation, "Presented two times, Dec. 31, 1841, by Rev. T. Edwards:"

I am requested to speak a word on the subject of dancing as a recreation or amusement.

Whatever views we take of the intrinsic character of this

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—all must agree that it is evil in its tendency and directly repugnant to that spirituality of mind which every Christian should cultivate. Besides it has been so long and so universally used by the irreligious and even the abandoned of every kind that as an exercise it is now regarded as exclusively belonging to them. Hence all sober-minded Christians of every denomination reject it from their amusements and this church has uniformly looked upon it with decided disapprobation. And yet the Session are from time to time called upon to inquire after communicants who have been treading on this forbidden ground.

It was thought best by the Session that the church would be at this time reminded of the estimate in which dancing is held and to make it distinctly understood that that amusement on any occasion by a communicant of this church will be considered as a grievance by the other members—as bringing a reproach on the church—and as cause for reproof and censure.

And permit us, Christian parents of this church, to urge upon you, the duty to restrain your baptized children in this respect, and to give such direction to their amusements that the barriers may not be broken down (as in this community is alarmingly threatened) between those who fear God and those who fear him not.

The city was stirred by religious revivals in 1842, conducted again by Messrs. Finney and Burchard, whose earlier efforts had been so notably successful—the one speaker “appealing to the intellect, the other to the passions.” Doubtless the First Church shared richly in the fruits of this deeper stirring of religious interest, though in the absence in

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these years of any reports to General Assembly definite figures cannot be given. It has been stated, however, by Dr. Bush that Mr. Finney alone converted "one thousand souls" in his visit of 1842.

An interesting letter from the files of that year is one from Mr. Edwards, very nicely accepting a reduction of his salary from \$1500 to \$1200. Under date of "Monday evening, May 16th," he writes to "Hon. M. Chapin and Hon. A. Gardiner, Committee:"

Gentlemen:

I have considered the statement given me by yourselves as a committee of the 1st Presbyterian Society, respecting the embarrassed state of its finances. In the prosperity of the past, the Society in such matters have always acted most liberally; and in the reverses of the present, most cheerfully do I share with them their burdens. Will you therefore please request the Trustees to consider me as relinquishing \$300 from my salary for the coming year? The future I leave to their liberality, should my necessary expenses be increased. Or, if they sh'd not, and the circumstances of the Society sh'd still be adverse, they need not be assured that the occasion will cheerfully be met according to its need.

That the fine spirit which prompted such a letter did not lack appreciation is indicated by a communication which was addressed to Mr. Edwards during his vacation, a few weeks later. Signed, "Your Brethren in

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Christ," it seems to have been written by the Session, speaking for the church:

Rev'd and Dear Sir:

We received and read with much gratification your letter addressed to our Church and congregation. While in this we learn that the welfare of your people lies near your heart during your absence, we can assure you that our prayers are continually offered that God will protect you in your journeyings, . . . and that he will in due time return you to us in the fulness of the blessing of that Gospel which you preach. We appreciate as you do the momentous interest of that relation which unites us. Other relations may for the time more engage our attention, but none will appear more solemn and important in that day when minister and people stand at the judgment seat of Christ. . . .

We rejoice that we were so well represented at Norwich and that the next meeting of the Missionary Board is to be at Rochester. . . .

We have thus far been well supplied on the Sabbath since you have been absent. Mr. Bush preached the first Sabbath and Mr. Dickson the other two. Both performed well. Our supply for the future is uncertain, but your five weeks will soon pass away, and then we shall greet your return.

In 1842 Mr. Edwards edited, with a memoir, the works of his grandfather, the younger President Jonathan Edwards of Princeton. It may be added here that several of his own sermons found their way into print—as "The First Presbyterian Church and the Early History of Rochester," "The Monitions of

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the Judgment," "God's Voice to the Nation," preached on the Sunday after the death of William Henry Harrison, President of the United States, and "Christianity: A Philosophy of Principles," which was delivered before the Adelpic Union of Williams College. He also contributed considerably to the periodical literature of the day; and in 1842-43 he delivered the series of lectures to young men, to which reference has been already made. In 1843 the church was re-decorated and thoroughly repaired.

It has been already suggested that freedom from the watchful care of the General Assembly seemed to give to Rochester's Presbyterian churches a special sense of responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their people. In 1843 there is a note of a day appointed in the First Church for "private fasting and prayer"; and of having, for a season, "daily prayer meetings each morning and preaching every evening by Mr. Edwards." In that year also each church was required to send to Presbytery, for its files and scrutiny, a copy of its Articles of Faith and Covenant; and among the letters preserved by the First Church Session is one written to Mr. Edwards in 1843 by T. B. Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton says

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that in conversation with some members of the church, he has regretfully learned that his example in dancing on certain occasions has been noted "as justifying them in the same acts, contrary to the advice of their friends." He adds: "Whatever may be my peculiar views on the subject of dancing, I had determined to discontinue it, before having the conversation above alluded to." He goes on to say:

I address you this note that you may give publicity to my determination on this point, if you think fit; and also explain another circumstance which may become public—I mean the fact of my going from Syracuse to Albany on Sunday.

I left Rochester on Friday in time to reach Albany on Saturday evening. I deemed it necessary for me to be there at the opening of the court on Monday morning. The cars were obstructed on the road and no train went down on Saturday. After considerable hesitation, I deemed that I was justified in going on Sunday.

I am decidedly opposed to travelling on Sunday and this is the only instance in which I have done so, and I frankly say that after once trying it, in what I considered an urgent case, I am fully convinced that the like circumstances would not induce me to repeat it. I am

Yours affectionately,

T. B. HAMILTON.

It may be added that as lately as the previous year a member, who had traveled on

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Sunday and failed to express repentance, had been excommunicated by the Session. Hence Mr. Hamilton had cause to be nervous.

After a pastorate only one year shorter than Dr. Penney's Tryon Edwards resigned. His letter is dated June 28, 1844. Its coming seems to have been quite unexpected, though he says that the step had been long in contemplation owing to the increasing arduousness of his labors. The church unanimously adopted a resolution begging him to reconsider the action and to "remain with us as our pastor." When Mr. Edwards declined to do this, the church passed a series of very complimentary resolutions, asked his aid in choosing a successor, and handsomely directed the continuance of his salary for three months after his relief from the performance of pastoral duties, which was on July 28th.

On leaving Rochester, Mr. Edwards went to New London, where for thirteen years he was minister to a large Congregational Church. Thence he went to Hagerstown, Md., as the pastor of a church, becoming also, while there, president of the Wilson Female Seminary, at Chambersburg, Pa., which he had much to do in founding.

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XIV

Choosing a New Pastor

That the First Church flock needed watching, and received it, during the vacancy of the pulpit, is indicated by a "Statement as to Betting, read to the Church January 10, 1845."

It is probably known to most of the members of this church that some of our number, previous to the late presidential election, made bets on the result of that election. Such members have been conversed with, and they readily see and admit the impropriety of their conduct in this respect. They express their unqualified regret and sorrow for this act and their determination to bet no more.

And the Session take this opportunity, in kindness, to put the members of this church on their guard against this practice which some professing Christians are unwarily drawn into. All will readily see, that if this kind of gambling is permitted, the walls of partition which should separate the church from the world will soon be broken down. It should be generally known that betting is considered in the church to which we belong to be a disciplinable offence.

In less than a year after Pastor Edwards left, the church extended an unanimous call to Rev. Malcolm N. McLaren, D.D. He was forty-six years of age; had been born in Albany, educated at Union College and at Princeton Theological Seminary, and at the

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time of his call to Rochester was located in Johnstown, where he had a church. His letter of acceptance says: "Delighted with my intercourse with your people during my short stay in your city, and affected by the unanimity of kindness with which the invitation was made out, I have, since it was placed in my hands, been more and more inclined to view it as an invitation from the Lord of the Vineyard that it is his will that Rochester become the place of my labors.

"There are considerations which wd. deter me from entering upon that field. Its extent, its high cultivation, and its commanding position are enough to intimidate one of more talents and of richer furniture and of more varied experience than the present object of their choice can have any claims to. But this movement has originated so entirely without my knowledge, has advanced so much without any agency of mine, and is so manifestly from the Lord that I dare not decline." The letter is written under date of May 26th, and he says that he will come to Rochester in three weeks, delaying to give the people in Johnstown time to arrange for supplies.

Dr. McLaren's installation took place Aug.

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27th. The sermon was by Dr. Sprague of Albany, the prayer by the Rev. Mr. Hickok, "of the Washington Street Church," the charge to the pastor by Mr. Hall of the Third Church, and the charge to the people by Rev. James B. Shaw, of the Brick. There was also an elaborate musical program by the choir.

XV

Dr. McLaren

One who knew Dr. McLaren has described him as having a tall, erect and graceful form, a manner especially courteous, as "endowed with a mind well disciplined by study," and as "having few equals in rhetoric and expressive pulpit delivery. For all these, and for goodness of heart and fidelity as preacher and pastor, he will long be remembered."

In spite of the favorable beginning of his ministry, Dr. McLaren remained in the First Church only a year and a half—until March 1, 1847. He resigned to accept a call which he had received to Brooklyn. He lived to be an old man, dying in Auburn in 1887, and it is perhaps significant of his Scotch-Presbyterianism that in compliance with his request copies of the Bible and of the Westminster Confession of Faith were placed upon his

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casket. Another significant fact is the interesting reminiscence that when preaching he always wore black gloves—which seemed, at least to one gentle little girl among his hearers, to give to his gestures an awful and threatening power. But his heart was very kind, and he and his family in their short residence here made many friends, so that his return, on various occasions, was always welcomed.

Whether due or not to the strict ideas of Dr. McLaren, and of his conservative successor, Dr. McIlvaine, the Session records of the years from 1845 to 1855 furnish data of many trials of First Church members by a disciplinary Session. Absence from church on Sunday, or absence from Prayer Meeting and Preparatory Lecture, were offenses that necessitated formal trial by the Session. At least one of these resulted in excommunication, perhaps because the offender not merely gave no sign of repentance but failed to obey the citations of the Session to appear before it and hear the witnesses. These, testifying that they had themselves been present at practically every service for several months, occupying pews so situated that they could see his seat “without turning around,” swore

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that they had not seen him there, nor even on the porch or in the yard. Neither had he given to them the excuse of sickness. The verdict was read to the church at Preparatory Lecture.

The Session was not always, however, so severe, for in one instance the minute reads: "It was voted that Mr. H—— be now suspended from the Communion, and that before he be excommunicated time be given him to repent and return to his Christian duty. Closed with prayer. M. Chapin, Clerk." Other offenses than absence from service came before the Session, and it is clear that to be an Elder in those days meant the devotion of much time to the affairs of the church, and the hearing of much spicy gossip.

Two new Elders were elected in 1846, Eben U. Buell and Robert W. Dalzell; and one, Charles W. Dundas, resigned. It was not much easier to resign at that time than it is to-day. Only two other resignations from the eldership had been accepted in the thirty years of the church. One of these was Jacob Gould's, in 1833, which reads:

Brethren:

I, by these presents, desire to do officially what I have virtually done for a considerable time, viz., cease to be

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an Active Elder in said Church, and I do now hereby, as far as I can, resign said office. By granting this request, I hope and Pray that the Spirituality and Union of the Church be increased and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ extended.

With much affection,

Yours,

JACOB GOULD

XVI

Interesting Correspondence

The church had a good deal of trouble in securing a successor to Dr. McLaren, the pulpit remaining vacant for a year and a half. Temporary supplies preached, however, during this time; especially and most acceptably Rev. Henry D. Rankin, for several months. He was a young man, and after leaving Rochester went to China as a missionary.

