

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,
First Presbyterian Church,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Presented in 1916
by
President Edmund J. James
in memory of
Amanda K. Casad

285
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Notes and Corrections.

Prepared by Elder O. C. Wight and approved by Dr. Sunderland.

INTRODUCTION :

3d page, 1st line, strike out *old* before *capitol*. 7th and 8th lines, change 1813 to 1812 and 1814 to 1813. 19th line add 9 to the text, thus Haggai, 2 : 9. Last line, change *F* to *T* in Dr. Sprole's name.

4th page—Strike out *g* from Gallagher. 11th line, strike out the word *recorded*. 14th line, substitute *Elias* for *Charles*.

SERMONS, &c. :

9th page—Deacons were first chosen in 1863 and Trustees January 10, 1869.

NOTE.—Compare page 105 with page 1—introduction. Dr. Brack-enridge evidently had no pastoral connection with this "flock" between 1802 and 1809. Compare 6th line from the top with 4th line from the bottom. 1811 is correct.

106th page—2d line, for 1812 read 1813. 5th line from bottom, for 1817 read May 17, 1818.

APPENDIX :

Elders : For Stillman read Hillman. Elder Kennedy died in 1847.
Deacons : First Board installed January 4, 1863. Ellis was dismissed and Carter was elected elder. Second Board installed June 21, 1868. Jewell, Champlin, Ross and McNair all were dismissed. Third Board installed November 30, 1873. Dal-rymple and Church were elected elders, Carpenter and Mil-burn were dismissed. Donaldson was installed in 1879 and is still serving. Next Board installed in 1881. Patterson died in 1892. Tracy and Gibson still on the Board. Curriden, John-son and Knight were installed in 1888 and have since been dismissed.

NOTE.—Page 146. The last Temporal Committee consisted of Dr. Lindsly, Z. D. Gilman, E. M. Gallaudet, C. Storrs, A. D. Robin-son, Z. C. Robbins and F. H. Smith. The first Board of Trus-tees consisted of N. P. Chipman, Dr. Lindsly, Z. D. Gilman, E. M. Gallaudet and F. H. Smith.

PAGE 147.—Strike out after the word corporators "*and the first Board.*" For Albert Robinson, put A. D. Robinson.

PAGE 153.—For Waides put Wades, and for Beals, Beales.

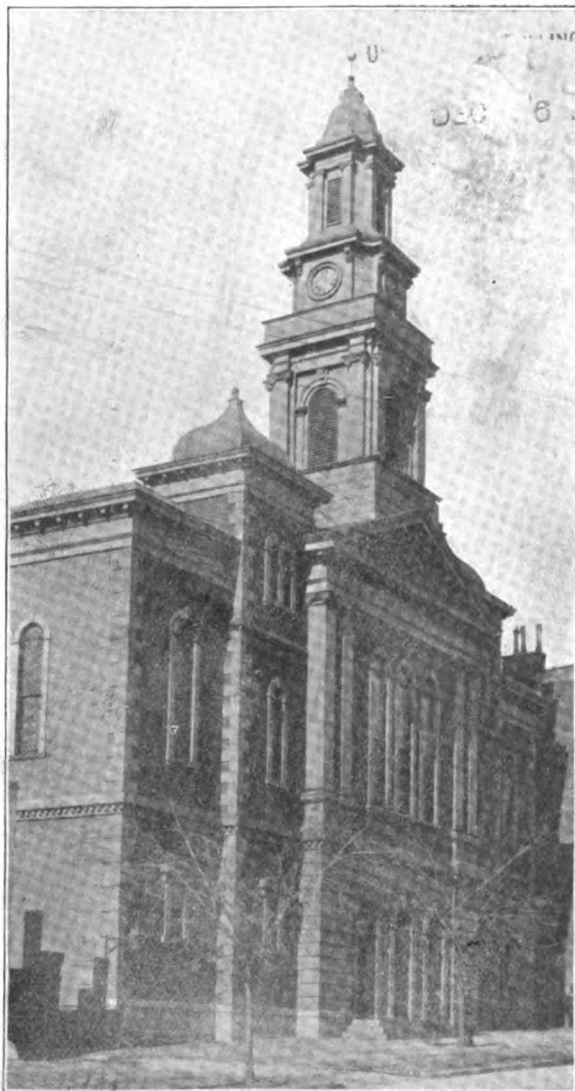
PAGE 154.—Superintendents of Sunday School, William Jardine and A. E. L. Leckie.

