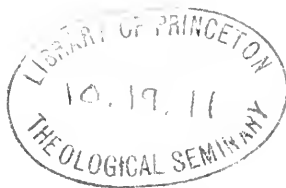


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St. Mark's Sixtieth Anniversary
1850-1910

A Discourse delivered in

St. Mark's Church, Brooklyn

Sunday, December 18, 1910

By REV. SPENCER S. ROCHE, D.D.

Rector

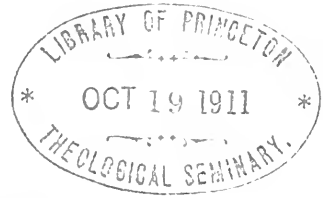
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Rector

ST. MARK'S SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

"I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine in behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.—Philippians, 1:3-6.

The Epistle to the Philippians is not doctrinal statement, but personal tenderness. It is an outburst of the heart, springing from the deepest inward need of loving fellowship. It unites exquisite sympathy with courageous faith.

The words from a Roman dungeon, may instruct us in review and outlook after sixty years of our Brooklyn church's life.

With reverent gratitude St. Paul cherishes devout and joyous reminiscence. Memory had a wide scope in these words, "from the first day until now." There are concrete facts, local references.

Philippi was on the great Roman road from Europe to Asia Minor, about nine miles from the sea, and backed by a mountain range. Here St. Paul had preached Christ without encountering the usual opposition. There were cities larger and more renowned, where his discourses roused the most virulent abuse, and where the most tactful missionary efforts were baffled. But it was different in Philippi. There one did not find the philosophic scorn of Athens, nor the mob violence of Thessalonica. The Philippians were of the middle class, earning, in most cases honestly, their own living. Recall the peculiar circumstances of the first three converts. Lydia was by birth an Asiatic, engaged in a necessary and lucrative trade, a seller of purple, which may mean a dyer or a dressmaker. The maid with the spirit of divination, the pythoness, was in all probability a Greek, and

turned to account the credulity and superstition of the multitude. The jailer represented in an humble capacity, the Roman empire's power and respect for law.

Like Brooklyn, Philippi was a city largely inhabited by those who were natives of other lands. The prominent part taken by women in the evangelization of the community, must not be overlooked, nor the resulting fact that whole families were gathered into the Philippian Church.

On a previous anniversary we have considered the ecclesiastical condition of Brooklyn in 1850: let us today call up certain local, social, political, and religious conditions in a singularly pregnant period. Let us glance at the life of Brooklyn from the first day of St. Mark's until now. What was then a petty city is now almost the largest borough of the second metropolis of the globe. The year constitutes an important epoch in the civic and general history. It may not inaptly be said to mark our transition from preparatory to permanent stages of thought and activity.

In 1850 we were comparatively a poor people. There were only seven billions of national wealth, being only \$308 per capita. Today we have one hundred and seven billions for the nation and \$1,310 per capita. Then our productions were worth a billion dollars, and they are now worth fifteen billions. Then the United States had a population of twenty-three millions: it now has ninety millions. Then eight people, on the average, dwelt on a square mile: now thirty people live on a square mile. The total Federal Revenue amounted to \$47,000,000, while the entire expenses of the general government were \$44,000,000, scarce a third of what it now costs to administer the affairs of the city of New York. There were thirty-six thousand churches of every name, the total value of their property exceeding \$86,000,000. The property of our church alone today is reckoned at \$125,000,000.

Thru the country there was a remarkable development, both as to methods and magnitude. We had immense energy, but not much cash. Our enterprises rested on foreign capital. A

graphic memorial of our condition is afforded by one of the very foremost structures down town. What is now the City Bank and was formerly the Custom House, was before that the Merchants' Exchange. This building, with its present imposing granite colonnade, was erected in 1839, at a cost of \$1,500,000, on the site of the earlier building destroyed in the great fire of 1835. More than half the amount, or \$800,000, had been borrowed in England and secured by bond and mortgage. Said Mr. Gallatin, the financial authority of the day, in 1839,—“Specie is to the United States, a foreign product.” In 1850, we were still largely a debtor nation, and such can hold coin only by favor. Immigration, the western farms, California gold, and an infinite variety of manufactures, were soon to change all this.

