

HISTORIC DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT THE  
QUARTER CENTURY ANNIVERSARY, OF THE  
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA  
DECEMBER 27, 1873

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Historic discourse ... Terre  
Haute, Indiana, December  
27, 1873







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# Historic Discourse.

INDIANA COLLECTION



HISTORIC DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

Quarter Century Anniversary,

OF THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA.

*December 27, 1873.*

BY

REV. BLACKFORD CONDIT,

Present Pastor of the Church.

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CINCINNATI:

Elm Street Printing Company, Nos. 176 and 178 Elm Street.

1874.

TERRE HAUTE, IND., *January 20, 1874.*

REV. B. CONDIT:

*Dear Sir*—Having heard your sermon on the history of the Presbyterian Church in this place, we request a copy for publication, as it contains facts of great interest pertaining to the first religious work in this locality.

Very respectfully,

C. C. KNAPP,  
C. I. RIPLEY,  
F. McBRIDE,  
ZENAS SMITH,  
S. H. POTTER.

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TERRE HAUTE, *February 12, 1874.*

MESSRS. C. C. KNAPP, C. I. RIPLEY, F. McBRIDE, ZENAS SMITH, AND  
S. H. POTTER:

*Gentlemen*—According to your request, I herewith submit a copy of the historic discourse delivered at our recent anniversary.

Yours very truly,

BLACKFORD CONDIT.

# HISTORIC DISCOURSE.

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*Text*—BUT PAUL SAID, I AM A MAN WHICH AM A JEW OF TARSUS, A CITY IN CILICIA, A CITIZEN OF NO MEAN CITY.—  
Acts xxi. 39.

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How different our circumstances to-night from those of the Apostle Paul, when he uttered the words of the text. All Jerusalem was in an uproar. So enraged were the people that some cried one thing and some another. And they went about to kill him. But when tidings came to the chief captain, with his soldiers, he ran down and rescued Paul. And when in the castle, the chief captain examined him and said: “Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?” But Paul said: “I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city.”

This answer simply sets forth the nativity of the apostle, and not as many suppose a claim of freedom from scourging or other violence. Such a claim he afterward set up on the ground of Roman citizenship, but here his answer may be regarded as simply declaring whom he was, and, incidentally, the honest pride he entertained for the city of Tarsus, the home of his childhood.

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And, as a matter of fact, Tarsus was no mean city. It was a celebrated seat of learning, taking rank with Athens and Alexandria, and even above them according to Strabo. Again, it was a free city. True, it had been conquered by Rome and consequently was in subjection to the Roman yoke, yet for years it had been free; free to elect its own magistracy, and in every way govern itself. And then add to these another fact, that it was a city of much commercial importance, connected with the East and the West by Roman roads, and we shall see that there was good reason for the apostle to hold up Tarsus as no mean city.

Now, if Paul could indulge an honest pride in speaking of Tarsus, his old home, at such a time as that, shall I not be pardoned if, in a season like this, gathered as we are, on the eve of the celebration of the quarter century anniversary of a Christian church in a Christian city, shall I not be pardoned I say, if I should seem somewhat enthusiastic in speaking of this, our city, as no mean city, but beautiful for situation—the pride not only of her old, but also of her new citizens?

For Terre Haute is renowned, not only for beauty of situation, but, like Tarsus, is a celebrated seat of learning. Her public schools are her public pride. And her State Normal School, though founded but a few years ago, has not its superior in all the West. And then if Tarsus was a free city, what is Terre Haute? I answer: a free city, of a free state, of a free nation. And, therefore, we enjoy a rich inheritance, a glorious citizenship of which we ought justly to be proud, not only for its freedom at home, but for its protection abroad. Again, if Tarsus was a commercial city, what are we with our grand iron ways running to the north, the south, the east and the west, connecting us with the utter-

most parts of the earth? At our depot to-day you may purchase your through ticket to the extreme eastern or western coast, or through the agent you may secure a ticket for a passage around the world.

But it is not my purpose to speak so much of what Terre Haute is to-day, as to trace her early history, or rather to speak of *the early history of Presbyterianism, in connection with the early history of the town.*

And if we go back to the extreme limit to which the pen of history points, we shall find that as early as 1673—just now two hundred years ago—the Jesuit missionary explored this whole region of country, west from the Ohio River, and south to the Gulf of Mexico, and claimed it for France and the Catholic Church. And for an hundred years it was so subject. All this region was French territory, and as just intimated was gained for France for the sake of the Roman Church, by the zeal and hardihood of the far seeing Jesuit. And close upon the heels of the Jesuit missionary flowed a tide of immigration of traders.

