

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
South Third Street Presbyterian Church,
WILLIAMSBURGH, L. I.

From its Organization, April 19th, 1844,

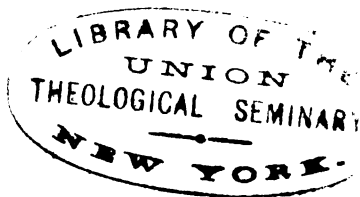
IN A SERMON, PREACHED APRIL 18TH, 1869, BY THE PASTOR,

J. D. WELLS,

And now Printed by Request.

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This Sermon is printed for the use of the congregation and others who may be interested in its affairs. It is purely historical.

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the organization of the Church, was commemorated by a joint communion of the five Churches mentioned in the Sermon, all their pastors being present, and taking part in the service.

A short account of this service follows the Sermon.

SERMON.

EXODUS XIV, 15.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.

Thus God spake to Moses, and through him to His people, at a crisis in their history. They were terrified and demoralized. They had come out of Egypt, but they had not wholly escaped the wrath of the enemy. The Egyptians were behind them, with horses and chariots, in hot pursuit, and they were encamped by the sea, beside Pihahiroth.

Failing to assure the people by his words of confidence in God, Moses betook himself to prayer. But Jehovah interrupted him, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Then followed minute directions how to proceed, and a revelation of what God himself would do. The course of his people lay through the Red Sea. They could not retreat. They must not turn to the right hand nor to the left. And how sublime were the arrangements for the advance! "The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and

it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night."

Pursued by the Egyptians, guarded and directed by the Living God, the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground. The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. The same waters were the destruction of their enemies. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

Twenty-five years after this deliverance, the tribes of Israel were a consolidated people. They had a written constitution, a movable sanctuary, a representative priesthood, typical sacrifices and holy sacraments, and the Shechinah, the visible symbol of the divine presence and glory.

They were still in the wilderness. Many had fallen by the way. But instead of the fathers had come their children. Moreover God was with them as their refuge and strength, and Canaan was nearer, than when the sea closed behind them to drown their enemies.

How many reasons had they to review the past and give earnest heed to the command still dear to their hearts: "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

On these words the Rev. Gardiner Spring, D. D., preached at the organization of our Church twenty-five years ago to-morrow. Twenty-five years ago to-day you had no organic life. On the 19th of April, 1844, you were constituted a Christian Church, and having obtained help of God you continue unto this day, looking gratefully and penitently into the known past, and hopefully into the unknown future. We look back to see all the way

by which God has led us. We look forward because the divine command, that we go forward, still rings in our ears.

I.

In looking to the past, it will be convenient to divide the twenty-five years of our history into periods of five years each, and to speak of them separately and in succession :

1. The first period extends from April 19, 1844, to April 19, 1849.

It embraces the organization of the Church ; the ministry, for the most part, of its first pastor ; the erection and occupancy of this church building, and of the adjoining house for a Parsonage ; and finally the increase of the Church in the number of its members, and in power.

When the organization occurred, Williamsburgh was a village containing about 10,000 inhabitants. Many acres of ground, now covered with costly buildings and thronged with people, were then fields for pasturage, or yielded to their owners and occupants the fruits of culture.

For these ten thousand people, leaving out Bushwick with its Reformed Dutch Church, still under the pastoral care of the Rev. S. H. Meeker, there were nine churches, viz.: the 1st M. E. Church, organized 1808 ; the 1st Reformed Dutch Church, 1828 ; the 1st M. Protestant Church, 1832 ; St. Mark's Protestant Episcopal, 1837 ; 1st Baptist, April, 1839 ; South 5th Street M. E., May, 1839 ; Holy Trinity, Roman Catholic, Montrose Avenue, 1841 ;

1st Presbyterian, 1842; and 1st Congregational, Rev. S. S. Jocelyn's, disbanded a few years ago, 1843.

Of the twenty-seven adult members, composing our Church at its organization, twenty-three, including three Ruling Elders, brought letters from the 1st Presbyterian Church, then in its infancy. The reasons for this transfer of relation are recorded in a historical minute, preserved in the first volume of our Sessional Records. The remaining four came from the Brick Church, New York, and the Presbyterian Churches at New Burgh, and Huntington, N. Y.

The Committee of organization consisted of the Rev. Doctors Gardiner Spring and John Goldsmith, and Ruling Elders, William Couch and George L. Sampson. The Rev. N. S. Prime, D. D., who was deeply interested in the movement, was invited to sit with the Committee.