About this time, immigration became a flood. A few years prior to the laying of our first corner-stone, only handfuls of foreigners came: one hundred thousand a year startled everyone. Beyond the Atlantic, there were great sufferings and many changes. 1848 witnessed bloody revolutions among the European States, while Ireland experienced two years of appalling famine. Vast multitudes started for America, the peasantry of Ireland seeking food, the downtrodden peoples in many lands seeking liberty. Three hundred thousand came in 1849, and four hundred and twenty-eight thousand in 1850.

There were of course mighty land areas to be cultivated, for great events were taking place in the nation. Texas added three hundred and fifty thousand square miles to the national domain. The Mexican War was fought. New Mexico and California, comprising five hundred thousand square miles, became part of the United States. No sooner was the treaty with Mexico signed, than gold in rich deposits was discovered in California. Perhaps the world never saw such a flocking together of adventurers as that of the gold seekers of 1849-1850. They scuttled into the new country from adjoining regions, from the Middle West, from our Eastern States and from every continent. In Brooklyn and New York men left their business, families and churches to make the long, perilous journey of months. By the time the census

of 1850 was taken, eighty thousand settlers had rushed to the neighborhood of San Francisco. Some made their way over the endless and barren plains, even walking over the snowy passes of the Rocky Mountains. Some crossed near where we are digging the Panama Canal, and thence took little vessels up the west coast to the Golden Gate. Some went by the six-months trip around Cape Horn. The bones of many an ill-fated gold-seeker were whitening on the western deserts and many a frail bark went to wreck on the Pacific shores. The winter of 1849-1850 was very cold and snowy in New York, and thousands of men hastened to California. As few found gold, gentlemen from our best clubs turned porters, waiters and peddlers in San Francisco.

Providentially our industries were suddenly broadened. Machinery showed wonderful improvements; practical sewing-machines were being made, but had hardly as yet become known; the rotary printing press was making its way more rapidly; the power loom for weaving cloth had been greatly improved; locomotives and steamboats we had, of course, but now came the McCormick reaper, producing changes scarcely less striking than those brought about by the application of steam in transportation. With the reaper came other advances in farm equipment. It was not till the Worlds Fair, projected by the Prince Consort in London in 1851, that the world at large learned for the first time of the novel agricultural machinery which was being set to work on our American prairies. That made the western farms profitable and gave a huge impulse to the occupancy of the land.

The year brought great changes in transportation and in the telegraph. The first trunk line railroad to enter New York was the Erie, whose tracks were completed from Lake Erie to the Hudson River early in 1851. The railroads that ran out of New York were humble affairs. For Albany and intermediate points, one took the cars at the corner of Chambers and Hudson Streets, or in Thirty-first Street near Tenth Avenue. For Albany via Harlem, the station was at 4 Tryon Row, just east of the City Hall, and at Twenty-seventh Street and Fourth

Avenue. The trains for Boston started from 412 Broadway, near Canal Street, and also from Fourth Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street. For Greenport and all places on Long Island, passengers crossed by the South Ferry to Brooklyn. There were two roads to Philadelphia, one via the ferryboat from the foot of Cortlandt Street, the train running through Newark; the other via South Amboy and Camden, the steamers leaving our Pier 1 and running to South Amboy where the railroad commenced.

It was not till 1844 that the first telegraph line in the country was in operation. New York and Philadelphia were not joined till 1846. Though in 1850 the wires were strung over less than 17,000 miles in the United States, they were already changing methods of business. We were to wait eight years for the Atlantic cable.