A call was extended to Rev. Adam Reid, of Salisbury, Conn., and one to the Rev. T. V. Moore, of Green Castle, Pa. The latter accepted, but, his Presbytery refusing to let him leave the charge he had, he was obliged to decline. The correspondence with Mr. Moore is, however, illuminating on several points. In referring to the call, he wrote: "I cannot consent to perform more than two services on the Sabbath. More than this I

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am convinced is not possible for me, in justice either to myself or the cong. Should a third service be deemed expedient I cannot bind myself even to be present, for the mental excitement of three services on my system would be such as ultimately to do me serious injury." The official reply to this declaration is that, "although our usual practice, with that of other churches in this city, has been to have a third service (being usually a prayer meeting conducted by the Pastor, with a brief extemporaneous lecture or remarks) yet our own observation and experience had led us recently to the conclusion that more than two services generally are not profitable and should not be required." There is added, with a bit of spirit, that it might be presumed that the Session "will never ask anything incompatible with your health or permanent usefulness." The correspondence also contains an interesting allusion to the amount of the proposed salary, which was \$1500—"three hundred dollars more than has ever been paid by any Presb. Church in this City, except for a short time to Mr. Edwards, during which one-third of the amount was paid by individuals and not by the Society." The sum of \$1500, it is stated, "we think will

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enable our Pastor, with proper economy, to lay up a little each year.”

Another letter, interesting for the possible light it throws on the condition of the church at this time, is one which is addressed to Judge Sampson by the Rev. Joel Parker. Mr. Parker is replying to an inquiry regarding a minister of Philadelphia, whose name the Session were considering. He writes:

Yours of the 3d instant came to hand last evening. I can but deeply regret that your church should be left again to the troubles and hazards of procuring a Pastor.

The gentleman with respect to whom you make inquiry has been long known to me. He was under my tuition for a year or two in the Sabbath School class when a lad of sixteen. He possesses far more intellectual power than I then supposed he would ever attain to. . . . Your most cultivated people would not grow weary of his discourses. . . . With respect to the manner in which he would encounter a factious spirit I am not so confident.

A very interesting document of 1847 is a letter addressed to the Session by Levi A. Ward, who had then been Superintendent of the Sunday School for eleven years. He says that when he took charge, he found that it had been the practice to collect from the teachers enough to make up the difference between the collections and the expenses of the

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school. This did not seem to him to be right. Accordingly, he had instituted the custom of personally advancing such sums as the expenses called for, and then in March of each year having a church collection taken up, from which he reimbursed himself as far as possible for the last twelve months' advances. Once in four or five years he prepared a balance-statement for the congregation, that of 1847 showing that the collections were then short \$70.52. In addition, "the *Tablets* (which cost \$35) and the Psalm Books were paid for by myself and not charged to the School."

XVII

Dr. McIlvaine

In 1848, Rev. Dr. Joshua Hawley McIlvaine, of Westminster Church, Utica, accepted a call to the pastorate. He commenced his duties April 23d, and was installed July 13th. Mr. Hickok of the Washington Street Church read the Scriptures; Mr. Richardson of Pittsford preached the sermon. Mr. Shaw of the Brick gave the charge to the pastor, and Mr. Billington of Fairport the charge to the people.

Dr. McIlvaine was a graduate of Princeton college and seminary. He was thirty-three when he came to Rochester, but had been

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pastor of a Presbyterian church at Little Falls prior to his charge in Utica. His pastorate of twelve years in Rochester was next to the longest that the First Church has had, and during it the church was very strong and active. Dr. McIlvaine is described as having possessed studious habits, thorough scholarship, and eminent pulpit power. "He was a peer among the students, authors and preachers of his day." His sermons were extremely intellectual.

An interesting evidence of the quickness with which Dr. McIlvaine took his place in the community is the choice of him to deliver on June 28, 1849, the address that celebrated the reorganization of the Rochester Athenæum and Mechanics' Association, the opening of their Library and new Reading Rooms, and the completion for public lectures of that "noble hall"—now the Corinthian Theatre. The subject chosen was "The Power of Voluntary Attention"—not a very alluring title; but he treated it in so satisfactory a manner that next day the directors, in extending a vote of thanks to him, appointed a committee to "solicit a copy of the Address for publication." The copy was forthcoming and the address in pamphlet form may

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still be occasionally found. The chairman of the meeting was the Superintendent of his Sunday School, Levi A. Ward.

Dr. McIlvaine had come to Rochester at a time of considerable excitement, for 1848 was the year of the "Rochester Rappings." Spiritualism and its manifestations so entered into the thought of the community that even five years later, on March 20, 1853, he preached a sermon on "the arts of divination" which made, as will be imagined, no little stir.

XVIII

Church Life in the Middle of the Century

With the pastorate of Dr. McIlvaine there was entered a period which is within the memory of a few of the older members of the present church. By the aid of their reminiscences, it is quite possible to picture the life of the church as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. Services were held both morning and afternoon, and most baptisms were in the afternoon. The sermon was the great feature of any service. There were, perhaps, but two hymns, and in announcing these the pastor would read them entirely through. An examination of the old hymn

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book reveals hymns that were so melancholy that two may well have been all that healthy individuals could bear at a service. One hymn, which was sung so often in the First Church that its words are perfectly recalled by a member of that period, began as follows:

Far from the utmost verge of day
Those gloomy regions lie.
Where flames amid the darkness play,
The worm shall never die.

The breath of God, his angry breath,
Supplies and fans the fire.
There sinners taste the second death
And would, but can't, expire.

The choir included, during Dr. McIlvaine's pastorate, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Perkins, Mrs. Levi A. Ward, Mrs. John C. Nash, Mrs. Judge Gardiner, Mr. Bell, and Dr. Backus, who was leader. The choir sat in the gallery at the rear of the church. A new organ was installed in 1848.

Once in two months the pastor would read the notice, "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be served in this house two weeks from to-day. The Session will meet to-morrow afternoon at 2 o'clock in the Session Room to receive applications for membership." This Session Room was the small room, back of the

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Lecture Room, which the infant class used on Sundays. One who visited the room as a child, on a Monday afternoon in response to the above announcement, recalls the "grave and venerable" Elders sitting in solemn conclave as "we poor, miserable, little candidates" entered. Preparatory Lecture followed on the Friday afternoon preceding Communion, and the entire membership of the church was expected to attend—though the hour was 3 o'clock. Baptisms were often administered at this service, and here were pronounced the sentences imposed by Session as a result of the trials it held. Here also were read the confessions of those who, having been brought to trial, repented.

At Communion the verses always read, and never explained to the trembling children who were only too conscious of unworthiness, were from the Eleventh Chapter of First Corinthians, as, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." These, and the others of similar purport, were recited in most solemn tones; and then came the mournful hymn, beginning,

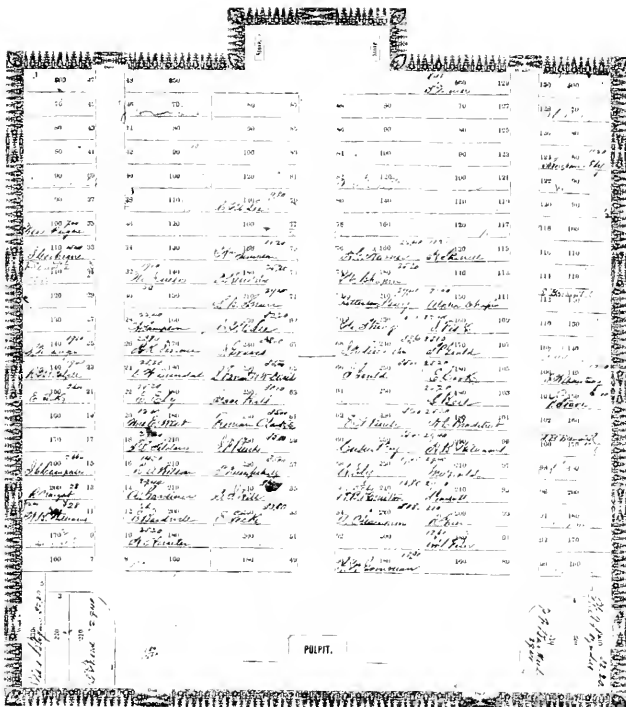
'Twas on that dark and doleful night
When powers of earth and hell engaged,

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sung in a minor key, the choir sitting with the congregation at this service. "It was all very sad."

One member of the church, S. Y. Alling, whose long years of faithful loyalty extended through this period, attained the record of not having missed a Communion service for fifty-two years.

Yet there were bright spots in the church life of the day. Those who arrived at service early had the pleasure of watching the others come in, facing the congregation, and all accounts agree that this was most entertaining. Individuality was strongly marked in those days, and there were princes among the men and queens among the women. And then there was the interest of watching strangers and visitors. On an April Sunday in 1847, ex-President Tyler was among the latter; but it is doubtful whether he attracted as much attention as had the picturesque Van Buren, back in the summer of 1828, when he had come into the church with General Gould. Van Buren had been nominated for governor that summer and in a tour of the State had reached Rochester on a Saturday. On Sunday, writes Henry B. Stanton in "Random Recollections," "he attended the First Presbyterian Church,



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the wealthy and aristocratic church of the town. . . . All eyes were fixed upon him . . . an exquisite in personal appearance. He wore an elegant snuff-colored broadcloth coat with velvet collar, his cravat was orange with modest lace tips; his vest was of a pearl hue; his trousers were white duck, his silk hose corresponded to the vest; his shoes were morocco; his nicely fitting gloves were yellow kid; his long-furred beaver hat, with broad brim, was of Quaker color."

It was the custom in the old days for the sexton, after he had finished ringing the bell, to enter the auditorium and show visitors to seats. "Some pew-renters," said Dr. Miller in his historical paper, "complained to the trustees that their places were occupied by outsiders, to their inconvenience and discomfort. The board discussed the question and decided that the stranger within our gates must be treated respectfully and kindly. They directed the sexton to give visitors as good seats as there were in the house." Very shortly after, to emphasize the hospitality of the church, prominent members of the congregation acted themselves as ushers, and so, prior to 1850, made, in the First Presbyterian Church a "beginning in Rochester of that

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special hospitality which is now so marked a feature in all our churches.”

On Mondays, once a month, it had been the custom to hold a union Monthly Concert, sometimes in one church and sometimes in another. Wednesday evening was devoted to the regular church prayer meeting, at which, however, there was a sermon. On Saturday nights there was another prayer meeting. This was transferred during Dr. McIlvaine's ministry from the Lecture Room to private houses, where it was conducted by one of the Elders. The minister was usually present, but did not necessarily take part. It is recalled that one member of the Session, who had a strong bass voice but absolute inability to carry a tune, sometimes led the singing, and in so doing would sing as much as four lines before his auditors could identify the tune. These Saturday evening meetings have been described as “very earnest and delightful.” There was also, once a month, a women's prayer meeting, held at the house of Mrs. Hervey Ely; and very early there was started, by Elder Starr, a men's Bible Class, conducted Sunday mornings at 9 o'clock in the Lecture Room. This was the beginning of the men's classes in which to this day Rochester is said to be the leader.

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At the Sunday services it was customary to appeal for contributions for various objects, the American Tract Society and the education of designated young men for the ministry being the special favorites. The amount secured in response to these appeals was often amazing, as the following records show: On an Autumn Sunday in 1848, Dr. McIlvaine having appealed for foreign missions, a collection of \$700 was taken up; on a January Sunday of that year, an appeal for the Tract Society resulted in a collection of \$1195.50. On December 10, 1849, in response to an appeal (which for some years was an annual event) the congregation gave \$300 for the Rochester Orphan Asylum; two months later, \$933.46 for American Home Missions, and just four weeks after that \$631 for the Foreign Evangelical Society! Nor was the giving only in the winter. On June 3d of that same year, \$59.65 was taken up for city missions; two Sundays later, \$207.13 for the cause of education; one month after that, \$1251.29 for the American Bible Society; and five weeks later, Aug. 19, \$127.50 for the American Sunday School Union. Whatever rise there has been in our standards of luxury and of personal income and expenditure in the inter-

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vening years, the congregations of sixty and seventy years ago certainly set a pace in their contributions for benevolent purposes. The total in 1851 and again in 1852 considerably exceeded \$8000 for benevolent purposes alone.