Of all these excellent men Dr. Spring alone, we believe, survives, laden with many years and honors.

The Church was organized in the Public School building on the N. E. corner of South 3d and 5th Streets, Friday evening, April 19th, 1844. The sermon, by Dr. Spring, was a word in season to the infant congregation.

Closing their report to the Presbytery, after "commending the little one to the love and blessing of the King of Zion," the committee "bespeak for it the fostering care of the Presbytery and the Churches, that out of weakness it may become strong, the mother of thousands, and an honored coadjutor in the great work of subduing a rapidly growing population to the faith and order of the Gospel."

The first Ruling Elders were, Henry Payson, Rufus Belden,

and Wheeler V. Nichols. John Hamilton was ordained and installed Oct. 11, 1846.

During this first period the Church enjoyed the ministry of the Rev. N. S. Prime, D. D., and the Rev. P. E. Stevenson; the Rev. Dr. Prime being stated supply for ten months.

The installation of the Rev. Mr. Stevenson took place on the evening of Feb. 20th, 1845, in the Baptist Bethel, corner South 1st and 5th Streets.* It was conducted by the Rev. Jonathan Greenleaf, the Rev. John Johnstone, the Rev. Doctors W. D. Snodgrass, James W. Alexander, and James M. McDonald, and the Rev. A. D. Mason, of the Bethel, in which, for the time, the Presbytery of New York held its special meeting.

Thus the Church entered upon its great work. It began its organized existence with prayer and fasting, and under the ministry of wise and faithful men God fed his people with the finest of the wheat. A mere handful, without wealth, and with no shelter that they could call their own, they worshiped God and enjoyed the sacraments, in walls that echoed through the week to the voices of children and their teachers; and this they did from April, 1844, to December, 1845, a period of twenty months. The Sabbath School too, was gathered and nurtured into strength in the same building; a building, I may add, which, after many years of thorough occupancy by the first of our Public Schools, has become the useful depository of books and apparatus for all the schools, and also of their consolidated Libraries.

The corner-stone of this Church edifice was laid August 18, 1845. In this service the Rev. N. S. Prime, D. D., the Rev. P. E. Stevenson, and the Rev. J. W. McLane, D. D., pastor of the 1st

* This building was destroyed by fire several years ago.

Presbyterian Church, took part. The Rev. Mr. Stevenson alone survives.

The basement was finished and first occupied on Thursday, December 4th, 1845, the day of Public Thanksgiving in the State. The entire building was dedicated to the service of God, on Sabbath afternoon, May 10, 1846, less than nine months from the time of laying the corner-stone. In the following year, the house now owned by the Church, and occupied as a Parsonage from the beginning, was built. It bears plainly on its side, in iron numerals, the date of its erection, 1847, reminding the passer of the lapse of time, but giving no hint of mercies that have fallen gently upon the only two families that have enjoyed its comforts.

It is proper to add that the Church building stands on ground sold at a merely nominal price, by G. C. Furman, Esq., afterwards, for many years, and at the time of his death, a worshiper with us.

At the close of this first period, there had been received to the Communion of the Church, fifteen persons on profession of faith, and a hundred and thirty-eight by letter, an aggregate of one hundred and fifty-three, and an annual average increase of about thirty-one. Twenty-eight infants were baptized and enrolled.

Already, therefore, the hope expressed by the Committee at the organization of the Church, was realized in part; out of weakness, the little one had become relatively strong. Foundations were laid. The growing community acknowledge the devotion, energy and enterprise of the Church. Its Sabbath School work was well developed, commanding as it did the earnest and consecrated labor of mature Christians. Through the personal toil of some of its members, the influence of the Church was felt at

Greenpoint, where a Sabbath School was established under the care of Ruling Elder John Hamilton, and by its prayers and alms, it reached and blessed the ends of the earth.

The years closing with April, 1849, may be characterized as years of organization, construction and consolidation. The Church was gathered, sheltered, strengthened. It was recognized by Christian people as a Church of the Living God, under the care of Christ the Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

During this period other churches were organized and in the following order: in 1845, the Gothic Methodist Episcopal and the Universalist; in 1846 Christ's Protestant Episcopal; in 1847 the German Evangelical; in 1848 St. Peter and Paul's Roman Catholic, and St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal; and in 1849 Calvary Protestant Episcopal; and North 5th Street Methodist Episcopal.