PAGE 155.—For F. H. Tolman, Edward M. Tolman. Mrs. Ordway's residence, N. E., not N. W. Mr. Norris, 331 C St., N. W.

PAGE 156.—Treasurer, Mrs. Mary A. McBride, 1330 18th street N. W.

EDMUND J. JAMES

THE CENTENNIAL OF THE BEGINNING
OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE CITY
OF WASHINGTON.



*The First Presbyterian
Church, November 17th
to 22d, 1895,
Washington, D. C. . .*

1895.

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Pastors :



JOHN BRACKENRIDGE	- - - -	1809-1818.
REUBEN POST	- - - - - - - -	1810-1837.
WILLIAM McLAIN	- - - - - - - -	1837-1840.
CHARLES RICH	- - - - - - - -	1840-1843.
WILLIAM T. SPROLE	- - - - - - - -	1844-1847.
ELISHA BALLENTINE	- - - - - - - -	1847-1851.
BYRON SUNDERLAND	- - - - - - - -	1853.
ADOLOS ALLEN	- - - - - - - -	1894.
T. DEWITT TALMAGE	- - - - - - - -	1895.

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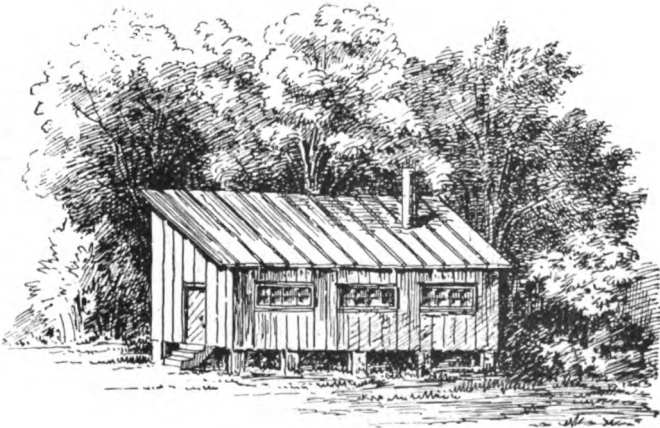
Elders:



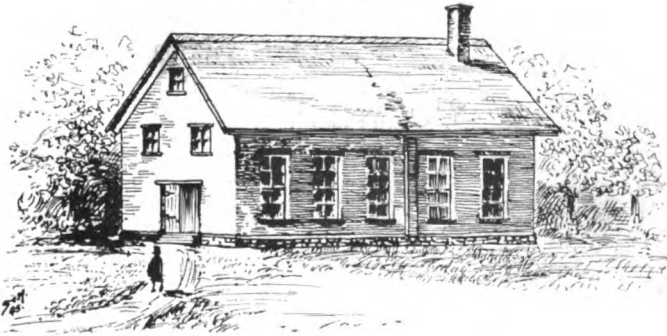
ELIAS B. CALDWELL,	ISAAC S. MILLER,
JOHN COYLE,	ALEXANDER SPEER,
GEORGE BLAGDEN,	JOHN DOUGLASS,
HENRY HILLMAN,	OTIS C. WIGHT,
JAMES MOORE,	THOMAS J. JOHNSTON,
EZEKIEL YOUNG,	HORACE J. FROST,
THOMAS PATTERSON,	FRANCIS H. SHITH,
ANDREW COYLE,	OCTAVIUS KNIGHT,
JOHN KENNEDY,	GEORGE B. PATCH,
JOHN SHACKFORD,	NICHOLAS DuBOIS,
JOHN COYLE, JR.,	WM. A. SUTPHIN,
JOHN G. WHITWELL,	RICHARD W. CARTER,
WM. H. CAMPBELL,	F. B. DALRYMPLE,
DANIEL CAMPBELL,	EDWARD G. CHURCH,
LEONIDAS COYLE,	ALFRED LOCKHART,
THEO. F. SARGENT.	