Those were the days of American triumphs on the ocean. The gold excitement gave immense impetus to the construction of clippers. The "Surprise," belonging to A. A. Low Bros., reached San Francisco from New York, in ninety days, and left there for London via Canton, receiving six pounds sterling per ton for tea and all freight, netting her owners \$50,000 in excess of her cost and running expenses. Our flag was seen on our own ships on every sea. A few months later the yacht "America" defeated all competitors and won the Queen's Cup. The steamer "Atlantic" in the summer crossed the ocean, making the run from New York to Liverpool in ten days, eight hours and twenty minutes, breaking all records.

The human mind confronted with such immense external changes, passed through a period of ferment which ended in the reign of transcendentalism and criticism in politics, literature and religion. Most fantastic of all the new systems that found origin in this period, we must count Mormonism.

Our political events were the outgrowth of the unrest, the anxieties, the aspirations and the blind gropings of the time. The spectre of slavery was looming and laying its corrupt hands on every public question. The incoming peoples from Europe

seeking labor, instinctively turned aside from the southern states and gravitated to the west. While Congress was wondering what to do with the newly-acquired territories, California came to the front with a vigorous, clamorous population demanding statehood. Were there to be slaves in these new states and territories? How was the Constitution to be interpreted? Were the economic ideas and the political doctrines of the south or of the north, to spread to the Pacific coast? These were the questions which aroused a bitterness we try hard in this generation to understand. Mr. Calhoun voiced the demands of the south; Daniel Webster and Henry Clay on the side of the north, urged mediation and compromise. While our earliest services were being held, contradictory enactments by Congress were suffered to go upon record. It was agreed that California should be free and that New Mexico should have slaves; that the District of Columbia should be free from slave traffic, but not from slave-holding, while a stringent Fugitive Slave Law should aid southerners in recovering their runaways. Brooklyn quickly discovered what the Fugitive Slave Law meant. Two days before our first services were held, James Hamlet, a former slave living not far from St. Mark's, was arrested under the new law and taken back to his owners in Baltimore. Public indignation could find no other course than a subscription list which purchased the man's freedom and returned him to his family. Close upon the huddling together in Congress of these compromises, close upon the first services of St. Mark's, great names passed from the living. Calhoun died March 31st, and the soldier-President, Harrison, July 9th. Two years later, in 1852, Henry Clay was taken in June, and Mr. Webster in October. During the first ten years of our parochial history the bitterness of factions increased till the volcanic outburst came in a civil war that devastated the land for four years and slew a million men, and piled up thousands of millions of debt.

Turning to a happier theme, the growth of the Kingdom, what visions rise as we think of the simple beginning of St. Mark's services! The General Convention of our Church met in 1850,

curiously enough, in Cincinnati, where it assembled two months ago. The Upper House consisted of twenty-eight Bishops, the number standing now at one hundred and twelve. The Board of Missions reported \$201,000 raised throughout the Church in three years: our receipts at present are in the neighborhood of a million dollars annually. The total number of the clergy was then 1,580; we have 5,500 now. In the Journal there is a quaint chapter on the "Course of Ecclesiastical Studies," which quotes the action of the House of Bishops in 1804, a pronouncement in which no mention is made of either the Greek or Hebrew languages, there being in consequence no mention of any requirement to read the Bible in the original tongues. The Diocese of New York, of which we then formed a part, was in an anomalous condition. From January 3, 1845, till November 10, 1852, a period of seven years, as result of action taken by the Convention of the Diocese, as well as by the General Convention, the leading jurisdiction of the American Church was left without a Bishop. Confirmations were held at St. Mark's in the years 1851 and 1852 by Bishop Chase, of New Hampshire. Dr. Wainwright, at St. John's Chapel, Trinity Parish, was called in 1852 to be Provisional Bishop of New York. Dr. Berrian was Rector of Trinity Church. Dr. Whitehouse, afterward Bishop of Illinois, was in St. Thomas Church, which then stood at the corner of Broadway and Houston Street; Dr. Bedell, afterward Bishop of Ohio, was at Ascension, Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, among the new Knickerbocker settlement; the elegant and learned Dr. Seabury was at the Annunciation in Fourteenth Street; Dr. Muhlenberg was far uptown at the Church of the Holy Communion at Twentieth Street. It is interesting in connection with the Deaf Mutes' services held in this church for many years, to recall that prior to St. Mark's beginning, Thomas Gallaudet was superintendent of the Sunday School of St. Stephen's Church, Broome Street, New York. He was ordained a deacon there June 16, 1850, by Bishop Whittingham, becoming assistant at St. Stephen's, September 18, 1850, on which day he started the first Bible class for Deaf Mutes in America.