2. The second period of five years, beginning with April, 1849, ends with April, 1854.

The Village of Williamsburgh became the City of Williamsburgh in 1851, and was consolidated with the City of Brooklyn in 1854.

The first important event of this period was the change of pastors. The dissolution of the pastoral relation between the Rev. Mr. Stevenson and the Church, took place, at his own request, in September, 1849, and he left the great work which God had enabled him to do to other hands.

My service, as pastor elect, began with the first Sabbath of 1850, but my ordination and installation were deferred till Sabbath, the 20th of January, in the evening. Some of you will recall the service, the thronged house, and the momentous and

affecting truths uttered by the Rev. W. W. Phillips, D. D., who preached the sermon; the Rev. J. M. Krebs, D. D., who gave the charge to me; and the Rev. M. W. Jacobus, D. D., who gave the charge to the people. Of the three, Dr. Jacobus alone survives.

It cannot be out of place to say that while the successive years of this period were given to earnest toil by the Church and myself, they were to me years of conflict and distress.

I found the work and responsibility of the pastoral office in this congregation a burden too heavy for me, and nothing but the boundless mercy of our Lord, and the wonderful forbearance and love of the people kept me from sinking. Again and again, I was ready to faint; but the manifest tokens of God's favor and blessing, were given in such measure and times, as to warrant the conclusion that the chastening we received was for our profit, and that only by mingled corrections and mercies could his kind purposes towards the Church and myself be accomplished.

March 10, 1850, we completed the organization of the Church by the election of Deacons. The brethren chosen were S. M. Beard, Horace Thayer, and D. B. Hunt; at the same time we added brethren A. P. Cummings and G. B. Hubbell to the number of Ruling Elders.

In the next year, the house occupied as a Parsonage was bought, and a large part of the funded and floating debt against the Church and the adjoining lots, amounting to about \$14,000, was paid; a heavy mortgage remaining upon the Parsonage.

In this year, too, we gave several families and some of our best workers, to assist in the organization of the New England Congregational Church in South Ninth Street. These brethren came

into our Communion frankly telling us, that when a movement was made to establish a Church of that denomination, to which by birth and choice they belonged, they would leave us. Some of this class lingered with us for years, and some remain to this day, honored and beloved. It is pleasant to remember that in all these changes there was no estrangement of feeling, and that we who are left in the two churches still meet and love as brethren.

In the year 1852 the first extensive repairs were made in the interior of the Church. Blinds took the place of shades. The seats of the Gallery were made lower and wider. The vacant spaces on the sides of the Pulpit were filled with pews. The wood-work was painted and grained in imitation of oak. New cushions were furnished and gas was introduced. The amount expended for these improvements was nearly \$3,000.00; and in 1853 a subscription of \$2,800.00 was made and applied to the liquidation of the debt.

During the five years of which I now speak, seventy-two infants were baptized, and so recognized as members of the visible Church. Thirty-seven adults were added to our Communion on profession of their faith, and a hundred and forty-nine by letter, making an aggregate increase of a hundred and eighty-six adults, and an annual average increase of thirty-seven adults.

The Sabbath School work of the Church grew in interest and power. It connected itself with two centers, remote from this, around which, even then, God was beginning to gather materials for separate Church organizations,—I refer to Ainslie Street and Throope Avenue. The work at Greenpoint was left to brethren on the ground, though now, after so many years, we are called

with the churches of our Presbytery to resume and enlarge the work in that important field*

Consecration and enlargement are leading characteristics of the period just spoken of. It was marked throughout by the devotion of time, strength, influence, and treasure, to the service of Christ, and by the extension of our work at home and abroad. Our contact with the ends of the earth, and the Kingdom of our Lord in remote fields was close and effective, just in proportion to the intensity and thoroughness of our work here. We received liberal help from others in the reduction of our debt, but found it then, as always since, more blessed to give than to receive.

Several churches were organized during this period viz.: The Reformed Scotch Presbyterian; The Associate Reformed Presbyterian, and The German Presbyterian now in Leonard Street. The first of these changed its ecclesiastical relation, and after some years, was disbanded, the property falling into the hands of the Roman Catholics, who established a new church on the spot.

The second became the first U. P. Church, now in N. 5th Street, and the other has grown into the large Church under the pastoral care of Rev. J. Neander.