And so it was that the first foundings of our chief cities were for French trading posts; *e. g.*, St. Louis, Vincennes, and to some extent our own city, as the name indicates. For it was in 1702 that a party of French Canadians descended the Wabash River, and established several posts on its banks for trading with the Indians. Among these were Vincennes, and doubtless “Old Terre Haute” on the west bank of the river, three miles below our present location.

But the organized and real life of the country commenced with this century. For it was in the year 1802 that Indiana territory was organized, and in 1803 the first territorial legislature convened at Vincennes. And it was in 1816 that Indiana became a State, the sixth admitted into the Union under the

federal constitution. So also it was in 1816 that Terre Haute was laid out, and when two years old was chosen the county seat of Vigo County, which settled the question of rivalry existing between it and other locations above and below the present site.

Not only did the organized civil life of this region begin with the present century, but also the organized Protestant religious life of the people. As already noted, for a hundred years before this the zeal of the Jesuit had been untiring, and to-day his labors, then put forth, are not without their visible fruits. Like the Indian with whom he mingled, he has left behind him enduring monuments, noticeable not only in deep laid church foundations, his peculiar work, but in the names of lakes, rivers and cities. So that the adherents of the Roman Church to-day feel at home as they recognize in these monuments the footprints and self-denying labors of their brethren who as early pioneers preceded them. But this Roman religion, though it had the energy and hardihood to explore these western wilds and plant trading posts, yet it could not possess and hold the land, excepting it was in the far south, where the climate was more congenial and the port of entry more convenient to France and Spain. And so it came to pass that it was the Protestant pioneer, with ax, plow, spelling book, and the civilizing element of a virtuous family came, conquered and held the land. It was the hardy pioneer from Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, also from the Middle and New England States that together took possession of this goodly land in which we dwell, in the name of Protestantism and civil liberty. And as a matter of history it was so, that, while the population was yet sparse, and the new settler was building his first log cabin, while, as yet, this region was a western wild, full of savage men and

savage beasts, the Protestant Presbyterian missionary was among them.

From a little pamphlet entitled: "A Brief History of Presbyterianism in Indiana," prepared originally by a committee of Salem Presbytery, in 1825, and published by the Synod of Indiana, I learn that in the very beginning of this century, missionary excursions were made in the vicinity of Vincennes, and up the valley of the Wabash, by such veterans in the service as Rev. Samuel Rannels, Rev. Samuel B. Robinson, Rev. James McGready, and Rev. Thomas Clelland. All of whom were members of the Transylvania Presbytery of Kentucky.

Among the immediate fruits of these missionary labors, we have the gathering and organization of a Presbyterian Church, at Vincennes, in 1806, by Rev. Samuel B. Robinson. This church was called: "The Church of Indiana," after the name of the territory, a name that it still bears. And to-day it stands not among the least flourishing of the churches of this (our Vincennes) Presbytery. And it is worthy of being regarded not only as the mother of numerous churches in that immediate region, but of Presbyterianism in the southern part of the State. The Palmyra Church was organized in 1807, by Rev. James Vance, which was afterward re-embodied, in 1812, in the Presbyterian Church of Charlestown, of that same county. In the town of Washington, Daviess County (in this Presbytery), the church was organized as early as 1814, by Rev. Samuel T. Scott, with about seventeen members. And this church is self-supporting to-day, and is among the most promising fields of the Presbytery. And as a matter of interest in passing, I would state that the Presbytery of Vincennes holds its spring meeting with this church, at which time arrangements are being made

to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. In 1815, in what is now the city of Madison, a Presbyterian Church was organized with fifteen or twenty members, by Rev. William Robinson. In its early history this church enjoyed the labors of such fathers in the church as Robinson, Searle, Trimble and Johnston. The Salem Church was organized in 1816, by Rev. Samuel Shannon. In this same year the Blue River Church, in the county of Washington, was organized by Rev. James McGready. And, as yet, we were but a territory, which, at its organization, had a population of only 5,000. In 1810 the population had increased to 25,000. But the increase from 1810 to 1820 was most unexampled; there being an increase of over 500 per cent., the population of the State in 1820 having reached 147,178. An increase in a single decade unsurpassed, excepting by the State of Michigan from 1830 to 1840.