From Auth. coll. of Pres. James. 7. Jones 28N32

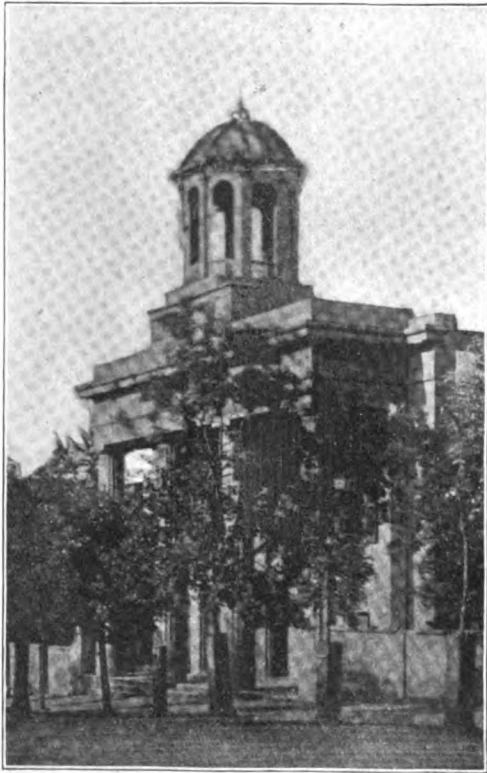
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1795.



1812.



1845.

Order of Exercises:



Sabbath Morning, November 17th.

Historical Sermon.

REV. BYRON SUNDERLAND, D. D.



Monday Evening, November 18th.

Rev. A. W. Pitzer, D. D., presiding.

Presbyterianism and the Nation.

Rev. CHARLES L. THOMPSON, D. D., LL. D.
New York City.



Tuesday Evening, November 19th.

Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., presiding.

Presbyterians and Education.

Rev. HENRY M. MACCRACKEN, D. D., LL. D.
Chancellor of the University of the City of New York.

Wednesday Evening, November 20th.

Rev. George O. Little, D. D., presiding.

Presbyterianism and the District of Columbia.

Rev. B. F. BITTINGER, D. D.

Hon. JOHN W. FOSTER.

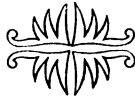
Rev. J. G. BUTLER, D. D.



Friday Evening, November 22d.

RECEPTION.

7.30 to 10.30 P. M.



The following document throws light upon the

**BEGINNINGS OF PRESBYTERIANISM
IN WASHINGTON.**

From the records of the Presbytery of Baltimore it appears that on April 30, 1794, Rev. John Brackenridge was licensed, and on April 29, 1795, he received a call from "The Churches in Washington," *i. e.*, small bands of believers who met for worship without any formal organization and including settlements outside the present city limits—a city without houses.

In 1795, June 24, order was taken for the ordination and installation of Mr. Brackenridge as pastor. In 1801, certain irregularities having been reported to Presbytery, Mr. Brackenridge was cited to appear and furnish satisfactory reasons for the same; but failing to appear he was again cited before a meeting held in Georgetown, D. C., April, 1802. At this meeting he appeared and pleaded ill health as the cause of misunderstanding and requested the dissolution of his pastoral relation.

The congregation was cited to appear before Presbytery to show reason, if any, why the request should not be granted; no person appearing at a meeting on April 26, 1802, the relation was dissolved. In 1809 the Presbytery, at a meeting held October 27, in Alexandria, appointed Mr. Brackenridge to labor as a missionary for three months in

Bladensburg, Maryland, and Washington City, and in 1810 he was appointed supply of Washington City and Bladensburg. In 1812, at the request of the First Church, Washington City, Mr. Brackenridge wrote a sketch of the rise and progress of the Church, but omitted all the foregoing facts, which, had they been known, would have settled the question of priority raised by Rev. Dr. Laurie after his congregation had joined the Presbytery of the District of Columbia. Dr. Laurie's congregation erected the first building, but Mr. Brackenridge had the first organization, and for the want of a suitable building was under the necessity of using a carpenter's shop erected for the workmen employed in the building of the President's House. In 1793, when this building was demolished, the congregation worshipped in a farm house now St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church.