3. The third period of our history extends from April, 1854, to April, 1859.

On the 16th of July, 1854, Eli Beard was installed, and Robert

*Since preaching this sermon, I have had the pleasure of sharing in labors that have resulted in the organization of a Presbyterian Church at Greenpoint, the purchase of grounds, and the erection of a commodious temporary church edifice. Moreover, the Church has grown from a membership of sixteen to forty; with a congregation four or five times as large, and a Sabbath School of about three hundred children. The Rev. W. H. Taylor, has been unanimously elected Pastor of the Church, and enters immediately upon his work, in the midst of a population of seventeen thousand souls, increasing rapidly every year.

Warnock, J. Arthur Burr and William M. Raymond were ordained and installed, Ruling Elders of this Church; and on the 7th of October of the next year, S. H. Sammis, Mortimer Strong, and W. H. Myers were ordained and installed Deacons.

On Sabbath, the 22nd day of October, 1854, eighteen members of our Church presented their letters to a Committee of the Presbyterian of New York, and were organized as the Ainslie Street Presbyterian Church, with Robert Johnston as their only Ruling Elder, and Herman Vasseur their only Deacon.

The contributions of our Church toward paying for the ground and Chapel of this first colony, amounted to about \$3,000.00, and by application to others, we raised nearly as much more. This was done in our weakness, and under the conviction that we must take possession of that part of the City, or lose the opportunity forever; and we have had great joy in the result. From the beginning the Church devised liberal things. In 1861 it became self-sustaining. And in its whole history, under the ministry of the Rev. Messrs. C. W. Hodge, Albert Bigelow, James McDougall, Jr., and John Hancock, assisted by fourteen Ruling Elders and eight Deacons, in all, it has received to its Communion a hundred and ninety persons on profession of faith, and a hundred and sixty-two by letter, making an aggregate of three hundred and fifty-two, and an annual average increase of more than twenty-three. Their adult membership is now two hundred and twenty-seven, and their infant membership is large.

They have received into their Sabbath School, from the beginning, about twelve hundred children, and have now in regular attendance, from Sabbath to Sabbath, more than four hundred scholars and teachers. By the enlargement of their Chapel and

the growth of the City, their property has greatly increased in value. They have, still unoccupied, a beautiful site for a Church edifice. The estimated worth of all their property is from \$25,000 to \$35,000, with an incumbrance of only \$1,000.00 the small balance left, after the recent payment of about \$4,000.00.

It is pleasant to add that the power of this Church for good, has been recognized from the beginning. For years they sustained a Mission School in a neglected neighborhood beyond them, and they are doing much to give character to the population crowding upon them on every side.

It is clear that not a tithe of the work easily and joyfully done by them for Christ and his cause, could have been done by us. Time, and the blessing of God, have abundantly shown that the little sacrifice to which we gave ourselves, fifteen years ago, was not in vain; and in our sacred reunion to-day, we will rejoice in the work of our hands, and give glory to God.

In the year 1855, we made costly improvements on our Church building in the erection of stone steps at all the doors; the excavation of an area on the west side; the removal of earth from beneath the basement floors, to improve the ventilation; and the painting of the outer walls.

There were added to the Communion of our Church during this period, eighty-three adults on profession of faith, and a hundred and fifteen by letter, making a total of one hundred and ninety-eight, and an annual average increase of more than thirty-nine. Beside these, eighty infant members were baptized.

The increase on profession of faith suggests the crowning mercy of this period.

On Tuesday night, March 20, 1855, following a Communion

Sabbath, while I was speaking to parents and their children, in what is now the Infant Room below, a number of souls were touched and subdued. From that sacred hour, for more than two years, there was great solemnity and great joy in our sanctuary. The promise "I will be as the dew unto Israel," was sweetly fulfilled. Gently the grace of our Lord Jesus distilled upon us. He seemed to breathe on all our assemblies, and say "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." We expected his blessing at every opening of his house, and knew that we had it. The peace of God which passeth all understanding kept our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. We did not multiply religious services because we thought it better to attend those already established and to put honor upon home duties. Adults and youth, deeply convinced of sin and righteousness and judgment, were drawn to Jesus, and gave themselves to Him, believing that they were no longer their own, but were bought with a price. They made no stipulation that in their Christian life, they should retain worldly pleasures, from which as snares to their souls they were glad to escape. They felt and said, that even in the past they had received nothing but wounds by conforming to the world, and that having received Christ as their Saviour and Lord, they wished to be like him here, that they might be with him hereafter. Those precious years, I am sure, did much to establish our hearts in the faith of the gospel, to strengthen us for Christian toil, to bind us together in the love of brethren, and, though we knew it not then, to help us safely through the fourth and stormy period of our history, when the fearful commotions of the State, threatened the churches through the length and breadth of our darkened land.