And it was in this prosperity of the State that Presbyterianism was prospered, as the further enumeration of the early planting of churches would show. And such enumeration would show also that the strongholds of Presbyterianism to-day are the fields early occupied by the missionary pioneer. It is so at Vincennes, and all that region round about. It is so in the counties of Parke and Montgomery, where the pioneer missionary pushed his way as early as 1822 and 1824. \*A missionary, in giving an account of his "first tour among the churches and settlements near the Wabash River, above Terre Haute," says: "I passed the night in the woods without human company, and with no other light than that made by the lightning." †Another missionary, giving an account of a tour through the same region, in recounting

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\*Reed's Christian Traveler.

†Life and Times of Stephen Bliss.



his perils by water, says: "I spent the day in seeking a ford by which to cross Big Raccoon Creek." But I must not stop to recount the hardships of the early missionaries, my object being rather to show forth the fruits of their labors. For, as just remarked, the fields that were then occupied are the fields that now are the strongholds of our church in the State, of which Indianapolis is another example, where a Presbyterian Church was planted in 1823. A city which to-day has ten Presbyterian churches, and each supplied by a pastor. Hence it well deserves the name of "The banner city of Presbyterianism in the West." A city from whose churches have gone forth some of the strong men of the nation. First among these I mention Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, of whom, on account of his world-wide reputation, I need not speak, excepting to say that seven years of his early ministry were spent in Indianapolis. He was first settled, in 1837, at Lawrenceburg. After a residence of two years, he removed to Indianapolis; he remained there till 1847, when he accepted an invitation to become pastor of the Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York. As another remarkable example, I would mention Rev. George Bush, the author of "Critical Notes on several books of the Old Testament," and for many years professor of oriental languages in the University of New York City. Mr. Bush was ordained and installed pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Indianapolis. \* "And this was the first ordination of a Presbyterian minister in the State. It was the act of the Presbytery of Salem, and the exercises took place in the State House, at Indianapolis, March 5, 1825."

But while it is profitable to recapitulate the history of the

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\*Brief History of Presbyterianism in Indiana.

planting of churches in the State, my immediate purpose is to confine your attention to our own section. The town of Terre Haute was organized in 1816, the same year the State was received into the Federal union. The life of the town, therefore, began with the life of the State. Situated a thousand miles from the sea-coast, with no highway of intercourse, and no approach even, excepting by the back door of Vincennes by way of Cincinnati, in a region of interminable forests, in a region subject to the incursion of the Indians, little could have been expected by those who located the town. Yet from the very beginning there was much that was encouraging. In 1815, the year previous to the laying out of the town, a settled peace had been concluded with the Indians. At this time, permanent settlers, attracted by the richness of the soil, were pouring into the State with unexampled rapidity. And then the town, on account of the beauty of its location, had its attractions. Situated on the east side of the Wabash, sixty feet from the level of the river, on a rolling prairie of some nine miles in length and three miles in breadth, the river furnishing an outlet for trade; and then the location was geographically on the direct line of travel from the East to the far unexplored West, which very soon appeared when the great National Road was projected. So that from the beginning our town had its geographical advantages and local attractions. And not the least among the latter was the character of the first inhabitants of the place, for while the early settlements on the frontier at that time were characterized by ignorance and rowdiness, comparatively the early settlement of Terre Haute was characterized by its intelligence, good order, and by a certain gentility that has always marked the place. And then for years afterward the internal improvements, such as

the National Road, of which mention has been made, and the Wabash and Erie Canal made Terre Haute a center of attraction for enterprising men.

But for a period of thirty-five years our city was only a village; since in 1851 our population amounted to only 4,000. And up to this date we had no particular ambition to become anything more than a village. But it was about this time that new aspirations took possession of the citizens. Several years previous to this date (1851), joint stock companies for building railroads in other parts of the State had been incorporated by the legislature. And now it became possible and probable that a railroad could be built connecting Terre Haute with the eastern cities. And from the hour of the projection of this road, and from the hour also that Block coal was discovered in our immediate vicinity, which is more valuable than the Mariposian gold fields of California, in that it attracts to us both capital and labor, and plants them to be permanently productive, I say since the projection of the T. H. & R. R. R., and the discovery of our coal fields, the future of Terre Haute has been decided, that sooner or latter she must become a great city.