The very amusements of the people showed that we were emerging from the simple ways of earlier times. P. T. Barnum's advertising of Jenny Lind had created a furor. A few days before our first worship, the "Swedish nightingale" had opened her season at Castle Garden with an audience of seven thousand people, the proceeds amounting to \$35,000. The unprecedented spectacle was afforded of people eagerly paying twenty-five dollars for an evening's entertainment. The same manager about the same time made the drama popular among a class of people who had maintained that the stage was immoral. His Museum included a "Lecture Room," designed for the presentation of what was called the "moral domestic drama." Strict church people in the city, and country visitors without number, and clergymen, found these entertainments entirely proper. Our Coney Island in 1850 was Hoboken, with a week-day population of 2,700 and a Sunday influx of 20,000.

It may interest us to recall the notable events of that day in our city. A few weeks earlier, the Griennell Expedition had set sail from New York for the Arctic circle, bent upon discovering some trace of the lamented Sir John Franklin, Dr. Elisha Kent Kane going as surgeon and naturalist. The Astor Library had just been started, Governor Hamilton Fish having recommended the necessary legislation. While the "Herald," the "Sun" and the "Tribune" had been some years in the field, the "New York Times" was not founded by Henry J. Raymond till the following year. The "World" was not to appear for ten years yet. New York's population in 1850 was 515,000, not a third of Brooklyn's inhabitants at the present time. Immigration, about 1850, brought a remarkable change in the living. Before that year, our domestics were largely blacks; afterward the Irish became general. New York's uptown movement had begun. It was noticed that in 1850 there was not a single private residence on Pine Street. A. T. Stewart, in 1854, extended his marble store to Reade Street. On Broadway, as far as Bleecker Street, the private residences were giving place to structures for business. The fashionable residence sections were Bond Street, Washington Square, East

Broadway and Union Square. An elegant region was building up on Second Avenue, Peter G. Stuyvesant having given an area for a square, on condition that the city should erect a proper iron fence. The cutting through of the avenue divided this into two pretty parks, on the west side of which the massive St. George's Church was rising. Samuel B. Ruggles, wishing to get people to erect first-class buildings a little higher up than Union Square, presented what is now Gramercy Park, to the owners of sixty adjoining lots of land. How to improve the ten acre region where Broadway crosses Fifth Avenue was a problem. A stream of water and a pond where the boys skated in winter interfered with all plans for its development. Through the influence of Mayor James Harper Madison Square took final form and rescued this part of the town from its wastes and shanties and made a new centre of fashion and amusement. No one yet dreamed of such a place as Central Park: but about this time the idea of connecting Brooklyn and New York by bridge was seriously discussed, an editorial in the "Tribune" saying: "The bridge is the great event of the day; New York and Brooklyn must be united and there is no other way of doing it. The thing will certainly be achieved one of these days, and the sooner the better." The likeliest plan for this improvement included a floating bridge with a draw for passing vessels.

In Brooklyn there had been a disastrous epidemic of cholera, especially on the low, unhealthy grounds. We had only enjoyed gas for two years and the great majority insisted that lamps were in every way superior. Our first church began with these. Improvements at Gowanus were made on a large scale by constructing a navigable canal to drain the malarious swamps, increasing the healthfulness of South Brooklyn and stimulating building. These efforts were successful, one-third the buildings erected in Brooklyn in 1849 being south of Atlantic Avenue.