In 1858, you gave me a great surprise, by sending me abroad

to recover strength, after exhausting labor. This was in keeping with all your kindness and generosity from the beginning of my pastorate, and with all that you have continued to do for my family and myself, to the present day.

I cannot hesitate a moment to characterize this third period of our history, as the period of special and most gracious divine visitation. The recollections of it are always pleasant and refreshing. Its results are partly with God, but in great part they remain with us, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

The principal churches organized during this period, in connection with other denominations, were, I think, the Second Baptist Church now in Ainslie Street, the Lee Avenue Reformed Church, the Lutheran Church in South 1st Street, and the Lee Avenue Baptist Church. Beside these, some of our colored Churches, now numbering four, perhaps three Methodist and one Baptist, were founded.

4. I pass now to the fourth period of our history, extending from April, 1859, to April, 1864.

It embraces a stormy time in Church and State. We did not escape the agitation of these and the subsequent years. But through the good hand of our God upon us, we received no mortal hurt. It cannot be said that in the conflict of new emotions incident to civil war, as it approached and finally burst upon the land, a tempest of wrath and fire and blood, we made no mistakes in the pulpit and the pew. We were all more or less moved from that repose which faith alone secures in troublous times. But we were not cast down and destroyed. Our hearts were fixed trusting in the Lord. We tried to stand each in his lot, and give what we could for the cause of our Master and the welfare of the nation ;

and God accepted us, not according to our partial judgment of each other, but according to his own infallible knowledge of our motives and our works. The great fact, that stands out in a clear light as we look back to those times, is, that our Church work advanced without interruption, if not with the same power and gladness as before.

By common consent the Councils of the Session were restricted to matters pertaining to the Church. The din of war was kept as much as possible from the ears and hearts of our children in the Sabbath School. Prayer was offered, without ceasing, that the Prince of Peace would maintain peace in every soul, and command peace as soon as possible in all our borders. We turned no deaf ear to the calls of humanity and patriotism, but we stoutly refused to set aside the great principles of law, human and divine, in reference to the use of the lot in Fairs, and chose more direct and righteous methods of giving our money and our labor for the relief of distress.

The increase of the Church on profession of faith, declined from eighty-three in the period before, to forty-one, a number that was still above the increase from 1849, to 1854. The number added by letter was ninety-three, making an aggregate increase of a hundred and thirty four, and an annual average increase of about twenty-seven. Seventy-four infant members of our Church were baptized during the same time.

In this period we gave most of the members and families that entered into the organization of Throope Avenue Presbyterian Church. Of its twenty-three members, seventeen were from our Communion. The organization was effected by a Committee of the Presbytery of Nassau, on the evening of Sabbath, June 8th,

1862, in their own Chapel, already built and occupied by the Sabbath School, to which for more than ten years, they had devoted their time and strength.

In this service the Rev. James McDougall, Jr., the Rev. J. Greenleaf, the Rev. J. Fenner, the Rev. B. F. Lockwood, who first broke ground in this field, Ruling Elder J. C. Cook, and myself, took part.

The Ruling Elders then chosen were W. C. Hull, W. L. Wood, H. W. Banks, and D. R. James, all from this Church; and the Deacons, W. Lamb, and J. A. Walker, also from our Communion. They have since added to their Bench of Elders, Robert White; and to the number of their Deacons, J. H. McKillop, and J. Smith.

With these helpers, and the full co-operation of the other members of the Church, their pastors, the Rev. J. Hancock, and Rev. J. Lowery, have received to the Communion a hundred and three persons on profession of faith, and one hundred and twenty-seven on certificate, making an aggregate of two hundred and thirty, and an annual average increase of thirty-three. The present adult membership is a hundred and fifty-two, and many infants have been baptized.

The number of children enrolled in their two Sabbath Schools from the beginning, far exceeds the number enrolled here. The average attendance in the original Mission School is about five hundred, and in the home school, now meeting in the new Chapel corner of Thrope and Willoughby Avenues, one hundred.

This Chapel has been occupied more than a year. The other, surrounded by a vast German population, and thronged by German children, still under the care of the same Church, is loaned without price to a new German Presbyterian Church, under the

pastoral care of the Rev. H. Losch. It was organized by the Presbytery of Nassau about a year ago with thirty members, and now reports a hundred.