But I would trace the early history of the church in connection with that of the town. As already remarked, Presbyterian missionaries made tours up and down the valley of the Wabash, in the first years of this century, the first-fruit of whose labors, as already stated, was the organization of a church near Vincennes, in 1806. I have before me a short account of a missionary tour made by Rev. Nathan B. Derrow, in the year 1816, the same year our town was laid out. Mr. Derrow was sent out by the Connecticut Missionary Society. He came into Indiana at Jeffersonville, and proceeded north to Fort Harrison which is three miles

north of us. He found the field at once destitute and inviting." I have also before me a \*letter written by another honored missionary of those early days, Rev. Orin Fowler. The letter is dated Carlisle, 1819, where he had that same year organized a Presbyterian Church. In his letter he says: "I have just returned from a tour up the Wabash, as far as Fort Harrison, and have preached in nearly every neighborhood." Terre Haute then was a town of three years old, and consequently was one of the probable neighborhoods in which this good brother preached.

Rev. Charles C. Beatty, D. D., of Steubenville, Ohio, one of the oldest living pioneers of Presbyterianism in Indiana, †made a missionary tour under the auspices of the General Assembly, through this region of country, in the year 1822. He organized Presbyterian Churches in Parke County north of us, also one or two churches south of us. In conversation with Dr. Beatty, some two years ago, he gave a very interesting account of his missionary tour through this country, and of his visit to Terre Haute. His preaching services were held in the ball room of the tavern, which stood on the southeast corner of Main and First streets, kept for many years by Captain Wasson. His audiences were discouragingly small; he, with the help of an old colored woman, did all the singing. During his stay in the village, he was hospitably entertained by the late Major Whitlock, of Crawfordsville. At that time Mr. W. was a resident of Terre Haute, and was the Receiver at the United States Land Office. Dr. Beatty enjoyed the social intercourse of such gentlemen as Doctor Modesitt, of whom he spoke in the

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\*Reed's Christian Traveler.

†Private Letter.

highest terms, who, though not a member of the church, had once been in connection with the Methodist Church.

\*Another missionary, writing under the date of 1824, speaks of making a short tour across the Wabash River, some miles north of Terre Haute, and returning by way of "Hopewell Church," which he describes as a relic of a church on the State line west and south of Terre Haute. At the time of this visit the church had but ten members, but from about this time it enjoyed a blessed season of revival, and was increased to some seventy members. He says: "That with the members of this church he held a sacramental meeting on the east side of the Wabash, in the village of Terre Haute."

†From one of our old citizens I learn that it was quite a common thing for these Hopewell Church people to come into town and hold what were then called "big meetings" in the Court House, commencing on Friday or Saturday evening, and holding over the Sabbath. And that on these occasions the people from the town and country turned out and filled the house. That it was customary at their night meetings for each one of the villagers to carry a candle, his contribution toward lighting the room.

But to return to the missionary's account. He says: "That at this time the minds of several of the leading men of the town were stirred up with the desire of settling a minister among them." In this same letter (date 1824), which is a report to one of the missionary societies east, he recommends that a man be sent to occupy this field, and states that "the villages of Terre Haute and Roseville would unite in his support, and that two hundred and fifty dollars could

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\*Rev. Isaac Reed.

†Harry Ross, Esq.

be raised on the field." In 1825 this same missionary again visited this region, and held a sacramental meeting at Terre Haute. In describing the country, he says: "That the whole tract of country, extending from Vincennes as high up as Vermillion, is immensely in need of the preached gospel, and begs the Society to send a missionary to occupy the field." Of his labors in the town, he says: "The last night I preached in Terre Haute, but few of the villagers attended, but two professors of religion who lived eight miles distant from the town attended the meeting, and returned that same night."