The "church sociables," or suppers, held at this time in private houses with great frequency, were also an important feature in the church life. The viands were at least as famously good in those days, it appears, as they are now. They were paid for by the passing of a hat or plate, into which it was customary for each person to put a quarter. These cottage "sociables" continued with great success until the pastorate of Dr. Robinson. At his request they were then transferred to the church parlors.

XIX

Some Events of Dr. McIlvaine's Pastorate

In 1849 the church elected three new Elders, Edmund A. Armstrong, Charles Church and Thomas Kempshall. In 1850 it joined with other churches of the Presbytery in a fruitless appeal to the two General Assemblies to find a basis of harmony and union. In this movement there is reason to believe that

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Dr. McIlvaine was very prominent, for he was a most loyal Presbyterian to whom the rupture was a cause of real sorrow. Four years later, when the Rochester Presbytery, by a narrow majority, voted to join the New School branch, the First Church, under his leadership, withdrew from the Rochester Presbytery to join the Rochester City Presbytery. The church held two meetings before deciding on its action, and very lively meetings they seem to have been—though the final vote was not close, the ballots being 46 for “Old School” and 8 for New. The men alone voted, as was customary; but in the words of the Session record, “the female members of the church” were permitted to be present, because of their interest.

In 1852, the Mother First gave birth to her fifth child, St. Peter's. One of the most prominent members of the church, Levi A. Ward, commenced early in that year the construction of a new Presbyterian church building on Grove Street, opposite his own residence. While it must have been hard for the church to dismiss a family long so prominent in its activities, Mr. Ward had the cordial co-operation of his pastor, and it is even said that Dr. McIlvaine himself suggested the

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name of the new church. The story, as he used to tell it, was that Mr. Ward, having complained that he could think of no name which would be distinctive among Presbyterian churches, Dr. McIlvaine "suggested that he take the bull by the horns, and call it St. Peter's!" The suggestion so pleased the donor that he adopted it. In the Sunday School, as further evidence of the kindly feeling, a collection was taken up late that year for "the purchase of a Bible and hymn book for the church at the grove—St. Peter's." In October, 1853, when St. Peter's Church was dedicated, Dr. McIlvaine preached the sermon. With Mr. Ward's departure, the Superintendency of the Sunday School was transferred to John N. Pomeroy. This whole period was marked by strong religious feeling.

In 1855 the sixth branching path was started from the mother trail, a goodly company of the First Church members leaving the old church to establish Plymouth Congregational. Only a block distant, and using the forms and order of government endeared by New England associations, it drew much strength from the First. Yet the life of that people went placidly on, and the pastor was not discouraged. Three new Elders were

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elected: John W. Adams, George Dutton and James S. Tryon, and in 1857 William Burke and J. G. Dabney were chosen deacons—the first ordination to that office in thirty-five years. Frederick Starr, an Elder for twenty-seven years, resigned in 1855, and Ashley Sampson, long prominent in the church, died in 1857. Other important losses to the Church by death at this period were those of Everard Peck, in 1854, and of Charles M. Lee in 1856.

There were several church events of interest during 1855–60. On July 14, 1855, the Session voted that beginning the following day the hour of Sunday afternoon service should “be changed to 3½ P.M., in compliance with request from St. Luke’s Ch.” The change was temporary, the church going back to its old hour in September; but it certainly was an evidence of Christian concord. On September 19th, it was voted, “That Session present to the Sabbath School the New England Primer, as from them.” And on Oct. 7th, there was held in the Mother Church a union Communion service of all the Presbyterian Churches of the town. Representatives from each of the several Sessions served the bread and wine, the other members of the united Sessions occupying the big

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square pews at either side of the pulpit. All the pastors addressed the people, and Dr. McIlvaine made a moving concluding prayer. The occasion is recorded as one of "solemn interest." In the following year, the Presbyterian churches held a series of union prayer meetings.

Mr. Finney returned to Rochester at this time to hold revivals in some of the churches, and very early in 1856 the question came up of inviting him to speak also in the First. The Session debated the matter at several meetings, and finally, under the leadership of its conservative pastor, decided to present no invitation. This was a step requiring courage, considering the revivalist's earlier success in the First, and a long statement on the subject was read from the pulpit. It placed the church squarely on record as questioning the relative permanency of the results of a revival.

On the recommendation of a young men's committee, which was appointed to investigate the matter, the Session authorized requests for subscriptions to the amount of \$1000, for the redecoration of the Lecture Room and to purchase new seats and carpet for it. Special collections were taken up,

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also, during these years, for a church library. In this year John W. Adams was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School, to succeed Mr. Pomeroy, and on Dec. 29, 1856, a meeting of the church was held "with a view to the furtherance of Christian cordiality and acquaintance among the members." The record says that "free and animated conversation" characterized the gathering, "which was at length (!) suspended by adjournment to Monday evening, Jan. 5th."

But lest this seem too gay a function for the staid members of the old First Church, let it be hastily added that less than a month later the Session appointed a committee "to visit . . . and his wife, to admonish them for having given a dancing party in their house." The committee having objected "that the more effectual way to deal with the evil of gay and worldly amusements was that of informal and private admonition," the Session later asked the pastor to attend to it. This he did, reporting that after conversation with the frivolous brother and sister, he had "found many palliating circumstances, and obtained a promise from them that no such thing should occur in future." He added that he had secured "a similar promise from other church

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members," and recommended "that the Elders of the church should unite in visiting all persons in the church, who had been led into this and other worldly amusements, for private admonition. All united, and each agreed to see some person for this purpose."

Visiting the congregation was no novel experience for the Elders of those days. The city was divided by them into districts, and each district was apportioned to two or more Elders, who made it a point to visit and pray with each family of the congregation living within it. This occurred at designated times, notice having been given from the pulpit that "visitations" were imminent. The Elders assigned to a district made their rounds together.

During this period, also, numerous citations were issued, requiring members to appear before Session for absence from church; and yet the conscientious pastor and Elders prepared a long paper which the pastor read to the "Dear Brethren and Sisters" at Preparatory Lecture, June 5, 1857, "confessing" lack of faithfulness in keeping the church members within the straight and narrow path, and promising increasing vigilance in the future—a pledge which they kept! A number of fast days are noted, also, in the records of this time.

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Another interesting action of 1857 was the employment of "a lay helper," whose task it should be "to attend to the renting of pews and seats, to the collection of rents and other such business." John W. Adams was appointed to the office and was voted a salary of \$800, to be taken out of such part of the church collections as was not otherwise appropriated. The following year there is note that the pastor presented a check for \$355.77 from the treasurer of the Ladies' Benevolent Society of the church, "as a donation to the Session, desiring that it might be applied toward the payment of our church agent and missionary, John W. Adams." This is the first mention of the Ladies' Society, and it is one that to this day would be characteristic. The amount which the Society gave was subsequently increased.

Reference has been made to the church collections for the Orphan Asylum. In November, 1857, the Session appointed a committee to confer with the managers and tell them that if the children did not return to attendance at the church the institution would certainly suffer in the collections. Another illuminating resolution, adopted a few months later, reads:

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Whereas, there is some disagreement in the church choir, which bears unfavorably on our church music;

Resolved, That it be the sense of the Session that each member of the choir should conform to the expressed wishes of a majority as to what seat he or other members of the choir shall occupy.

A joint meeting of the Session and Trustees, called in August, 1858, passed a resolution expressing deep sympathy with the members of the Third Presbyterian, in the loss of their sanctuary by fire, inviting them to join with the First "as long as their destitution continues." In the following year the First Church had to do some building of its own. The city decided to widen Irving Place, and that meant that the little brick chapel—or "Lecture Room,"—which directly abutted on the street, must come down. The city paid \$1000 for the strip, and a new stone Lecture, or Session and Sunday School, Room was then built west of the church, on the Fitzhugh Street side. It was dedicated in 1863, Dr. Pease, the pastor in that year, officiating.

XX

An Important Year

Four important events marked 1860. The opening of this new Lecture Room, the death of Dr. Penney—of which there has been

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already mention—the meeting of the Old School General Assembly in the First Church, and the resignation of Dr. McIlvaine.

The Assembly convened in the First Church on May 17th, Rev. Dr. Scott of California preaching the sermon. As it was a time when moral feelings ran high on the questions underlying the civil war, there was never perhaps an Assembly looked forward to with livelier interest or greater anticipation of forensic struggle. The very seriousness of the crisis resulted in the election of exceptionally able and conservative delegates, and on the thirtieth the Assembly dissolved after a session of undisturbed harmony.

Dr. McIlvaine resigned to become Professor of Belles Lettres at his *alma mater*, Princeton. His farewell sermon was preached on August 26th, and it is easy to believe that the church was very reluctant to let him go. Like the preceding pastors of the First Church he had been a leader in the community. The fact that he was one of the originators of the Pundit Club, though at the time this must have seemed a relatively unimportant incident of his career, will well indicate to the present generation the place he had taken in the community.

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After leaving Rochester, Dr. McIlvaine often returned on visits to the city of his many friends, and his farewell sermon as a pastor was by no means the last which he preached from the First Church pulpit. He remained at Princeton for ten years, was then pastor for seventeen years of the High Street Church in Newark, N. J., and then returned to Princeton as President of the Evelyn Female College—the third of the First Church pastors to become a college president. He died January 4, 1897.

XXI

Dr. Pease and His Death

During the months before a new pastor came to the First Church the pulpit was often supplied by Rev. E. G. Robinson of the Rochester Theological Seminary, and by the Rev. James Nichols. One call was extended and declined. Then the church, perhaps observing that it had been a trainer of college presidents, proceeded to elect one to its pastorate by presenting a call to Rev. Calvin Pease, D.D., who was President of Vermont University at Burlington.

Dr. Pease was born in Canaan, Conn., Aug. 12, 1813. His parents moving to Vermont

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when he was thirteen, he attended the State university and soon after graduation became Professor of Greek and Latin there. After thirteen years as professor, he accepted the Presidency. He had been President of the University for five years when called to the First Church. It has been written of him that he "was remarkable for the just balance and harmonious development of his faculties and the symmetry of his character. He combined social and domestic accomplishments, but it was as a minister of the Gospel he preferred to be judged and estimated. There was a blending of modesty and authority in his presence at the Sacred desk; his voice, usually low like distant music, was occasionally loud, like a rising storm, against Sin which his Soul hated."

The labors of Dr. Pease in the First Church were begun on January 12, 1862, but he was not installed until the afternoon of May 13th. The program of the installation included an introductory prayer and Scripture reading by Mr. Nichols, who was then Moderator of Presbytery; a sermon by Dr. McIlvaine, who had come back to Rochester for the occasion; a charge to the pastor by Dr. McLaren, who had been pastor before Dr. McIlvaine;

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and a charge to the people by the Rev. J. T. Coit, of St. Peter's.

In April of 1862, the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln was read from the pulpit, and made the theme of a sermon. In that year O. M. Benedict was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School, to succeed John W. Adams; and in January of the following year two new Elders were elected, Oliver M. Benedict and Seth H. Terry.

In the summer of 1863, weary and worn in the Master's service, Dr. Pease went for a rest to his family home in Vermont. Strength did not return to him, as his friends had hoped it would, and on September 17th he died.

High tribute was paid to his memory by the clergy of the city. Dr. Shaw presided at a meeting in the Athenæum Building to voice the clergy's and the city's loss. Here resolutions were adopted expressive of deep grief and high appreciation. In Vermont it was said that that State had "lost her ablest man."

The funeral was held in Burlington, where Dr. Pease had died, and three Elders from the Rochester church, Messrs. Benedict, Adams and Buell, together with Judge Gardiner, were among the pall bearers.