As this Church, through its Pastor, claims a filial relation to us, and is invited to share in the Communion Service this afternoon, I could not do less than make known to you the fact of its existence; and in doing this I have suggested the far reaching influence of that surrender which we made seven years ago, some of us with tears, of beloved brethren and sisters with their children, to constitute the Throope Avenue Church.

The value of the real estate belonging to this Church is \$33,000, on which there is an incumbrance of only \$6,000.

Before passing to the final period of our history, I may characterize that of which I have just spoken, as a period of agitation calmed and controlled by the grace and providence of God. It pleased God to prepare us for it, and to bring us through it, without any of those terrible consequences, which in the case of many churches remain to this day. If there were differences among us, they were kept so much within the sphere of opinion as, for the most part, to cause no strife among brethren; and at last they were overruled for sacred ends worthy of God, securing a new and mighty development of all our resources as a Church, and the wider diffusion of Christian influence than would have been possible, perhaps, in any other way.

5. The remaining period of our Church life extends from April, 1864, to the present time.

In some respects this is the period of our largest growth and greatest mercies. I hope the rapid review I am compelled to make, will not fail to awaken your gratitude to God. And while I make

it, thus bringing to a close the sacred reminiscences of a quarter of a century, and showing you that the command of God, "Go forward," was not sounded in your ears without effect at first, let me entreat you to hear the same command, meaning all that it then meant, and coming to you when your strength and facilities for an advance movement in following Christ and doing good to men, are more than tenfold greater than they were at the time of your organization.

At the very beginning of this final period, we gave twenty-seven adult members to the organization known as the Ross Street Presbyterian Church, though still worshipping in the Wilson Street Chapel. These were joined by five members from the First Reformed Church, and eleven from the First Presbyterian Church, making the entire membership forty-three. They represented much of the wealth, influence, and working power of the Church.

The organization was effected by a Committee of the Presbytery of Nassau, in Christ Church Chapel, on the evening of Thursday, April 28th, 1864, all the members of the Committee, except James Dunbar, senior Elder of Ainslie Street Presbyterian Church, being present. They were the Rev. Doctors J. Greenleaf and J. E. Rockwell, the Rev. Messrs. P. D. Oakey, B. F. Stead, and J. D. Wells, and Ruling Elders, W. V. Nichols and W. C. Hull, and senior Elders of this and the Throope Avenue Churches, respectively.

The Ruling Elders elected were Eli Beard, W. M. Raymond, J. L. Bennett, and R. Shepherd; the Deacons, M. Cook Fitch, and E. A. Jones.

Within these five years under the ministry of their first and only Pastor, the Rev. Charles S. Pomeroy, there have been received

to the Communion of this Church, fifty-three persons on profession of faith, and one hundred and eighty-three by letter, making an aggregate of two hundred and thirty-six, and an annual average increase of forty-seven. The present adult membership is two hundred and seventeen, and a goodly number of infants have been baptized.

Into their Sabbath School they have gathered about four hundred children, and have now on their roll, as belonging to their classes two hundred and forty, and they have just closed an engagement to occupy Masonic Hall, corner of Grand and Seventh Streets, with a Mission Sabbath School, to be drawn chiefly from the neglected masses residing north of Grand Street.*

Their real estate on Wilson and Ross Streets is valued at \$45,000, on which they owe but \$5,000.

The location of this Church, in the southern part of our district, gives them joint possession with other churches of an important field, while we are left in contact with increasing numbers who may be gathered around the table of our Lord in this house, for many years to come. It is our constant joy that they are doing a work impossible to us, and bringing glory to the Lord, both theirs and ours. We hope soon to congratulate them on the erection of their main Church Building, and the enlargement of their work.

In May of the same year, 1864, we added to the number of our Ruling Elders, Charles Roberts, Vilroy Wilcox, V. W. Foster, A. J. Smith, and H. J. Davison, and to the number of our Deacons, J. B. Philson, G. B. Cole, and J. W. Selleck.

In the Summer of 1866, we painted the Church and Parsonage,

* This school is now in successful operation, with an average attendance of 250 scholars.

and made improvements on the grounds and iron railing, at a cost of about \$3,100.00. In the Summer and Fall of 1867, the interior of the Church was transformed, and a new organ, pulpit, study, cushions and carpets were introduced at a cost of more than \$12,000.

And in the Spring of 1868 a still further addition was made to the Session, by the election of J. V. D. Ayers, Davis S Giffing, and Hugh McDougall.