In another tour made this same year (1825), he speaks of riding eleven miles to the village of Terre Haute. He describes the town as "A very singular place; that it had a population of two hundred, and much mercantile business; that it had no religious society of any order, but there was at this time a great disposition to hear preaching; that several gentlemen had formed a Sunday reading meeting, at the Court House. At these meetings they took turns in reading printed sermons. There was also a newly formed Bible Society in the town, and a small Sabbath-school." So again, in 1826, we find our missionary in Terre Haute, preaching in the Court House to a large and attentive congregation. He expresses his pleasure in finding the town so quiet and orderly on the Sabbath, but adds "That it is still (1826) without any religious society."

I remember when in college of finding in the library a small volume containing the diary of a pioneer missionary in Indiana. His description of Terre Haute made quite an impression upon my mind, and was this, almost word for word: "The town of Terre Haute is a beautiful village, composed of white houses, situated on the left bank of the Wabash River, but no place for the gospel."

\*In the life of another Presbyterian pioneer, I find an account of his preaching, in 1826, at two points, viz: Carlisle and Terre Haute. He journeyed on horseback in filling these appointments, for as yet, he says, "The roads are but bridle paths through the woods and prairies." Again, in 1827, I find an entry in his diary of "His riding to Terre Haute and preaching in the evening. The next day he rode to Big Raccoon. The next day, on account of very heavy rain, he spent the whole day in searching for a ford across the creek, and in vain." In those days missionaries contended with perils by the way; some of whom lost their lives in attempting to cross the streams in times of high water.

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I have thus quoted largely from the reports of missionaries who have visited our place previous to 1827. While, as yet, there was no organized church of any name in the town, according to the testimony above quoted, doubtless every denomination had been represented by transient missionaries, of whom there was no lack in the country. And if time permitted, I might give some droll examples of the character of the preachers who passed up and down the State in those early days.

So far then as any record shows, there was no organized church in Terre Haute till the spring of 1828, when a Presbyterian Church was organized by Rev. David Monfort. He came from the State of Ohio, and was a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati. †Mr. Monfort came here in the fall of 1827, but the church was not organized till May 17, 1828, and was composed of ten members, viz: Samuel Young and Margaret Young (his wife), from Union Church,

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\*Life and Times of Stephen Bliss.

†Private letter from his son.

on Honey Creek ; Samuel Ewing and Mary Ewing (his wife) ; James Beard and Jane Beard (his wife) ; John McCulloch and Margaret McCulloch (his wife), from New Hope Church ; Mrs. Phœbe Monfort, from Bethel Church, Ohio ; and Mr. O. Dibble. \*The meeting for the organization took place on Saturday, May 17, 1828, when Mr. Samuel Young and Mr. James Beard were duly chosen elders of the church. And Messrs. William C. Linton, John Britton and Captain James Wasson were elected trustees of this the First Presbyterian Church of Terre Haute. On the next day, which was Sabbath, May 18, Mr. Samuel Young and Mr. James Beard, elders elect, were by ordination solemnly set apart to this office by Rev. David Monfort.

†This newly organized church appears first on the Minutes of the General Assembly for 1829, and is reported as having seventeen members ; having gained seven to its membership during the first year. In 1831 the church appears on the Minutes of the Assembly as vacant, Bro. Monfort having remained with them less than two years. The reason for his short stay was doubtless the severe afflictions of sickness and death in his family. Says one of his sons in a private letter : “ During my father’s short stay in Terre Haute, we passed through terrible afflictions in the loss of my mother and sister, and the severe illness of all the family save myself.”

Rev. David Monfort stood high in the esteem of the best citizens of the place, and the memory of his devoted wife is

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\*The date, Saturday, May 17, I found in an old trustee book of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, together with the record of the meeting. The year, viz : 1828, I decided by reference to a calendar, by which I learned that Saturday, May 17, and the year 1828 corresponded.

†The year 1828 appears also as the year the church was organized, by putting together the two dates, 1827, the time of Mr. Monfort’s arrival, and 1829, when the church first appears on the Minutes of the Assembly.



still fresh in the minds of many of our old citizens, all of whom speak in the highest terms of her superior talents, and of her womanly and Christian character.

In Gillett's History of Presbyterianism, I find the following: "Rev. David Monfort, D. D., was a native of Pennsylvania, and was born in 1790. In 1817 he completed his course in Princeton Theological Seminary, and the following year was settled over Bethel Church, in Oxford Presbytery, State of Ohio. \*In 1829 he joined Wabash Presbytery and supplied the church at Terre Haute. In 1830 he commenced a pastorate of twenty years in Franklin, Indiana. His death occurred in 1860."