In Rochester on the Sunday evening follow-

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ing, Rev. G. L. Boardman of the Second Baptist Church pronounced an eulogy upon him, referring in the course of his remarks to a characteristic that has been always marked in the religious life of the city. He said, "I gladly seize the occasion to say publicly, that the ministers of Rochester glory in unity. Ours is a goodly fellowship. God grant that it may ever continue, as it ever hath been, an unbroken brotherhood in peace and love."

In commemoration services, held at First Church on September 27th, Rev. Dr. Shaw took as his text, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright;" and Professor Cutting, also speaking, said: "You know with what total unreserve he gave himself to your service; with what solicitude he watched every interest of your parish; how he cherished the Sunday School and the cause of missions; how he looked after the sick, the suffering, and the afflicted; how he composed differences, and promoted unity and peace; how he was the joy of your homes, and the light of your public assemblies; how gentle and loving he was."

In a privately printed memorial of Dr. Pease it is said of his brief pastorate in Rochester that it "comprehended the happiest and

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most interesting period of his life. Within these few short months he did his greatest and best work, for which all his previous life, labor and experience were but the preparation, and it their fitting crown and reward." And Dr. W. G. T. Shedd, of Union Theological Seminary, delivering a memorial address at the University of Vermont (Commencement Day, Aug. 2, 1864), said of the relation between Dr. Pease and the First Church: "It is rare in the history of clergymen and congregations that such a tender and affectionate feeling springs up between pastor and people as that which existed in this instance. . . . The tie seemed to have all the strength of a long-continued pastorate."

XXII

Dr. Beadle

From the death of Dr. Pease, in September, 1863, until the following May, the First Church pulpit was again filled acceptably by Dr. Robinson, of the Theological Seminary. At a meeting of the church on October 3d, a call was extended to Rev. Dr. Elias R. Beadle, of New Hartford, Conn., to become pastor. Dr. Beadle accepted the call, was received by Presbytery, and entering upon

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his duties as pastor-elect, served the church from November 6, 1864, to July 19, 1865.

In March, '65, he was obliged to go South by reason of ill health and in April of the same year he presented his resignation, having been advised by his physicians that he would be unable to endure the winters of the North. The church, having no alternative, sadly accepted the resignation. That the disappointment was genuine is indicated in many ways. At the time of Dr. Beadle's arrival the records note, "The church and congregation are very much pleased with our new pastor, as regards his discourses in the pulpit and as regards himself socially. We hope to co-operate with him in every good work." Dr. Beadle's earnestness of purpose is evidenced by the announcement in his first sermon that he had come to preach Christ; that he should aim at no flights of rhetoric, but would labor solely for the salvation of souls. There are frequent references also to later visits which he made to the church, where he was always cordially welcomed. In 1866 he came to spend his summer vacation in Rochester. It is said of him at that time, "His face is gladly welcomed wherever he goes."

It was during Dr. Beadle's brief presence

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that the second Sunday service was changed from afternoon to evening; and the few months of his incumbency covered a period in which history was made. March 19, 1865, is noted as "the Sunday of the flood. The church being inaccessible, surrounded on all sides by water, no services were held either in church or chapel." Sunday, April 16th, has the record: "A feeling of general gloom pervades the city on account of the demise of President Lincoln." Within the church circle itself a notable death of that year was that of Moses Chapin, for forty years an Elder.

XXIII

Mr. Wines

After the resignation of Dr. Beadle, the pulpit was supplied for several months by, for the most part, members of the faculties of Auburn Theological Seminary and of the University of Rochester. It was the period of the war and some great sermons were preached. It is remembered that on one occasion, when Dr. Robinson was preaching on patriotism, the congregation of the conservative old church rose in their places and cheered him!

On Dec. 18, 1865, the church gave a call

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to Rev. Casper Maurice Wines, a brilliant young minister, born in Philadelphia, who, though but lately graduated from Princeton Seminary, had had pastoral service in Jersey City and Newburgh. He was installed on the March 22d following. The sermon was preached by his father, Rev. E. C. Wines, D.D., of New York, whose name is widely known in connection with prison reform. Dr. Wines, taking as his text the words (John XIII, 20), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me," may well have delivered, as it is said he did, an impressive discourse.

Very early in the ministry of Mr. Wines—in fact, some days before his formal installation, for the date is May 5, 1866—the Session "Resolved, that the first Wednesday night of each month be set apart for monthly concert of prayer for missions." So began a custom which, with occasional temporary changes and lapses, has been since observed for almost fifty years. On May 20th there was entered in the Sunday School records a note which reads, in reference apparently to the regular Monday evening meeting, rather than to the foregoing:

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Monthly concert of prayer. Very slim attendance on account of weather. Very poor speeches. Very stupid meeting.

But Mr. Wines took hold not only with great earnestness, but with the energy of youth. He preached very regularly and showed a particular interest in the Sunday School. One of the first and most important innovations due to him—though it had first to be long and conscientiously discussed by the Session—was the substitution of “Songs of the Sanctuary” for the sad “Psalms and Hymns” that had been sung for so many years in the church.

On October 14, 1866, the trustees offered the use of the church to the congregation of St. Luke’s, as had been so cordially done on other occasions. This time repairs were in progress at St. Luke’s. The offer was again accepted, and for a considerable period the Episcopal service was read in the First Church on Sunday afternoons, the Presbyterians worshipping in the evenings.

These evening meetings were not as well attended as Mr. Wines thought they should be. It is recorded that on July 21, 1867, he was preaching on this subject, reading an exhortation promulgated by General Assem-

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bly for a better observance of the Sabbath, when there broke such an uproarious thunderstorm that "the sound of the organ could scarcely be distinguished in the front pews, and the minister's voice was silenced." A few months later, on Monday afternoon, January 25, 1868, another excitement occurred. This was during a Session meeting in the adjacent Lecture Room. "A loud report was heard, proceeding from the church. Upon investigation, it was found that a large section of the ceiling and joists supporting it, in the audience chamber of the church, had fallen, crushing many seats and doing great damage." On the preceding evening, Dr. Hall of the Third Church had been preaching in the auditorium, and it became an oft-quoted witticism of the day to say that the Third Church pastor "had brought down the house."

In a physical way, these untoward occurrences seem to typify various other incidents which, without lessening the personal regard between pastor and people, soon convinced the former that he ought to resign, and persuaded the latter to accept the resignation. The letter of resignation, which is dated June 24, 1868, only two years after his installation, is in the Session files and is a manly, straight-

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forward document, Mr. Wines taking to himself and ascribing to his youth the blame for any blunders he may have committed. Presbytery dissolved the relationship July 14, 1868, and in noting his departure the record relates that Mr. Wines "as a talented and social gentleman has left behind him a host of admiring friends who will ever be glad to see him back." He went from Rochester to a church in Brookline, Mass., and later, turning Episcopalian, had a church in Cleveland.

XXIV

Without Pastor and Church

After Mr. Wines resigned, the pulpit remained vacant for upwards of two years. It is no slight evidence of the loyalty and faithfulness of the congregation that, with considerable periods of pulpit vacancy—three different pastors staying only a few months each in the ten years from 1860 to 1870—and with several other discouragements, they held together so well. This doubtless was due in part to the excellence of the pulpit supplies.

From July 14, 1868, until December, 1870, these included Rev. Charles Parker and the Rev. Jonathan B. Condit, D.D., of Auburn Theological Seminary—chiefly the latter,

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“whose ministrations,” it is noted, “were greatly to the edifying of the church.” Significant notes in the Record book read, “Dr. Condit preached an excellent sermon to-day. Everybody likes him.” “Prayer meeting was as usual during the week, being crowded at nine every morning.”

Other striking evidences of faithfulness and loyalty were offered in these days in the Sunday School. William B. Burke, made Secretary in 1862, served with great devotion for ten years. George C. Buell, elected Superintendent in 1868, to succeed O. M. Benedict, held the position for thirteen years; and steadily during that long period made it his practice to devote his Saturday evenings to the preparation of the lesson. Mrs. Arink started on June 14, 1868, her Women's Bible Class, of which she was to be the head until her death, thirty-six years later, in 1904. Under the dominance of her strong personality this became one of the most important features of the church life.

Notwithstanding a loyalty of which such statistics give only the crudest outline, and putting that loyalty to the test, the church had to contend at this time, it has been said, with various discouragements besides the lack

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of a regular pastor. As if the falling of the church ceiling in 1868 had not been bad enough, a fire later in the same year destroyed the carefully kept records of the Trustees, these being then at the banking house of the Secretary, George E. Jennings. Furthermore, an examination of the church edifice, following the accident of January, had resulted in the discovery that the building was absolutely unsafe.

Services were immediately transferred to the Lecture Room, and on March 12th a meeting was held, at which the ladies provided refreshments, for the renting of pews in the Lecture Room and the consideration of the course of action to be followed. A committee was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Hayden, Benedict, Morgan, Burke and Munger, "to procure and submit to the Society for adoption, plans and estimates for a new church edifice, and to execute such plans as shall be adopted." It was further resolved "that an effort be made at once to secure by subscription, as a free donation for that purpose, the sum of \$30,000, and that such subscriptions be obligatory when the sum of \$25,000 is subscribed; and that Messrs. G. C. Buell, Jennings, Ross Lewin, Munger, Walbridge,

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Brown, Hayden, H. Gould, C. B. Hill and C. F. Pond be appointed a Finance Committee to procure said subscriptions and to supervise the expenditure of the same.”

At a Sunday service a few days later, the following notice was read from the pulpit: “It is well known by this Church and Society that a most important crisis has arrived in its history. The falling of the ceiling of the church edifice necessitates a very thorough renovation and repair, or the erection of a new edifice; what shall be done, is a question for the Society to answer, and one we cannot avoid if we would. Therefore, the Church and Society are requested to meet in this room Friday evening (March 27) to act upon this matter. The Trustees will then be prepared to report upon the present condition of the old edifice, and what can and cannot be done with that.”

The church continued to worship in the Lecture Room, and while at service there, on the evening of Sunday, May 7, 1869, the church building caught fire—so settling, once for all, the question of possible repairs. Passersby discovered a bright light in a window of the second story of the tower. They thrust open the door of the Lecture Room,

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where Dr. Condit was preaching, and shouted, "You are on fire!" Dr. Condit, raising his hand, pronounced the benediction, and the congregation passed quietly out, taking their Bibles and hymn books with them. Meanwhile, others had sounded a public alarm on the City Hall bell, and the firemen quickly arrived. A line of hose was laid and water drawn from the race was poured into the reservoir in front of the Court House, thence to be drawn again and thrown upon the fire in three streams. The flames soon reached the belfry and then mounted to the steeple, which stood like a pillar of fire. It was not long, however, before only the frame work of the spire remained and that finally fell, crashing on the roof of the Chapel. Tradition says the gilt star and iron weather vane went completely through the roof, carrying with them a large amount of the plastered ceiling.

The fire occurred at a time when incendiarism was very prevalent and the tower in which the fire first appeared was easy of access when the Chapel was open. As the loss was fortunately covered by insurance, the fire only hastened the proposed demolition of the old church building. Nevertheless, deprived now of church as well as pastor, it was a discouraging

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period for the congregation. This is well indicated by the following note, recorded under date of September 5, 1869,—so different from most First Church records: “ Dr. Condit met with a welcome from the small body of persons who will constitute the congregation of this church. He will preach for us all winter. With no place but our Lecture Room to meet in, and even that in a dilapidated condition, never having been repaired since the fire; with no pastor, or any settled plans for a new edifice, our membership and congregation are fast diminishing.”

XXV

Planning for a New Building

Though these were the darkest days in First Church history, they were bravely met. A considerable portion of the congregation favored the sale of the property—seeing in the city a probable buyer—and then the purchase of a site in a quieter neighborhood. Others, to whom the central location had grown dear, opposed a sale, desiring to rebuild on the old site. On December 19, 1869, there was a meeting of the Society, at which, after protracted discussion and argument, it was voted that the property should be sold

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to the city for not less than \$25,000, and to this end the Trustees were empowered to take the necessary steps. But a Court decision, handed down in the following April, required the Trustees before giving deed for the existing property to select a new site, which the Church should by vote approve. In June a meeting of the Church and Society was held to take action on that point. Every person entitled to a vote was present and was given opportunity to express his choice. Finally it was agreed by all that a lot at the corner of Plymouth Avenue and Spring Street, 85 feet on Plymouth Avenue and 100 feet on Spring Street, should be purchased.