The enterprise was greatly weakened by the efforts made by Dr. Laurie in the formation of a church under his ministrations. After this time the congregation worshipped in "The Academy East," the only house that could be obtained and in which they met every three weeks. It was not long before steps were taken for the erection of a church building and the following persons appointed a committee to have the matter under their care: Messrs. George Blagden, Elias B. Caldwell, John Coyle, John McClelland and Daniel Rapine. The enterprise received great and unexpected encouragement. In the meantime permission was granted

the congregation to hold worship in the ~~old~~ Capitol, Mr. Brackenridge still laboring a part of his time in Rockville and in Bladensburg. The new house of worship was occupied for the first time June 20, 1812, the dedication sermon being preached by Rev. Mr. Brackenridge from Luke, 19: 9. At a meeting of the congregation held January, 1812, Mr. Brackenridge was called and on July 4, 1812 was installed pastor of the church, continuing as such until May, 1818. Mr. Brackenridge died in 1844 in the seventy-fifth year of his age. The church was supplied successively by Rev. John McKnight and Rev. John Clark.

In April 19, 1819, Mr. Reuben Post was called as pastor and installed June 24, of the same year.

On the 10th of April, 1827, the corner stone of the present edifice was laid. The church was dedicated December 9, 1827—the sermon preached by the pastor was from Haggai, 17.

Rev. Dr. Post was released from his pastorate January 24, 1836. He died September 24, 1858. Rev. Addison Mines supplied the church until December, 1836, when Mr. William McLain was elected pastor; installed January 11, 1837; relation dissolved June 9, 1840. In November, 1840, Mr. Charles Rich, Licentiate, was ordained and installed pastor. The relation was dissolved July 13, 1843. In November 27, 1843, Rev. William T. Sprole was installed pastor; relation dissolved April 2, 1847.

The church was supplied by Presbytery until March 1, 1848, when, Rev. Elisha Ballantyne was installed pastor. The relation was dissolved July 21, 1852. Rev. James Gallagher supplied the church until December, 1852, when Rev. Byron Sunderland, D. D., was called, and continues the pastor to the present time.

In 1859 the church was enlarged and re-constructed, making it one of the largest if not the largest Protestant church building in the city.

At the first ~~recorded~~ meeting of the Session there were present (September 15, 1812);

Rev. John Brackenridge and ruling elders John Coyle, Charles B. Caldwell, George Blagden.

Mr. Laurie, installed over F Street Church, 1803; house built afterwards, but no date given.

Came under control of Presbytery of District of Columbia, June 14, 1824, but in 1839 transferred to Presbytery Baltimore—afterwards set off to Presbytery of Potomac—again in 1869 united with other churches in Washington City Presbytery.

Dr. Sunderland was installed Thursday evening 7.30 o'clock, April 21, 1853.

Dr. Heacock of Buffalo, N. Y., preached the sermon; J. R. Eckard, charge to pastor; Mason Noble, charge to people; Samuel Washburn, Moderator.

Rev. Adolos Allen was installed as co-pastor April 17, 1894, and resigned February 3, 1896.

Rev. Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage was installed co-pastor October 23, 1895.

CENTENNIAL SERMON,

By Rev. Dr. BYRON SUNDERLAND.

Pastor of the Church.

Ps. 87:3. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God!

The city. This is the heart of the world. It has been so with the great Capitals of all nations, those now buried beneath the dust of ages, and those still standing, out of which pours the life-blood of the times to the remotest corners of the earth.

Piety and Patriotism forever, both love and laud their seat of Government whether in church or state. The home of Religion and the Capital of a nation, in the blended story of their beginning and progress have never ceased to kindle the most thrilling emotions in every mind susceptible of exalted conceptions.

It was so at Jerusalem in the time of the first Kings. There was the center of God's worship and the famous capital of the Hebrew Nation, and there in the great festivals which celebrated the wonders of their history, the majestic choir of Tabernacle and Temple poured out this song of Triumph, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God." Yes, it was the city of God, destined to have such a history as no other city on the face of the globe ever had or can have. These words booming from Strophe to anti-Strophe through the wide air, gave

voice to the feeling of immense multitudes, rapt by the spirit of grateful adoration. It has often been so among the generations of men!

It is so with us to-day. For now we begin to commemorate the founding of our city and of that line of religious evolution in Washington from which we trace the development of this old church back through a hundred years.