After the resignation of Rev. David Monfort, the church was without a pastor for some four years. During this period, Rev. — Sprole supplied the pulpit for a few months. †Probably in the fall of 1830. He came here directly from the seminary. The church was anxious to have him remain, but he could not be induced to stay.

It was during this period that the ‡Vincennes (formerly Wabash) Presbytery met in Terre Haute with this church. This meeting of Presbytery was in the fall of 1832. §The church at this date was vacant, and as yet there was no house of public worship in the town. The Presbytery convened in the Court House. At this meeting of Presbytery five persons were received into the church: one on profession and the others by letter. It was also during this period that the Rev. James Crawford, who was settled in the region north and west of us, and the Rev. John C. Campbell, who sup-

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\*The correct date must be 1828.

†Private letter from Rev. Ransom Hawley.

‡Changed by act of Synod, in 1830.

§Private letter from Rev. Ransom Hawley.

plied the church of New Hope, situated some four or five miles west and south of us, frequently visited the church in Terre Haute, and ministered to it. And if I may indulge in a personal reminiscence it was during this period, in the year 1832, that I was received into this church by the rite of baptism, administered by Rev. John C. Campbell; and what gives special interest to this fact is that to-day I minister to a branch of the same church to which then I was publicly admitted. For it is an historical fact, not heretofore recognized, that this the now Second Presbyterian Church of Terre Haute, organized under the name of the Baldwin Presbyterian Church, in 1848, whose quarter century anniversary we to-morrow celebrate, is by direct lineage a branch of the First Presbyterian Church of Terre Haute, organized in 1828. Let us briefly trace the history and see if this appear.

After the resignation of Rev. David Monfort (which must have been in the latter part of the year 1829), \*the first record of a church meeting is under the date of May 16, 1833. The object of this meeting, as stated, was the election of a pastor. Rev. Samuel Baldrige moderated the meeting. The result was the election of Rev. Michael Hummer as pastor of the church. The church, as then constituted, consisted of the two original elders, Messrs. Samuel Young and James Beard. The names of the members, so far as I can learn, were Messrs. Amory Kinney, Ephraim Ross, Zenas Smith, Thomas Desart, Alexander Ross, William Young, Mrs. Elizabeth Desart, Mrs. Charlotte T. Condit, Mrs. Julia McCall, Mrs. Hannah Smith, Miss Mary King, Miss Cath-

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\*Trustee book of the now First Presbyterian Church of this city.

erine Boudinot, Mrs. Mary Ross and Mrs. Mary Young, sixteen members in all.

The call was placed in the hands of Mr. Hummer, but there is no record of his ever having publicly accepted it. \*For just at this time there were sad divisions in the church; and Rev. Matthew G. Wallace, by invitation, took charge of the church. In consequence of this, a large proportion of the church withdrew under Mr. Hummer, and held public services in the brick school-house, which stood for so many years on the northwest corner of Fifth and Walnut streets, the site now occupied by the Catholic school-house. And as I am reliably informed part of the old walls are still standing, forming a part of the walls of the present Catholic building. But to return to the history. Troubles of a private nature, external to the church, disturbed the happy relation existing between Mr. Hummer and this people; consequently he remained but a short time, resigning his place to take charge of the Presbyterian Church, at Lafayette.

And further, in tracing the history, it was this same colony, †not as an organization, but as individuals, that united with a few others at a meeting in an upper room of the Court House, in 1834, and took the first steps which resulted in the organization of the First Congregational Church of this city.

And, furthermore, in briefly sketching the outline of this history, it was a Presbyterian element, composed of sixteen members, three of whom belonged originally to this afore-said colony, that withdrew, in 1848, from the Congregational

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\*Record in trustee book of First Presbyterian Church.

†Testimony of Mr. Thomas Desart, now of Brazil.

Church and organized what is the now Second Presbyterian Church of this city. So that to-day we stand as a representative branch, though it be by separations oft, (the causes of which it is not necessary to speak,) we stand, I say, a representative branch of the First Presbyterian Church of Terre Haute, organized in 1828.