Judge E. Darwin Smith, of the Supreme Court, then gave permission for the sale of the old lot and the Common Council adopted a resolution for its purchase at \$25,000. The deed was passed on June 30, 1870. The very next day deeds from J. Mogridge and wife, Whiting Wadsworth and wife, and Sarah S. Lewis for the aggregate amount of \$21,600 to the First Presbyterian Society, were passed, conveying the site of the present church. All these deeds were drawn by Oscar Craig.

A location having been thus at last secured, plans for the new building were made by A.

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J. Warner & Company. These provided for an auditorium 62 by 89 feet and a chapel 68 by 31 feet. The architecture was Gothic, and the proposed building material Albion red sandstone with white Medina stone trimmings. The interior woodwork was to be of black walnut and in the windows there was to be the best quality of stained glass. It was planned that the church should have a tower which, with a spire, would reach 160 feet in height.

The structure actually erected sufficiently indicates the extent to which these plans were subsequently modified, to the greater beauty of the building.* The original contract, exclusive of spire, windows and furnishings, and of repairs to a house which, standing at the south side of the lot, was to be used as a parsonage, was \$60,000. The stone spire cost an additional \$10,000; organ, pews, furniture and carpets, \$15,000; and the parsonage repairs, \$3000, making the total cost, including the lot, \$110,000. To meet this expenditure, there was, as early as April 1, 1871, \$7000, "over all encumbrances"; subscriptions to the amount of \$42,000; and a promise by the ladies to raise \$1000 for

* Vd. the Frontispiece.

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carpets, etc. During the next year there were additions to the building fund to the amount of nearly \$9000, and in the year of the building's dedication there were general subscriptions of about \$28,000, an organ fund of \$1000, interest accumulations of \$2000, and the gift of a bell, valued at \$2000, from George S. Riley—so that at the dedication, Mr. Robertson, who was then pastor, was able to announce: "We can say that the church is dedicated to the Lord to-night virtually free from debt."

XXVI

The Coming of Mr. Robertson

Meanwhile, the attention of the church had not been wholly focused upon material matters. Exceeding care was given to the selection of a new pastor, the unanimous choice falling at last upon Rev. James L. Robertson, who, though still a young man, had had, as one of the newspapers said, "ten years of rich and valuable experience," and was then pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati. Mr. Robertson had received his theological education in Allegheny, Pa., and had had a pastorate in Geneva, N. Y., before going to Cincinnati. In view of the sad

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experience of the church with Drs. Pease and Beadle, it is interesting to note that the new pastor-elect was described as of "vigorous, robust health." It is significant of the changing times that the salary now proffered was \$3000, and in addition there was to be the use of the house. Whatever the vicissitudes of the church, it was not poor.

At a meeting of the Society held October 2, 1870, formal announcement was made of Mr. Robertson's acceptance of the call. He began his duties with the church on November 13th, and on the evening of December 7, 1870, he was installed. The exercises were necessarily held in the Chapel, or Lecture Room, which was filled, the congregation including not only First Church members, but many from other churches. The sermon, which is described as "able, eloquent, and of great power," was preached by Rev. Walter Clark, D.D., of Buffalo, who took a "good conscience" as his subject. The installation prayer was made by Rev. Levi Parsons of Mt. Morris; Rev. J. R. Page of Avon propounded the constitutional questions and declared the pastoral relations consummated; and Rev. Dr. Shaw gave the charge to the pastor, Rev. Mr. Campbell of Central Church

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delivered the charge to the people, and Dr. Cromwell of St. Peter's made the concluding prayer.

XXVII

Cornerstone Laying and Dedication of New Church

Work was now proceeding on the new church. The Common Council of the city was asked to allow the removal of the cornerstone of the old building, so that its contents might be added to the fresh material which should go into the new cornerstone, and for the collection of the latter material a committee was appointed. The cornerstone of the old church was subsequently laid in the center of the new spire, only a few feet from the top. This is stated by Mr. Robertson in his address at the dedication.

The ceremony of laying the new cornerstone took place at 3 P.M., May 17, 1871, "beneath a large canvas erected for the occasion." The program was as follows: Rev. H. M. Morey of Westminster Church read the Scripture and offered prayer; the choir sang, "Glorious things of thee are spoken"; Dr. Campbell of Central Church followed, with remarks; and then Dr. McLaren, the pastor

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of 1845-47, who had come over from Geneva, made a long address. Next there were brief remarks by A. W. Riley, the only person present who had witnessed the laying of the cornerstone of the old church. The box was then placed within the stone. Upon its cover was the inscription:

ISAIAH LXI, 4

FIRST CHURCH SOCIETY DOCUMENTS FOR
FUTURE GENERATIONS

The pastor, on behalf of the Society, presented to William H. Gorsline, the contractor, a "magnificent silver trowel," engraved with his name and the occasion. The trowel was bought at the jewelry store of John T. Fox.

Unfortunately, many of the papers in the old cornerstone had been found so far destroyed by moisture and decay as to be illegible. The following, however, are some of the numerous articles which went into the new stone on the Plymouth Avenue side of the tower:

Twenty-five cent piece of 1805.

Penny of 1811.

Printed matter from the old cornerstone.

Piece of the old pulpit.

Piece of the old bell.

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Sunday School Record book containing:

Views of the old Church and old Lecture Room.

Views of the new Church and new Lecture Room.

List of all officers and teachers, 1871.

Each class, its name, teacher, etc.

Full record of Infant Department.

Autographs of officers and teachers.

Autographs of pastors and their wives.

Autographs of Sunday School Superintendents.

Notes of the first and last meetings in the old Lecture Room. Description of the fall of the ceiling, the decision to buy the present lot, and the burning of the tower.

Subscribers and amounts given for building of the new Church.

Newspapers giving account of the burning of the old Church.

Photographs of individuals.

History of the Church and Society from 1813 to 1871.

List of pastors and members of the Church—City Directory, 1870.

Directory of Powers Commercial Building.

Report of Managers of House of Refuge.

Report of Rochester Athenæum.

Alumni Proceedings of University of Rochester, and Seminary, 1867.

Rules and Regulations, Home for Idle and Truant Children.

Presbyterian Report of Home Missions.

Home Missionary Magazine for 1871.

Christian Almanac, 1863, '65, '69, '70.

Temperance Almanac, 1870.

“The Well at Bethlehem’s Gate.” Poem, Rev. J. A. Ely before Rochester Alumni.

“Half Century of Rochester Presbytery.”

Address before Monroe County Teachers’ Association

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on work of past two years, Fiftieth Annual Report of New York Sunday School Teachers' Association.

Third National Sunday School Convention of U. S. A. Report, Rochester Female Charitable Society.

"Hospital Review" and "Industrial School Advocate."

Various Church and Sunday School magazines and papers.

Obituaries of Professor Dewey, Dr. Levi Ward, Mrs. Maria W. Smith, Jacob Gould, Moses Chapin, Calvin Pease, W. C. Bloss.

Manuals of Brick, Central and Plymouth Churches.

Churches in New York City.

St. Luke's Church History.

Collection of views of great flood.

Dr. Campbell of Central Church said, in his remarks at the laying of the cornerstone, that the old First was not merely the "mother" of a half dozen Presbyterian churches, but was the "grandmother" of all the others in the city. Referring then to the various churches, he ingeniously elaborated the idea in this way: "The eldest is here to-day to rejoice with her mother. The second daughter will be present—she is yet hale and hearty and will be here from Temple Street. Another sister is here who occupies a *Central* position; another sister, with her book upon her arm, and her robe, is here to-day to give you a right-hand greeting. There is a granddaughter from Jefferson Street; another from

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Grand Street, one from Hudson Street, and one from Allen, and the one from St. Paul Street, who faces the Jews and is ready to defend those who trust in the God of their fathers.”

It may be well also to quote the following verses, written by Mrs. S. J. Nichols on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone. It is believed that they were read by Mr. Robertson, but whether they were or not they are interesting for their own merit, for the affection so widely felt for the gentle lady who wrote them, and for their illustration of the spirit with which members of the church regarded this occasion :

Thou Stone; by prophet long foretold,
Cut, without hands, from mountain side—
Thou precious Stone; firm laid of old,
Foundation sure, elect and tried.

Thou Chief, Thou Cornerstone; the tower
Of Zion's strength; her mighty Rock;
Thou Living Stone; whose vital power
Thy life doth pour, through each new block;

On Thee we build; on Thee, alone,
A living church; nor hosts of hell,
Nor power of man, our Cornerstone
To shake or crush, shall e'er prevail.

Be Thou our Master Builder, too!
With skillful hand and loving eye
Choose Thou the stones; in order due
Their courses fair, lay strong and high.

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With chisel, square, and hammer stroke
Perfect each stone; assign its place,
Nor cease, till topmost sound evoke
The hallowed shout of Grace, free Grace!

The dedication of the new church took place on the evening of June 23, 1872, Dr. McIlvaine returning to preach the sermon and Mr. Robertson making the actual dedication. Long before the hour appointed for the exercises, the church was crowded, so that many had to turn away. The music was rendered by a double quartette, the members of which had been selected from the various choirs of the city.

The program consisted of an invocation by Rev. D. K. Bartlett; the hymn, "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne"; Scripture reading by Rev. James B. Shaw, D.D.; the hymn, "Arise, Oh King of Grace, Arise"; sermon by Dr. McIlvaine; the hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"; remarks and dedicatory prayer by Mr. Robertson, and then the following hymn:

O, Thou whose own vast temple stands,
Built over earth and sea,
Accept the walls, that human hands
Have raised to worship Thee.

Lord, from Thine inmost glory send,
Within these courts to bide,
The peace that dwelleth without end,
Serenely by Thy side.

.

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May faith grow firm and love grow warm,
And pure devotion rise,
While 'round these hallowed walls, the storm
Of earth-born passion dies.

Dr. McIlvaine pronounced the benediction.

In his dedicatory address, Mr. Robertson expressed the special gratitude of the church to the chairman of the building committee, C. J. Hayden. For his sermon, Dr. McIlvaine took as his text the words (I Peter, II, 5), "Ye, also, as living stones, are building up a spiritual house." Urging that "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former," he exclaimed:

How full, dear brethren, is the past history of this church, of solemn and tender memories. The first to raise the standard of the cross in this then wilderness, she has continued to hold up this glorious banner before the incoming population until the present hour. And what shall be said of the men who rallied around the flag in moulding the character, the institutions, the destinies, of this beautiful city? Such men as Oliver Gibbs, Daniel West, Elisha and Hervey Ely, Asa Ainsworth, Levi A. Ward, Jacob Gould, Everard Peck, M. Green, Frederick Starr, Moses Chapin, and a host of others, our patriarchs and our peers.

He spoke of the number of churches which had sprung from the First, and of the influence for good which she had exerted upon the surrounding country and upon the world

Through her members and the twenty-five or thirty ministers and missionaries which have been raised up and

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gone forth from her bosom. By such tokens of God's grace and mercy, He has made the history of this church a glorious one. Such is the glory of the former house. Why do I mention these things? Is it to awaken your pride? God forbid! . . . I mention these things not to awaken your pride, but for your spiritual encouragement and for the strengthening of your faith, that God, who has done so much for you in the past, will not forsake the work of his own hand, but will do, if you are faithful to His cause, still greater things for you in the future."

With great earnestness, then, he urged loyalty, faithful attendance at all the services, and toleration.