In the same year, too, our Sabbath School work received a new impulse. A more perfect organization of the home school was effected, and while we continued to supply reliable help to the colored school in South 3rd Street, we became fully responsible for the English department of the German School in Leonard Street.

The average attendance of officers, teachers, and scholars in the home school is three hundred and thirty-six. The whole number registered from the beginning we estimate at six thousand one hundred and ten, and the number in actual attendance at four thousand five hundred and ninety. Many of these have been received to the Communion of the Church on profession of their faith. Three are known to be in the ministry, and three others, members of the Church though not of the Sabbath School, are now useful pastors, and one is the devoted wife of a Missionary in China.

Our losses by death and removals to other places, during this last period of our history, have been great and afflictive. We have never suffered so much. But we have learned to be still when our friends and fellow laborers depart, and to stay ourselves upon God; and as a compensation for these losses, God has been pleased to give us a larger increase on profession of faith than in

any former period of five years. We have received eighty-five adults in this way, and a hundred and eight by letter, while eighty-two infant members have been baptized. We report to the General Assembly this year three hundred and thirteen members, exclusive of the reserved roll, to which are transferred, from time to time, the names of those who are lost to our Communion, while we do not know the places of their present abode.

The aggregate membership of the Church from the beginning is eight hundred and sixty-four, of whom two hundred and sixty-one were received on profession of their faith. The annual additions have been, on the average, thirty-four.

In this review, from the beginning, I have said nothing of our Board of Trustees or of those in the other congregations to whom have been, and now are, committed financial affairs so closely connected with the highest interests of these sacred organizations and the glory of God. It is not easy to estimate the abundance and the value of their labors. I give the names of our own Trustees in this connexion: Rufus Belden, W. V. Nichols, Thomas N. Ayers, A. P. Cummings, Thomas Pollock, B. H. Howell, Edwin Ferry, John Miller, Jr., Levi W. Ufford, H. C. Boswell, Robert Warnock, S. M. Beard, J. A. Burr, Horace Thayer, Thos. M. Clark, L. B. Case, W. H. Myers, V. W. Foster, W. C. Walker, E. M. Brown, F. A. Burr, J. W. Selleck, L. W. James, Davis S. Giffing. Under the administration of these gentlemen, you have expended from the beginning for congregational purposes, including the cost of ground, Church edifice, Parsonage, repairs and salaries, about one hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars. This is a large sum of money, but it is less than the first cost of some of our city churches, and we rejoice in the wise economy that has characterized its ex-

penditure. The value of all our property is from sixty to seventy thousand dollars, with a mortgage of ten thousand dollars. This was given that we might complete our last improvements, and given with the understanding that one thousand dollars shall be paid every year till the mortgage is canceled.

The aggregate of our charitable contributions reported to the General Assembly from the beginning, in round numbers, is forty thousand dollars.

Comparing the last five years with all the other periods of the same length, it will be seen from figures and from facts that they have been, in many respects, the best of all our years. We have given most and gained most. We have learned to suffer great losses and repair them by increase from without and growth from within. We know what it is to surrender dear brethren and valued families to build on foundations near to our own, and then to build all the more earnestly and successfully at home. We have found most efficient helpers in our mothers and daughters, who have shared largely, during these latter years especially, in giving and raising money for sacred purposes.

There are many things, alas! that we have done negligently or left undone, but let us be thankful that we have not turned back upon that course, at the beginning of which God said to us, "Go forward." Many have fallen by the way; but not, as we fondly hope, through unbelief. Most of our beloved dead have died in the Lord. Not a few have given us the assurance that in their connection with this Church, they were helped to grow in grace. A volume would not suffice to record all the precious words with which they have cheered our hearts. It is known to us, that at least a hundred adults once in our Communion, have passed away.

To these must be added sixteen from Ainslie Street Church, nine from Throope Avenue, and three from Ross Street, an aggregate of more than a hundred and twenty-five. And who shall number the precious babes and little children, baptized and unbaptized, that have been in our homes and sanctuaries, and now, we trust, are with Jesus? All these adults and infants are among our dearest treasures. Let God be praised that we have had them, and that Jesus has them now. Among the mighty influences which, in combination, have helped us in our onward and hopeful movement hitherto, we may reckon the blessed lives and deaths of all those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises.

A few only of all who hear me to-day were present at the organization of this Church. You cannot have forgotten the emotions with which you heard that ancient command applied to yourselves: "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." And now do you doubt, looking back over all the way by which God has led the Church for a quarter of a century, that He has been with you, and given you grace to obey His command?