In the "History of St. Mark's Church 1850 to 1885" reference is made to the three sites which St. Mark's has occupied. It suffices now to say that the original location in Fleet Place near Willoughby Street, was in a well-populated community. The

ground purchased in 1860 at DeKalb and Portland Avenues was in a newly built, handsome region. Our present, and let us hope permanent, site was purchased from the Church of the Messiah in 1866. That parish had been planted here at the same period that we had built in Fleet Place.

The original church building for the Messiah must have been erected on this site among farms and vacant lots. In the Brooklyn Directory for 1841-2, Adelphi Street runs between Clermont and Carlton Avenues south from the Wallabout Road to Myrtle Avenue, and has only eight houses, of which three belong to officers of the United States Navy. It is not till 1854 that Adelphi Street crosses Flushing, Park, Myrtle, Willoughby, DeKalb, Lafayette, Greene, Fulton and Atlantic Avenues. Many facts show that this region of Brooklyn was then beyond the limits of civic dignity. When we commenced services, squatters were on Myrtle Avenue opposite Fort Greene. As these refused to pay rent or to obey the town ordinances to remove, it was decided to evict them by force.

While our little edifice was being pushed forward, Trinity Chapel, New York, was in building, the Marble Dutch Church at Twenty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue was being planned, and the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Fiftieth Street and Fifth Avenue was being commenced by Archbishop Hughes. Brooklyn now had 100,000 and Williamsburgh 20,000, the latter having risen since 1840 from 5,000, and intending to annex Bushwick, with 15,000.

We note first in the words to the Philippians the Apostle's overflowing gratitude for fellowship in the work of the Gospel. Strong personal affection existed.

"I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine in behalf of you all making my supplication with joy for your fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel."

Paul could not offer a prayer without indulging a supplication for those dear souls. As he later says, he had the Philippians in his heart.

Let it be with humility, with a painful sense of the mani-

fold shortcomings both of the people and of your clergy, but most of all of your present Rector, that we apply to ourselves these burning words of primitive zeal. Yet we feel that St. Paul struck the chord in Philippi, to which our hearts respond here in St. Mark's. Your ministers have received unmistakable tokens of your devotion. Of Francis Peck, I never heard anyone speak but in the tenderest manner. To rich and poor he appeared the sympathetic, sincere messenger of Christ. Dr. Cornell attached people as with hooks of steel. Mr. Fitch held to his last hour, the strong respect of intelligent and devout people.

As we mention the ministers, visions rise of their helpers, of the men and women who worshipped in our congregations, taught our Bible classes, labored in our societies, extended the power of the Gospel to the souls without. Among our workers, let us thank God for Hyde, for Burtis and Hinman, and Mrs. Potter, for Huntington, and Hoffman, for Warburton and Walker, for Budington, the Lockitts and Pettits, for Roes and Longmans. Let us speak tenderly, too, the names of Davis and Whittaker, of Bouck and Newell, of Cole and Fricke, of Mortimer, Annan and Keeney. We think of all the sacred hours that weary, tempted souls have known in these four edifices. There are the seventeen hundred lives consecrated in their early days at this Font, with the water of Baptism. There are the thousand souls who, in Confirmation, deliberately and solemnly promised obedience to Jesus Christ. There are the many thousands who, kneeling before this altar, ate and drank of the Body and Blood of Christ and found their souls mysteriously strengthened. There are the more than twelve hundred lovers whose hands were joined here and to whom Heaven allotted happiness and offspring. And there were the recumbent forms of sire and grandsire, of wife and child, of brother and friend, borne twice through these aisles as the tears streamed and we tried to sing,

“For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy Name, O Jesu, be forever blest,

Alleluia.”

Such sacred reminiscences of Pastor and People excite the profoundest feelings of thanksgiving.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you all." I thank Him not merely for my great-souled, earnest, devoted father, nor for my gracious, sainted mother, nor for my happy home, nor for my love of books and art and nature, but I thank Him too for the difficulties and discouragements, for the delights and dignities of this rectorship of St. Mark's.