It is only proper to add that accompanying the happiness and pride which was felt in the beauty of the new church, there was in many hearts a pang of regret at the final severance from the old. "Never," wrote Elder Terry, "will that spot be forgotten by the many who there made for the first time public profession of their faith in Jesus; there received their first Communion; there brought their children to the baptismal font. . . . The 'Old First' has a history of rare interest. Sermons of great power have been preached, and scenes of surpassing importance have been witnessed, within its walls."

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XXVIII

The Pastorate of Mr. Robertson

For all the distractions of the new building, the inner life of the church proceeded vigorously. A month after the installation of Mr. Robertson—on January 8, 1871—these four Elders were ordained: William Burke, Seth H. Terry, Charles J. Hayden, and Oscar Craig. In the same month, E. W. Armstrong, who had served for over twenty years, presented his resignation, giving as his principal reason age and infirmity.

His letter, which is very long, is extremely interesting because of its chronicling of a changing spirit in the church, of the passing of the old straitness, and the dawning of what—without recording judgment on its relative quality from the religious standpoint—might be called the modern spirit. He notes the rising of “a new generation,” with “new ideas, new opinions and new usages.” In illustration, he cites the recent election of Elders, “when the principle of rotation in office for a term of years—in imitation of our political elections—was introduced and adopted by a vote of the church members present, in opposition to the remonstrances, the entreaties and the protestations of the older

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members of the Session.” Moreover, he observes, there was “unseemly and inexcusable levity” by “some of the advocates of the innovation”—an innovation “without warrant from the Scriptures.” It is the strong letter of a God-fearing gentleman of the old school, who sees evil days for church and state in the growing frivolity and carelessness of the community life. As such it has the significance of marking clearly the dividing line between the old and the modern period in the history of the church.

Yet it must not be supposed that the transition was abrupt. A Session minute of 1871, expressing the judgment that Elders may not “legislate against specific things not forbidden in the Scriptures,” records also the unanimous opinion that their duty was, clearly, to warn the members of the church against “love of the world”; and for several years thereafter remissness in attending services on the part of members of the church is noted in the records as individually reprovèd.

On the same day that the newly elected Elders were ordained, two Deacons were conducted into office—James F. Baker and John T. Fox. In that month also the pastor was authorized by the Session to make further modifications in the phraseology of the stern

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Covenant which intending members were expected to adopt; and on Dec. 6, 1871, the first Wednesday evening meeting was held in the new chapel. A few months later, an article in "The Union and Advertiser," describing the "new vigor" which the church was showing, attributed it to "the sincerity and unaffectedness" of Mr. Robertson's preaching, saying that "his Christian graces of character and earnestness of purpose have had the best influence on the congregation. Its membership has increased in the face of all the discomforts incident to the changes which the burning of the old church made necessary—a strong proof of the pastor's successful ministry."

There are other evidences, however, of this progress, than newspaper report. The Clerk of the Session notes that the new pastor, in his first four months, "visited all the resident members of the church, and many of them, especially in cases of sickness or other afflictions, repeatedly," that, in addition, he had secured "thorough and complete visitation by the Elders"; and that "the monthly concert of prayer for missions," suspended for about two years, had been "revived with even more than former interest."

A notable action of 1873 was the change

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of the time of Preparatory Lecture, from the afternoon to the evening of the Friday preceding Communion; and it was during Mr. Robertson's pastorate that there was inaugurated the custom, still observed, of holding a New Year Prayer Meeting on January 1st.

In the church year of 1874-5, Emmanuel Mission was started, the First Church raising in that year \$4095 for the Mission building, and thereafter assuming for many years substantial payments for maintenance and for interest on the mortgage, though so little time had passed since its own costly structure had been erected. In 1875 also there was organized the Woman's Missionary Society, which on March 30th began a series of monthly meetings that have suffered no interruption in the ensuing forty years. The first officers were Mrs. S. J. Nichols, President; Mrs. W. H. Perkins, Vice-President; and Miss Louise J. Alling, Secretary and Treasurer. In the following year Messrs. George Breck, James F. Baker and A. G. Bassett were ordained Elders. Oscar Craig resigned in December of 1875.

The genuineness of the advance which the church was making under Mr. Robertson, in regaining strength lost during its troubles of 1860-70, was shortly to be tested. Quite

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suddenly, on May 31, 1877, Mr. Robertson presented his resignation. The letter is only half a dozen lines in length and tells nothing of the reasons. But that they seemed adequate to pastor and people is indicated by the pressing and acceptance of the resignation. In accepting it, however, the church adopted by a rising vote a series of affectionate resolutions. "We cannot express," these said, "our love for him or our gratitude for his ministry and work among us." It was noted that there had been a "net increase of 114 in the Communicants of the church, though the total resident membership is only about four hundred"; that as a preacher Mr. Robertson had "presented the truth with great tenderness and faithfulness, and with power over the heart and conscience"; and that "as a pastor he has sympathized with us in affliction, guided us in perplexity and confirmed and strengthened us in trial."

It is proper to add that coupled with the sorrow occasioned by the departure of the pastor, there was very keen regret for the leaving of Mrs. Robertson. She had been an "ideal pastor's wife. Every one loved her and confided in her; while the love which she returned to the people of her husband's church expressed itself in all manner of helpful-

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ness and ever ready sympathy and understanding.”

On June 11th, Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relation, unanimously adopting resolutions expressing warm appreciation and esteem. After leaving Rochester, Mr. Robertson went to Cortland, N. Y. Still faithfully engaged in the Master's business, he is now pastor of a church at Bronxville, N. Y.

XXIX

Dr. Robinson as Pastor

Six months after Mr. Robertson left, the church elected as pastor Rev. Lawrence M. Colfert of Philadelphia. The call was declined. On February 5, 1878, a committee was again appointed to select a candidate, and a month later announced its choice as Rev. Charles E. Robinson, D.D., of Troy, N. Y. Dr. Robinson was unanimously elected.

The pastor-elect was then forty-three years old. He was a graduate of Hamilton College and of Auburn Theological Seminary. He had been pastor of the Second Street Presbyterian Church in Troy for eleven years, and previous to that had had a three-years' pastorate in Oneida. At the time of his coming to Rochester, a newspaper said of him, "He is of noble presence and graceful carriage,

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exhibiting in his speech the refinement of elegant culture. . . . In the simplest service he possesses a persuasive eloquence. . . . He has large, beaming, tender eyes, and there is about him a tenderness that takes hold of the human nature in you and pleads with you."

Dr. Robinson preached his initial sermon in the church on the morning of March 16th, before a congregation "which filled it to overflowing." At the close of this service he announced his acceptance of the call.

Beginning his duties on April 7, 1878, his installation took place on May 14th. The program included the anthem, "Oh, be joyful in the Lord"; prayer and Scripture reading; the hymn, "Oh, Lord, our God"; sermon by Rev. Dr. Herrick Johnson, of Auburn Theological Seminary; the anthem, "Sweet is Thy Mercy"; constitutional questions by Rev. Charles Durfee, Moderator of Presbytery; installing prayer by Rev. Corliss B. Gardner; anthem, "How Lovely are the Messengers"; charge to the pastor by Rev. Herman C. Riggs; charge to the people by Rev. George Patton; and the hymn, "I love Thy Kingdom, Lord." A Session record notes that "the Chapel was filled with an attentive audience. . . . Rev. Dr. Herrick Johnson's discourse was one of great power

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and eloquence; and the charges to pastor and people were solemn and forcible. The heartiest and happiest congratulations were extended to the newly installed pastor after the congregation was dismissed."

The eight and a half years of Dr. Robinson's pastorate carried still further forward the rehabilitation so well commenced under his predecessor. The church grew in numbers, financial strength, and spiritual grace. Again there was a net gain of approximately a hundred members. A debt of \$12,700 was paid off in the church year of 1879-80, leaving the valuable new property entirely clear of encumbrance. Contributions for benevolent purposes, which had fallen from the \$8000 reached under Dr. McIlvaine to an approximate of \$3000 in 1879-80, exceeded \$5000 in the last year of Dr. Robinson's pastorate. The total enrollment of the Sunday School, including Emmanuel Mission, rose from 425 in 1878 to upwards of 900 in 1885.

As to the spiritual condition of the church, Dr. Robinson inaugurated the custom of following the week of prayer by four weeks of special services, during which he preached almost every day or evening. This was done for a number of years, and in the Session records of 1881 there is a note on "the large

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number of young men that are being drawn to the Church and Sunday School." In the winter of 1886 the First, Brick, and Central churches united in special daily revival services under the leadership of Rev. Edgar E. Davidson. Many came into the church as a result of these meetings and of the Communicants' class conducted by the pastor. In fact, at the April Communion of that year the accessions by profession numbered forty-six.

Under the rule of rotation in the Eldership, four new Elders were ordained in January of 1879—George C. Buell, Thomas Chester, Menzo Van Voorhis, and Charles H. Webb; two in January of 1882—Newell A. Stone and David M. Hough; one in February of 1884—Henry Goold; and one—John M. Pardee—in January of 1885. In 1880, D. M. Hough succeeded George C. Buell as Superintendent of the Sunday School and he, after five years' service, was succeeded by John M. Pardee. Mr. Pardee, acting 1885–1886, was followed by Charles P. Ford. In 1882, George W. Carpenter, elected Treasurer of the Sunday School, began a term of service which was to continue uninterruptedly for thirty-two years.* At or about the same time James Johnston, made

* The conclusion of it in 1914 was fittingly marked by the presentation of a silver loving cup.

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Treasurer of the church, took up duties which he still performs.

There were many volunteer workers in Emmanuel Mission during these years; and to supplement their efforts, the Session, in February, 1886, employed Rev. T. M. Hodgman "to labor in the Mission Sunday School field for three months." So satisfactory were the results of Mr. Hodgman's efforts that in September he was appointed to take charge of the Sunday evening services at the Mission. On May 3, 1887, Emmanuel was organized into a church,—the youngest child of the Mother First. Its church life began with a Communicant roll of sixty-eight, of whom ten went from the First.

The Girls' Mission Band was started in the First Church in 1885, through the efforts of the pastor's wife. She, as in the case of Mrs. Robertson, was a most efficient and loved co-worker with her husband. The first meetings of the Band were held at her house, and she was its first president, giving to it the start which has kept it through thirty years an efficient organization—with its annual distribution of Christmas baskets still one of the most successful community activities of the church. The first Secretary and Treasurer was Miss Julia O. Robinson. Other organ-

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izations of Dr. Robinson's pastorate included a Young People's Christian Union and a Mite Society.

An interesting event of this period was the part of the old First Church in the semi-centennial celebration of the city of Rochester in June of 1884. On June 8th memorial services were held both morning and evening. The pulpit was decorated with palms and tropical plants and in the space in front of it was arranged a mass of white flowers with the figures "50" in yellow roses. As already stated, the morning sermon by Rev. Tryon Edwards was the same that he delivered at his installation, fifty years before. In the evening, the pulpit was occupied by Rev. F. De W. Ward, D.D., of Geneseo, who in 1834 had been ordained in the First Church as a missionary to India. His text was from Psalms XVII, 15, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness." Having closed his sermon, Dr. Ward drew from his pocket an old and yellow manuscript, which, he said, was the same sermon in substance as that which he had just delivered. On its margin was written, "Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, June 8, 1834." He then paid tribute to the pastors, Elders, and early members of the church.

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For many months Dr. Robinson's health had been so poor that for weeks at a time he had had to abstain from active work. It was therefore with no shock, though with great sorrow, that at a church meeting on November 16, 1886, the people received from him a letter in which he asked that, on account of his health, they join with him in requesting Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation.

After many expressions of regret, a committee was appointed to urge his reconsideration of the action, and to offer him a six months' leave of absence. To this committee Dr. Robinson replied that his resignation must be considered final. He felt assured, he told them—"though I love Rochester, and though this church is dear to me"—that there was little probability of the prompt regaining of his health. To remain would mean, then, doing only a part of his work, and the letting go of responsibilities. This, considering the needs of the church, was an action he could not contemplate. He closed his reply by saying: "Having put eight and a half years of my heart life into this church in the joyful labors and privileges of the Gospel ministry, I shall not forget the tie that has bound us together, and I can never cease to remember you with affection."