The other branch (or part of the original stock shall I call it?) of whose history I should be glad to speak were it not in every way out of my province, has persistently held on to the name of the original mother, bearing, as it does to-day, the name of the First Presbyterian Church of Terre Haute. As a sister branch she is larger than we, and it may be in disposition firmer, and, consequently, if possible, has been more faithful to our Presbyterian doctrine of perseverance; yet she has had her trials, as we have had our trials, but to-day, I am happy to say, she is in a more hopeful condition for serving the Master than for years past.

And we say to these, our Presbyterian and Congregational sisters, to whom we have sustained such special and peculiar relations, the Lord be with thee! The Lord grant peace and prosperity to all within thy gates! The Lord speed us all in the common work of rebuilding the walls of our spiritual Jerusalem.

In conclusion I would say, that in briefly recounting the history of the past, we have learned something of the discouragements under which the fathers labored in the planting of the church in this place. That while churches were organized on every side of us, it seemed impossible to get a foot-hold here. And in understanding some of these difficulties it is noticeable that even when the church was organized in 1828, only two of the ten members of which it was originally constituted, resided in the town, and even one of

these was the wife of the minister who organized the church. The other eight members resided in the country. From the first our town bore a bad reputation, so far as church membership was concerned. Even in 1829, more than a year after the church was organized, \*a missionary who passed through the town was told that there was but one professor of religion in the place, which, in charity he adds, must have been a mistake.

I mention these things to show the faith and courage of the fathers in their early struggles to plant the banner of the cross in our town. To whose courage and faith we are to-day so much indebted, and for which we are glad, yea we will take courage and march forward in hope of final victory. For though yet in the wilderness, our faces are turned Zionward. Like the Israelites, for forty years and more we have wandered. We have been made to drink the bitter waters of division and spiritual dearth; we have complained against God and he hath been displeased and turned us back. And yet, in all, has there not been some progress? And for any evidence of the good hand of our God upon us, we will give thanks and rejoice.

In the past history of the town it is easy to recount the evidences of progress. From three or four log houses in 1816, there has sprung up, as if by magic, in the short space of fifty-seven years, a beautiful and flourishing city with a population of 25,000. And a very large part of this increase has been in the last twenty years. In the first years of the history of the town, the best houses were built on the bank of the river, and on First street. In about ten or fifteen years, Second began to vie with First street for the suprem-

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\*Private letter from Rev. Ransom Hawley.

acy. And in a few years afterward, Third, then called Market street, became the Broadway of the village. At this time all east of Sixth street was out on the prairie on the hill. "Sibley town" was then a thicket of oak saplings and hazel bushes. "The Indian orchard," one of the oldest landmarks of early days, was way up the river, where the boys went on Saturdays for green apples. "Strawberry hill," another of the time-honored landmarks, which has not to this day altogether lost its identity, was way down in the country. And "Pucket's lane," a celebrated locality of the olden times, but now almost unknown, was way down south of the village. Even so late as the year 1840, Seventh street was a county road, and all east of it fields of clover and corn; Seventh which to-day claims the honor of being the central avenue of the city, though the honor rightly belongs to Sixth street. Consequently to the pioneer of 1816 and 1824, or even to the old resident of 1840, what a change. The old landmarks have disappeared or are forgotten. From a few scattered white houses on the river bank, we have become a beautiful city on the prairie. From a quiet village, adorned by the fragrant locust tree, we have become a city of mart and manufactures, and with bright prospects of becoming second to but one city in the State.

And in this material progress we are permitted to trace the progress of the church. For from but one church of ten members, with only two of these residing in the village, in 1828, we have to-day churches of every denomination, with a church membership not reckoned by twos or tens, but by thousands. And from one little Sabbath-school held in the Court House, in 1825, we have church and mission schools extending to every part of the city. But, my brethren, except the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it.

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In tears our fathers sowed, in joy may their children reap. And in the future song of the reaper let the refrain be, even the cry of the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