If you would find the purest friendship of this world, I would advise you to study the lives that have been given to the Church of God. Look to the men and women who built up some little mission, or to the sacred companionships the people of St. Mark's have known in their sixty years. As life passes, our most precious memories are not of our amusements, nor our occupations, nor even of our domestic enjoyments, but rather of those hours when the soul was swept by impulses from God on high, hours when we labored to build up the kingdom of Christ, hours in which we listened to the herald of divine truth, or tried to speak of sin and salvation, of Christ and heaven to the little children.

But it is time to turn from the past to the future. There is the anticipation, under God, of a great future. Philippi is to behold the "furtherance of the Gospel." The good work that started in Lydia's house, is to broaden out till many in the town should be blessed. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." We are embarked on a course which in the event of human fidelity, must issue in glorious well-being.

The words of St. Paul represent the religion of Jesus Christ in a light that goes far to explain the secret of its practical supremacy among human interests. The Gospel is a good work begun, promising perfection. It is the cause of truth, of justice, of purity, in a word, the cause of God working through the race of men. The weakness, the mutability, the evanescence that characterize all other forms of activity, do not in like manner characterize the Church. The vine may be cut down, but it

springs again and in the new life brings forth richer clusters.

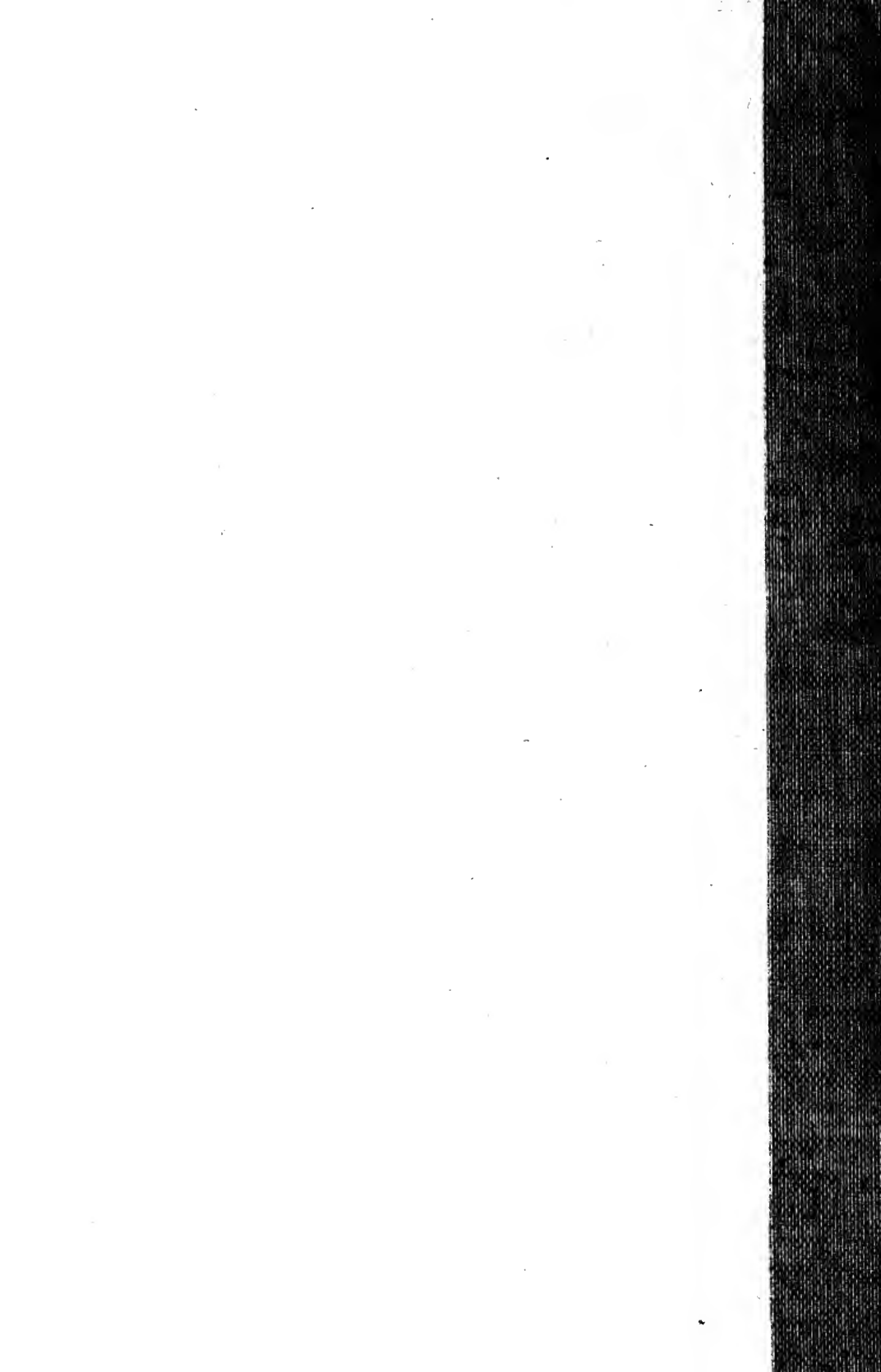
Why should not the future of St. Mark's be bright in work done for the Master? The parish is planted in a beautiful region in one of the most prosperous communities of our times. The growth of the Borough of Brooklyn is more than startling. Brooklyn built in 1909 residential structures for 67,000 persons. In the three years 1907, '8 and '9, we reared abodes for 320,000 people, sufficient to accommodate the entire population of Troy (76,000), and of Albany (100,000), and of Utica (74,000), and of Salt Lake City (92,000). Today or rather several months ago, Brooklyn had a population of 1,634,351, exceeding in size Philadelphia. The Borough ranks ninth among the cities of the world. The area is only 77 square miles, or 50,000 acres. The