Presbyterian Christianity was early in this region, as the churches of our order at Hyattsville and Georgetown bear witness, and as one church closely akin, but not then associated with us, organized in Washington a few years before our own, also attests.

Tradition, clear and undisputed, couples this church and the Capitol in their founding and progress. The story of the city is no Greek or Roman fable. Prior to the coming of the colonists this place was called Tohoga, the seat of an Indian Emperor or Sachem. Here dwelt the Nacostians, whose neighbors were the Monacans and Powhatans. Their council fires were lighted on yonder hill. But their feuds are ended. They vanished before the pale-face like a vision of the night. A new order from beyond the sea began to displace the Amphictyon of Savage Life. Lines of survey were traced here more than two hundred years ago. Patents came out through the monarchs of England for Pinner, Langworth, Troop and Francis Pope, who seeing that his name was Pope, aspired to be equal to the Pope and gave to his estate and the

stream that laved it, the august names of Rome and the Tiber. His prophecy which lingered around the Hill for a hundred years was then to be fulfilled.

In 1793, the first corner-stone of that structure which now looks down upon us in more than Roman majesty was laid. From the spot now covered by its dome spread out in those first years of the city, the lands of the *then* proprietors, on one side declining to the river's brink, on the other, expanding in copse and forest away to the circling hills.

There are the hamlets of Hamburgh and Carrollsburgh, there is Duddington pasture, there the house of Daniel Carroll, yonder of Notley Young and yonder still of David Burns. There are the uplands and the orchards and the old burial places of the dead. The lark springs up from the dewy corn with his morning song, the plover sends out his nightfall whistle from yonder sedge. In many a footpath, by many a spring, the children wander, searching the wild fruit and waking their echoes in the deep woods. Sportsmen haunt the shores of Anacostia, whose rude old wharfs scarce break the shoals and water courses that crowd over the track of Pennsylvania avenue and end away in "the Northern Slashes."

All this in a scene of rural loveliness, which *then*, as *now*, beamed from Prospect Hill, from the Heights of Georgetown, from distant Arlington, and from the moonlight sheen of waters laughing to the sea.

Years before, Washington had fixed his eye upon this site for the seat of government. The action of

Congress looking to this end, began in 1790. Maryland and Virginia followed it with appropriate enactments. Terms of cession were agreed upon, and on April 15th, 1791, the first corner-stone of the District was set up below Alexandria, with fitting ceremonies, and in the great concourse, the minister of the Cross offered up to Almighty God the prayer of the infant Republic. The soil thus outlined was thenceforth consecrated to the cause of American Independence and the Religion of Jehovah.

In 1792, the corner-stone of the Executive Mansion was laid, and it was a whole decade before the structure was completed. There in the heart of the forest a carpenter's shop was erected, and there for years it stood a shelter for the workmen in summer's heat and winter's snow.

In September of the following year, Washington came to lay the corner-stone of the Capitol. On that memorable day he was attended by a procession with fife and drum, winding their way on a fallen tree across the Tiber amid the oaks and underbrush to the elected spot. That scene was the presage of all that followed. The old roads gave place to new made streets, the marshes receded, the evening lights grew thicker, the bloom of urban life was gathering to the flower just bursting from the shadow of the wilderness. The times of Adams and Jefferson succeeded. There were already three thousand souls. The Congress came in 1800, and two years after the City of Washington was incorporated. Municipal

functions were assumed, and the Metropolis was fairly launched on her pathway of renown. The fathers of the city came, the physicians, the lawyers and the judges came, the noble artists came, the inventors and men of genius came and their magnificent works are all before us. Time and space would fail me to trace the growth of the city to what we see it now, or to name the glorious men who have made it what it is.

“Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God!” It is surely to-day the favorite city of all true Americans, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole nation, can we add the words, “O City of God!” In what sense is it the “City of God!” His divine protection has ever been over it. On one occasion only was God’s shield withdrawn and that but for a day and a night when it felt the ravage of the Minion troops of England, to be followed speedily by the death-dealing guns at Baltimore and Ft. McHenry, which gave us the immortal ode of Francis S. Key, “The Star Spangled Banner!”