"Unto Him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen."

The churches organized during this period, connected with other bodies, are The Central Baptist Church, German Baptist, and St. John's M. E. Church. The Central M. E. Church comes in place of that known as the South Fifth Street M. E. Church.

II.

A glance into the future is all we can give. We have yet to go forward. We are under marching orders. Indeed the life of a Church, favored of God, as this has been, is always fresh. Its

pilgrimage and work are before it. The recollections of the past are inspirations for the future. The "precious faith" of departed and living saints, remains. The glorious gospel of the Blessed God, with all its ordinances and appliances, is entrusted to us, that we may use it for our personal sanctification, and the salvation of multitudes, small and great.

Before we can enter into rest, we must traverse the sandy desert, and, trusting in God, encounter its heat and privations and perils. The early pilgrims had the cloud by day, and the fire by night. And the movable Sanctuary was with them, the tent of meeting, in which by their representative priests, with blood and incense, they had access to the God of their Salvation.

And we have our holy and beautiful house, with personal access to it, and an open way to the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus.

Do not set less store by this Sanctuary, the sacred home of yourselves and your children, than by your private residences. As you have cared for it in the past, see that you abound in this duty yet more and more. You will not surely leave it under the incubus of a mortgage which you are better able to remove than to bear. You have never been more numerous, peaceful, and thoroughly organized than now. Every year added to your history, has increased your obligation to put yourselves beyond the possibility of annoyance from a debt that is a trifle compared with the value of your Church property and your personal possessions, and yet can never be reckoned anything better than a burden to be carried. God hath said it, "The borrower is servant to the lender."

Let me say further, looking to the future, that we stand

together on the confines of the eternal world. More than one-ninth of all the adult members received to our Communion from the beginning, have been called to their account. And soon we must follow them.

“Let your loins be girded and your lights burning, and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.”

And remember that you have come to the kingdom for such a day as this.

You pray that the kingdom of grace may be advanced and the kingdom of glory hastened. See that you labor for this. Let there be true consecration, earnest and co-operative toil, large benevolence and beneficence, and humble reliance upon Christ the King for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost.

This is a day of peril to the Church—a time that demands a stalwart Christianity and a heroic spirit. Truly the enemy cometh in like a flood. Will you meet the enemy in earthly armor? I beseech you rather, put on the whole armor of God. And while you pray that the Spirit of God may lift up a standard against the enemy, rally about that standard, strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

Guard your consecrated households. Let not the flood of ruin burst into them. Hold your children as Christ's by the right of redemption, consecration and covenant.

And ye consecrated children! remember that you are forever separate from the world in the plan and purpose of God, and by the sacraments and prayers of the Church. We claim you for Jesus and his cause. We cannot let you go. Give us your con-

fidence and love, and we will do all we can to transfer them to Jesus. Look yourselves unto Jesus here and now. Hear his gentle, yet earnest voice: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Join with us in the communion of saints and the work of the Church. I would that all of you were coming to our hallowed Communion this afternoon. Let me espouse you to Christ, and whether you stand upon the earth at the end of the next twenty-five years or not, you will be children of the King and heirs of glory.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty and dominion and power both now and forever, Amen."

Communion Service,

SABBATH AFTERNOON, APRIL 18, 1869.

After a few words of welcome to the Churches and their Pastors, with other Ministers who were present, by the Pastor of the South 3d Street Church, the parts of the service introductory to the Communion were conducted by the Rev. P. E. Stevenson, the first Pastor of the Church. His tender words were listened to with great interest. The Rev. John Hancock, Pastor of the Ainslie Street Church then briefly addressed the Communicants, and having invoked a blessing, distributed the bread.

The Rev. John Lowery, Pastor of Throope Avenue Church, followed with a few words of instruction and exhortation and having given thanks, distributed the cup.

The Rev. Charles S. Pomeroy, Pastor of the Ross Street Church made an address after this to the Communicants and Congregation: and the Rev. James McDougall, Jr., third Pastor of Ainslie Street Church, offered the closing prayer.

The Ruling Elders who officiated were chosen from the Sessions of the four Churches most nearly related to each other. At the close of the service, many voices and hearts united in singing the well known hymn,

“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,” &c.

It was read by the Rev. Henry Losch, Pastor of the Throope Avenue German Church.

The large assembly was dismissed after the Sacramental Benediction, pronounced by the Pastor of the South 3d Street Church: “Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.”—HEB. xiii, 20-21.

THE END.