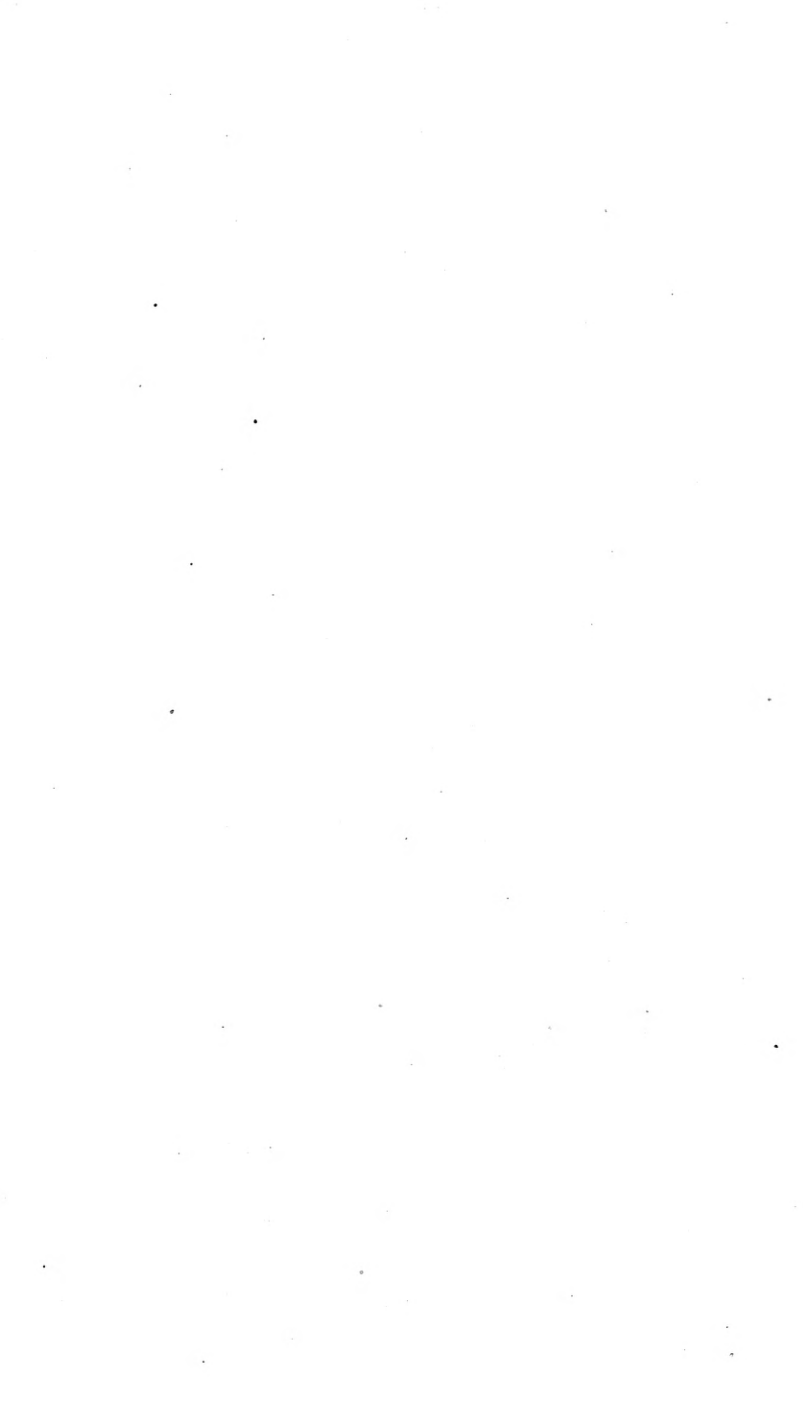
But I can not close without extending the word of welcome to my brother who founded this church twenty-five years ago, who is with us to-night from his distant home in the West, to speak words of joy and cheer on the morrow. To you, my brother, I say welcome! And gladly to the other four brethren, former pastors of this church, who are detained but who have sent their gratulations, would I say welcome! Also, to the elders of the church who have served with the pastors; and to the private members who have labored with them for the sake of the Master, and who have returned to enjoy with us the festival of to-morrow; and to our invited guests of the city; to you all I speak the word of welcome! And last, but first of all, I do not forget \*you, my brethren, pioneers of Presbyterianism in Indiana, though you have not labored in this particular field, yet for years have been engaged in this same work of building up the kingdom of Christ in this part of the State, and are here, by special invitation, to relate something of your missionary experiences, to you I extend a hearty welcome! And my prayer is that this occasion may prove, not only a season of joy and rejoicing, but the beginning of better things. And may Jesus, the great Head of the Church, who hath given everlasting promises to his people, add his blessing.

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\*Rev. Henry Little, D. D., and Rev. Ransom Hawley.

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