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The Session and Trustees, reporting to the church "the failure of all efforts" to change the pastor's decision, passed resolutions in which they said: "Not alone has he labored faithfully and ably in the house of God; he has come intimately into contact with the individual members of our organization. To young and old he has been trusted guide and loving friend. Strong in encouragement, gentle in reproof, abounding in sympathy and love, he has softened our griefs and intensified our joys. . . . Our hopes and prayers go with him."

As already indicated, Mrs. Robinson also held a very warm place in the hearts of the congregation. She was prominent in every activity of the church. There was a peculiar charm in her strong personality, and both the pastor and his wife wonderfully drew to them the young people of the church, who were ever sure of their sympathy and understanding.

Other convincing testimony to the affection which was felt for Dr. Robinson—if further testimony is needed—was offered in the circumstance that quietly, without notation in the formal records of the church, there was made up for him a purse of \$2000, which was presented at the time of his departure.

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After leaving Rochester, a considerable period of rest so restored Dr. Robinson's health that he was able to accept a pastorate in Scranton, Pa. He is now a resident of Pelham Manor, New York.

XXX

Dr. Millard

After the departure of Dr. Robinson, the pulpit was very acceptably supplied by Professor Oren Root, of Hamilton College. The sermons of Professor Root established so high a standard of thought that the committee appointed to secure a new pastor could not fail to place value on vigor of intellect. Their choice fell upon the Rev. Dr. Nelson Millard, who then was pastor of a church at Norwich, Conn. Dr. Millard was born in Delhi, N. Y. in 1834; was a graduate of Union College, and had received his theological education at Princeton and Union Theological Seminaries. He had then spent a year and a half in Europe. Before going to Norwich, he had had pastorates at Montclair, N. J., and Peekskill and Syracuse, N. Y. The honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity had been given to him in 1874 by Union College.

Dr. Millard accepted the unanimous call which the church extended to him at a meeting

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held on June 8, 1887; and on the 18th of the following September he began his labors. His formal installation did not take place, however, until April 24, 1888, Dr. Millard desiring first to feel assured that his breadth of view was not incompatible with the opinions of the church. The program was as follows:

Voluntary, organ.
Invocation, Rev. C. P. Coit.
Scripture Lesson, Rev. W. R. Taylor, D.D.
Hymn, Rev. J. S. Root.
Prayer, Rev. Edward Bristol.
Anthem, Choir.
Sermon, Rev. S. S. Mitchell, D.D.
Constitutional Questions, Rev. T. D. Hunt, Moderator.
Installing prayer, Rev. George Patton, D.D.
Charge to pastor, Rev. J. B. Shaw, D.D.
Charge to people, Rev. Charles E. Robinson, D.D.
Hymn, Rev. J. E. Kittridge, D.D.
Benediction, Rev. Nelson Millard, D.D.

The coming of the new pastor was followed, as so often, by considerable changes in personnel among church officials. Thomas Chester was elected Sunday School Superintendent, serving from 1888 to 1890, when Charles Chichester succeeded him. On February 3, 1889, four Elders were ordained—Arthur S.

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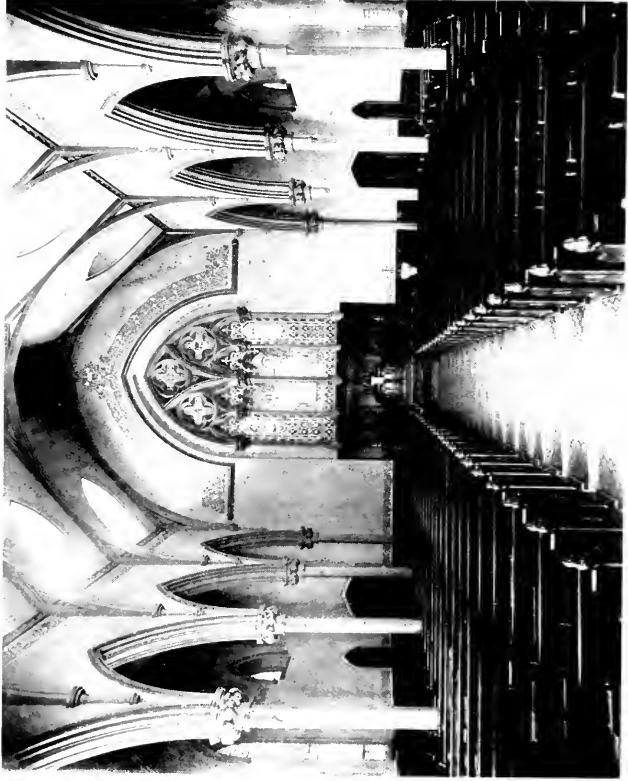
Hamilton, Prof. Geo. D. Olds, Charles F. Pond and Thomas Chester—the latter re-elected. With the beginning of the new church year, April 1, 1888, the envelope system was adopted for collections for benevolences, and coincidentally with the change George W. Carpenter was made financial secretary—a position which he has since held continuously. The following year the envelope system was adopted also for the current expenses of the church, and, as stated, James Johnston, Treasurer then, is Treasurer still. On Easter Sunday, in April, of 1889, there was begun yet another term of service whose length is still unbroken, William Rowe commencing then his work as sexton. The fidelity of the latter is sufficiently attested by the fact that in the twenty-six subsequent years, he has missed only two services—when, for one Sunday, he was excused to attend the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Thus it may be noted that in all departments the loyalty of service which the First Church has ever been able to command, did not pass with the older generation.

While scholarly sermons were the dominant characteristic of the pastorate of Dr. Millard, and while it is proper for the historian to pass with rapidity over these well-remembered later years, yet there stand out certain events

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which demand chronicle, that the History of a Hundred Years may be complete.

Within two years after the installation of Dr. Millard—i.e., in 1890—the First Church had not only paid off an accumulated floating indebtedness, but had canceled the mortgage on the property of Emmanuel Church, raising a fund of \$2000 for Emmanuel's debts. At the same time there were substantial increases in the contributions for benevolent purposes, and the Session notes record "a new awakening" in the spiritual life of the church. In 1891-2 the second Sunday service was changed from evening to late afternoon; and in the summer of 1892, under the direction of the women of the church, the walls of the auditorium and chapel were redecorated, the beautiful mosaic by Maitland Armstrong, which is now in place behind the pulpit, was installed, and new carpets and upholstery were provided—the whole expense amounting to \$5224, exclusive of the cost of a memorial window which was given privately. Other windows of exceptional beauty have followed, and in 1895 the small parsonage which so crowded the church lot was torn down, and the old pipe organ was replaced by the present instrument, representing a value of nearly \$10,000.



INTERIOR OF THE PRESENT CHURCH

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On May 15, 1896, a great sorrow came to the church in the death of the pastor's wife, Mrs. Alice Boyd Millard. Mrs. Millard was admired, loved and honored by the entire congregation. The resolutions adopted by the Session fittingly speak of her "rare social qualities" and of her "intelligent devotion to the work of the church." The latter was shown through her activity in the Women's Missionary Society, in the Sunday School, and in every department of the church life. In Mrs. Robertson, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Millard, there was a consecutive trinity of pastor's wives in which the church had been exceptionally blessed. The individuality of each was strongly marked, and each was deeply loved.

On October 1, 1898, at the house of Mrs. Gormly, there was organized the Women's Association for Christian Work. Subsequently rechristened the Women's Guild, this is still a very important factor in the work of the church. It is composed of chapters, to each of which some special branch of activity is assigned; and its monthly meetings, which have been held regularly during the seventeen years since its formation, never fail in interest. Much of both active work and financial aid have resulted from the Guild. Its first officers

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were: President, Mrs. William R. Gormly; Vice-presidents, Miss Sallie Hall, Mrs. Arthur Robinson and Mrs. John H. Brewster; Treasurer, Miss Rumsey; Assistant Treasurer, Miss Mary Morse; Secretary, Mrs. Arthur L. Baker.

In 1893 the children of the Industrial School, who for many years had attended the First Church—marching in a body up the south aisle to occupy the front cross pews—ceased their attendance, the School giving up at that time the housing of children. On January 30, 1895, Professor Arthur L. Baker was ordained an Elder of the Church, and on February 27, 1898, Delbert C. Hibbard was so ordained.

At the morning service of October 1, 1900, Dr. Millard read to the congregation a letter of resignation. His pastorate was then the longest which the First Church had had. "You have made for me," he said, "these thirteen years of my life among you, by your unbroken respect, loyalty and love, years of such enjoyment of the pastoral relation as falls to the lot of very few ministers." Yet, he announced, he had come to "a settled conviction that some other and younger man can do better than myself the work needed to be done by the pastor of this church and can

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inspire you to do more thoroughly the work which you, its people, need to do. I believe you are entitled to the more vigorous services that some younger man can render." He therefore presented his resignation, adding, "No words can express the sadness I feel in contemplating that the time is near when I can no longer say that you are 'my people.'"

The church earnestly asked that the resignation be withdrawn, proposing the appointment of an associate to relieve Dr. Millard of pastoral cares. On October 17th, he replied that his conviction was final, and a month later, November 15, 1900, Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relation. He still occupied the pulpit for a time, however. Taking no other pastorate, he remained in Rochester, maintaining close social relations with the congregation. His death occurred January 5, 1910, and the funeral was from the church which had so long been his and where his friends were so many.

XXXI

Dr. Miller

At a Wednesday evening meeting on November 21, 1900, the committee appointed to secure a successor to Dr. Millard reported its choice of the Rev. George D. Miller, who

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then had a church at Warsaw, N. Y. Mr. Miller was a graduate of Hamilton College and of Union Theological Seminary. He was a young man, as Dr. Millard had recommended that his successor should be, being but thirty-two; but he had had his charge in Warsaw for six years, and prior to that had been pastor for two years of a church at Southold, Long Island. The call was unanimously given, and was accepted, Mr. Miller beginning his work with the new year.

The installation took place on May 3, 1901. The sermon was by Rev. William R. Taylor, D.D., of the Brick Church, who selected Ephesians II, 8, as his text. The charge to the pastor was delivered by Rev. Herman C. Riggs, D.D., and the charge to the people by Dr. Millard. Rev. Dr. Kittridge, of Geneseo, offered the closing prayer and pronounced the benediction.

Following the installation of Mr. Miller, Charles P. Ford and Frederick A. Sherwood were ordained as Elders, on June 2, 1901, and Frederick Durand and Charles Mulford Robinson as Deacons. Mr. Durand died the following year, and Mr. Robinson and John P. Silvernail were, on March 7, 1902, made Elders, when E. N. Walbridge, G. H. Parmelee and A. Findlay were elected Deacons. On

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June 6, 1904, Edward N. Walbridge was ordained an Elder; and in October, 1906, F. A. Combs was made Deacon.

Under the new pastor's leadership the activities of the church began to expand, and within the church itself to aim at greater efficiency. At a meeting of the Society on June 12, 1901, it was voted that an invitation be extended to the Rev. Robert F. Fitch, of Ningpo, China—now of Hangchow—to be its representative in the China mission field. The invitation was accepted, and the Church has made itself ever since responsible for the major portion of his salary. In October of the following year Miss Florence McLaughlin, who had been doing volunteer work through the Sunday School for six months, was retained on part time as Pastor's Assistant, and in the spring of 1904 she was engaged to give all her time. In September of that year, the work becoming still further specialized, Miss McLaughlin's efforts were concentrated on the Sunday School—especially on the younger children and on the visiting of the homes of the pupils of all departments—and the Rev. Stanley F. Gutelius, just graduated from Auburn Seminary, was called to serve as Assistant Pastor. Both Miss McLaughlin and Mr. Gutelius performed their duties to the

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great satisfaction of the people, and it was with real regret that in just a year the church yielded to the necessity of letting Mr. Gutelius go, that he might accept a call to the pastorate of a church in Iowa. Miss McLaughlin is still serving. The Superintendents of the Sunday School during the pastorate of Mr., now Dr.,* Miller were: Roland B. Woodward, 1900-1903; Clarence A. McLaughlin, 1904-1905; Charles Winslow Smith, 1906-1907; Lloyd G. Davis, 1908-1909.