available additional acreage is but 40,000, so that we have used up more than one-half of our territory. We have 1,000 miles in streets and highways, 900 miles in sewers. And yet there have been no considerable additions to our transit facilities. Though new bridges have been constructed, no suitable approaches have yet been provided; there are no adequate transit facilities from Manhattan to Brooklyn. And yet in these ten years Brooklyn has added 467,000 to its numbers, or more people than live in Cincinnati (364,000), or Detroit (465,000), or Washington (331,000). With the Fourth Avenue Subway, the Broadway-Lafayette Loop, better communication across the Brooklyn Bridge, the Williamsburgh Bridge, the Queensborough Bridge, and a conservative estimate for the next ten years would place the population of this Borough alone in 1920 at 2,500,000.

In so teeming a population, we are members of a church that has proven its adaptability to the people of America. Statistics presented a few days ago to the Triennial Convention at its opening session in Cincinnati show that sixty years ago, the Episcopal Church numbered 80,000 communicants, and has today 950,000 members. While the population of the United States has increased four hundred per cent, the number of communicants in this Church has increased over twelve hundred per cent.

Let us only love this church, and strive to bring others to

love it, too. May these days of sacred reminiscence spur us to a purer zeal. Go back sixty years. Think of the insurance companies, firms, banks, factories, mining enterprises that have arisen, dazzled, and then dropped from sight. And poor St. Mark's, often unable to pay its ministers, or its choir, or its insurance,—St. Mark's has lived and come into a goodly heritage. When you are discouraged, look at the Church! When God begins the work of Redemption, it will be carried on to an eternal triumph.

Sacred hours in sixty years in which our grandfathers and our fathers and we labored and wept and rejoiced and hoped and feared and struggled and triumphed together! Here faithful men have listened to the glad tidings and tried to square their lives with the truth. And as we look up to this choir invisible, this cloud of witnesses on the heights, we will gather strength from hand-grasping with our own dear living fellow-members who are striving to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."



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