On Sunday, January 9, 1906, the church celebrated the ninetieth anniversary of its organization under a regular pastor. At the morning service, Dr. Miller presented a valuable historical paper reviewing the career of the church; and in the afternoon there were short addresses by Dr. Millard, Dr. William S. Ely, and Charles F. Pond. On the following evening, the Men's Club of the church held a dinner, at which a hundred guests were served. There were speeches by Charles M. Williams, grandson of the first pastor, by Eugene Denton, Rev. Dr. Converse of St. Luke's, Rev. Dr. S. Banks Nelson of St. Peter's, W. W. Webb and Charles F. Pond. Music was in charge of W. W. Chapin.

* Hamilton College conferred the honorary degree of D.D. upon Mr. Miller in June of 1903.

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As if the recollection of its past had given new impetus to the church, there was a largely attended meeting on May 16, 1906, to consider plans for an enlargement of the chapel, in order that the Sunday School might have better facilities for work. Tentative plans for rebuilding were exhibited, and a finance committee and a building committee were appointed. When the plans had been carefully worked out, the Trustees, at a formal meeting in February, 1907, voted to undertake the proposed construction together with such alterations of the church building itself as might be necessary.

Actual work was commenced in May, the sessions of the Sunday School being at once transferred to the assembly room of the Mechanics' Institute. The church services were continued in the auditorium until the beginning of the vacation period, July 1st. On their resumption, in September, 1907, they also were transferred to the assembly room of Mechanics' Institute. The Sunday School was able to convene in its new building on June 20, 1908. The church did not get back to its auditorium until the second Sunday in February, 1909.

It seems unnecessary to include in this volume a description of the church buildings as

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now improved. Their convenience and beauty are obvious to all who enter. But the completeness of the kitchen may be mentioned, because every one will not see it; nor will every one know of the heating and ventilating system. This includes a battery of four warm air furnaces and a Sturtevant fan, which keep a large volume of air, warm in winter and cool in summer, moving steadily. All the air, before it is moved by the fan, is filtered through a screen of water, and in the main auditorium—a space of 180,000 cubic feet—the air can be changed every twelve minutes. A notable feature also is the quality of the glazing which supplements the memorial windows. The skylight in the Sunday School room reproduces in glass a coffered wooden ceiling; the aisle windows of the main auditorium are adaptations, in vertical lines and flamboyant cusplings, of the great window in the front façade of Milan cathedral; and in the outer and vestibule doors crystal leaded glass has been inserted.

The architect, to whose painstaking work is due the credit not only for the beauty of the reconstructed buildings, but for the completeness of the harmony between the old and new, was Hugh P. Chrisp, then a member of the congregation. Others to whom particular

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credit is due, are the pastor, the President and treasurer of the Board of Trustees—Arthur Robinson and James Johnston, respectively—and, most of all, Charles H. Wiltsie, who was chairman of the building and of the finance committee. The total cost of the alterations came to \$36,300. Of this sum, about \$22,000 was subscribed and paid during 1907 and 1908; and the balance was contributed in 1911-12.

In September, 1908, Rev. Lloyd G. Davis came to take the place of Mr. Gutelius, and as paid Superintendent of the Sunday School to give to that branch of the church life the impetus which the new building so strongly invited. In this he was very successful.

On May 30, 1909, Dr. Miller having completed eight years of service, and seeing the church efficiently operating in buildings which were complete, modern and beautiful, formally tendered his resignation. He desired time for extended travel and study abroad, and after expressing appreciation of the loyalty and friendship which had been shown him, he said: "A long leave of absence, while enjoyable and comfortable for a pastor, is liable to retard the progress and delay the activities of the church." For this reason, he asked his dismissal, requesting that it take effect on June 27th. A meeting of the Society was

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held on June 2d, and a committee appointed "to express to Dr. Miller the congregation's regard for him and its appreciation of his brilliant services, and request him to reconsider his proffered resignation and, if possible, withdraw it." Five days later, at a meeting of Trustees, Session and committee, Dr. Miller read a statement reaffirming his decision. This was reported to the congregation at a meeting held on June 16th when, regretfully, the resignation was accepted. After leaving Rochester, Dr. Miller spent many months in Europe. He is now again pastor of the church in Warsaw.

Almost coincidentally with the resignation of Dr. Miller the church lost by death one who had been on its Session for thirty-three years, and continuously, for twenty-six years, its clerk—Albert G. Bassett—a man whose spirituality gave to his gentleness a strength and power within the church of which he himself did not dream.

XXXII

Temporary Supplies

After the departure of Dr. Miller the First Church was without a pastor for nearly two years. During that period, Rev. Henry H.

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Stebbins, D.D., accepted the Session's invitation to act as Moderator and occasionally supplied the pulpit. In his absence, the Assistant Pastor, Mr. Davis, took his place as Moderator. The most frequent pulpit supplies, however, were the Rev. Henry C. Applegarth, D.D., and the Rev. Cornelius Woelfkin, D.D.—these four men maintaining, between them, the efficiency of the church and the quality of its preaching at a very high standard. Naturally, much of the detail work fell upon Mr. Davis, and at the close of the pulpit vacancy the Session appropriately adopted resolutions expressing its appreciation of his ungrudging service.

On November 10, 1909, the congregation elected Moses Lyman to the Eldership, to take the place of Elder Bassett. In the following year brass flower-vases, purchased by friends of Mr. Bassett and suitably inscribed, were placed on the pulpit tables in memory of him. Special services were held, as usual, during Holy Week, and on Good Friday Communion was celebrated—as it has often been since. During this period, also, the church bore its part in the Laymen's Missionary Movement, and with marked success conducted an "Every-Member-Canvass" in behalf of the Benevolent Fund.

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XXXIII

The Beginning of the Present Pastorate

On January 4, 1911, a meeting of the Society, receiving the report of the committee to select a pastor, acted upon its recommendation, and by an unanimous rising vote extended a call to the Rev. Warren Sage Stone, who was then pastor of a church in LeRoy, N. Y. Mr. Stone was born in Mexico, N. Y., in 1876, and like Dr. Robinson was a graduate of Hamilton College and of Auburn Theological Seminary. He had also studied at Leipzig, Ger.; and in addition to his pastorate at Le Roy had been for two years lecturer in the Department of Homiletics at Auburn Seminary.

The call was accepted and the ceremony of installation took place on Thursday evening, March 2, 1911. The invocation was offered by Dr. G. B. F. Hallock, Assistant Pastor of the Brick Church. Then came the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation." The Scripture was read by the Rev. R. R. Converse, D. D., of St. Luke's; prayer was offered by Dr. Applegarth; and after an anthem by the choir, "Rejoice Ye with Jerusalem," the sermon was preached by Dr. Woelfkin. The hymn, "Lord of All Being" followed, and after that the Rev. William D. Jones, Modera-

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tor of Presbytery, propounded the constitutional questions. The installing prayer was made by Rev. Charles C. Albertson, D.D., of Central Church; the choir sang, "In Heavenly Love Abiding"; Rev. James S. Riggs, D.D., of Auburn Seminary, gave the charge to the pastor, Dr. Stebbins the charge to the people, and after the hymn, "Oh, Master, Let me Walk with Thee," the pastor pronounced the benediction. The occasion was the first time in the church's history on which it had installed its pastor prior, by three days, to the delivery of his first sermon from its pulpit.

Two months after the installation of Mr. Stone, Rev. Lloyd G. Davis presented his resignation as assistant, owing to his wish to accept an appointment at the Berry School, Mount Berry, Ga. The resignation was regretfully accepted, and took effect July 1st.

On June 21, 1911, John P. Silvernail and Charles Mulford Robinson were re-elected Elders. Charles Winslow Smith, succeeding Mr. Davis as Superintendent of the Sunday School, served from 1910-12. Frank L. Gosnell followed him for the year 1913-14, and now Mr. Smith is again Superintendent. It is enough perhaps to say that the Superintendents of the recent years have fully main-

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tained the high standards established by their predecessors.

To the great happiness of the First Church members, the pastorate of Mr. Stone is still "history in the making." As no perspective can yet be taken of it, no further record may here be attempted. But noting the marked gain in the contributions of the church for benevolent purposes—a gain of 25 per cent. in the short time since the new pastor's coming; noting the payment of the last dollar of church debt,* the growth of a church endowment fund, and the Society's beginning of its second century with money in the bank for ordinary purposes; noting the continued loyalty of church members—evidenced in a thousand ways, but perhaps most strikingly by the long terms of service which are still unbroken, and by the record of a Sunday School scholar † who, after more than twenty years, is yet to be absent from her place for the first time,—noting in the church the substitution of an enthusiastic volunteer chorus choir, under the leadership of George B. Penny, for the paid quartet of other years; and noting,

* Arising in the main from the payment of damages for an injury for which the church was claimed to be liable.

† Miss Florence Miller.

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as best, the deep spiritual life, the strong and steadily gaining Sunday School, the fellowship among the people of the congregation, and the comradeship which so generally expresses their sentiment toward the pastor—noting such things, and then looking back over the long way which the church has come in its hundred years, we may see how truly it may be said that the forest trail has developed, in spite of its several branching paths, into a firm and sunny highway.

Upon this, it is a happy band of pilgrims that now goes singing toward the Goal.

NOTES

The First Church of Rochester antedates all the present Boards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

The total amount contributed for benevolent purposes by the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester during its hundred years is about \$375,000.

Congregational expenses during this period totaled about \$525,000, making a total of nearly a million dollars for religious purposes by the society which sixteen people started a hundred years ago, in a room over a tailor shop.

Missionaries who have gone from the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester are: Ebenezer Bliss, to the Cherokees; Jonathan S. Green, to the Sandwich Islands; Dr. Ferdinand DeW. Ward, to India; Henry Cherry, to India; T. Dwight Hunt, to the Sandwich Islands; Henry A. DeForest, M.D. and Mrs. DeForest, to Syria; Mrs. Delia Stone Bishop, to the Sandwich Islands; Mrs. Maria Ward Chapin Smith, to Syria; Mrs. Alice Buell Morris, to China.

Persons who, going from the First Church, have entered the ministry, include: Enoch Miller, Justin G. Riley, George S. Sill, Robert L. Stanton, Horace Winston, G. Parsons Nichols, James Ballentine, Dr. L. Merrill Miller, Henry E. Peck, Charles G. Lee, Frederick M. Starr, Dr. Everard Kempshall, William N. McCoon, Charles R. Clarke, Henry B. Chapin, D.D., Robert Proctor, George Dutton, M.L.R.P. Hill, and J. Hall McIlvaine.

PRESENT OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

SESSION

Rev. Warren Sage Stone, *Moderator*
Charles F. Pond Fred'k A. Sherwood J. P. Silvernail
Moses Lyman Charles P. Ford E. N. Walbridge
Charles Mulford Robinson, *Clerk*

DEACONS

Wm. C. Wait A. D. Findlay
Frank E. Combs George H. Parmele

TRUSTEES

<i>Class of 1915</i>	<i>Class of 1916</i>	<i>Class of 1917</i>
Arthur Robinson	Henry C. Reiner	George I. Viall
Wm. H. Briggs	Wm. B. Lee	Charles H. Wiltsie
George H. Clark	James Johnston	Wm. W. Chapin, <i>President</i>

SUPERINTENDENTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

Charles Winslow Smith
Edward E. Ford, *Assistant*

FOREIGN PASTOR

Rev. Robert F. Fitch, Hangchow, China

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