It is the City of God in this, that at the very beginning, from the North, the East, the South (for then there was no West) God’s own people came here, as to their new Jerusalem, religious families, men and women who had been trained in the various Christian denominations, and who brought with them their convictions and predilections. Among these religionists, were the Presbyterians, some from the churches of Makamie the father and founder of straight Presbyterianism in this country, and

some from the church of the Covenanters, under the title of "The Philadelphia Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church." The General Assembly of the Makamie churches was organized in 1788 and comprised by far the larger portion of those who professed the Presbyterian faith.

When these families arrived in Washington they found no churches of their order within the limits of the city. They had no Pastors, no church organizations, no stated religious services, which they sadly missed and for which they could only substitute irregular meetings when some traveling minister or missionary could be procured to conduct them.

Under these conditions the Presbyterians of Washington, uniting in their efforts, procured the use of the carpenter's shop in the grounds of the White House where they first assembled for religious worship in 1795. From time to time they met there, until the shop, no longer needed, was torn down, and they were obliged to seek another place of worship.

There is in existence an old deed giving to the "Calvin Society" a lot of ground adjoining the site of the old German Lutheran Church, now standing in the first ward of the city. For some reason unknown to me, it certainly was never appropriated by our people, if they ever had any title to it, and it remains to this day in the use and possession of the German Church. Their next place of worship was a frame building, used also for a school, on F street, near the corner of Tenth street N. W.

About this time the Covenanter portion of the people withdrew and in 1803 organized what was long known as the "F Street Church," under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. James Laurie, and in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod of Philadelphia. The building is now known as "Willard Hall."

The remaining party of the Presbyterians in Washington were those who had come from churches in connection with the Presbyterian General Assembly and, though without formal organization, which accounts for the absence of permanent records for the first fourteen years of their history, they still clung together, as the facts have surely been handed down to us upon the testimony of many of the early members of this church, some of whom were active participants in the Presbyterian movements of that period, and from whose lips I personally received the account more than forty years ago.

On leaving the F street building they removed to the "Academy East," in the vicinity of the Navy Yard, because in those days it was expected that the bulk of the growing city would be eastward of the Capitol, and because the requirements of the Navy Yard had already drawn to that section a considerable colony of people from whom they hoped to augment their numbers and extend their usefulness.

When, however, the Capitol had been so far advanced as to provide a basement room for the sessions of the Supreme Court of the United States,

our fathers obtained permission to hold their Sabbath service in that place, and there the Lord's Supper was first administered.

Later on they determined to seek, through the Presbytery of Baltimore, a church organization and to erect an edifice for public worship. The site chosen was near the Pennsylvania avenue ascending the hill just south of the Capitol. The first earth was turned for the new building by John Coyle, one of the first elders of this church. His daughter, Mrs. Whitwell, then a little girl, described to me the scene. The ground was then broken into steep hillocks and spurs and covered with a growth of saplings, vines, and underbrush. There, one evening in the solitude just as the setting sunlight flashed upon the autumn foliage, lighting up a flame of gorgeous colors, might be seen a man with head uncovered; by his side his little daughter and a stout-bodied colored man, spade in hand, on which he reverently leaned. Then the voice of prayer rose fervently to the God of the Covenant for a benediction on that spot and the use to which it should be put. The prayer ended, the master took the spade and struck it in the ground and turned over the first soil where the corner-stone was laid of the "little white Chapel under the hill." Some of its wall are still standing but buried out of sight by the subsequent grading there. The building was dedicated in 1812, at the beginning of our second war with England.

From that date, the permanent records of the church appear. The nucleus that met in the carpenter's shop in 1795, and had been a nebulous and nomad body of Christians began to take a local habitation and a name. About the year 1811, it was formally organized by the Presbytery of Baltimore under the title of "The First Presbyterian Church of Washington, D. C., having for its first pastor, the Rev. John Brackenridge, whose grave remains to this day by that of his wife in a beautiful field of the "Old Soldiers' Home."

But in truth, it must be said, the church was never chartered and fully organized as it is this day, till 1868—when to the Session a Board of Deacons and a Board of Trustees were added, filling out the requirements of the written law of the church in every particular, by its form of government, its Directory of worship and its Society, Constitution and By-Laws. It is the first charter granted by Congress to any church in this city or District.

In the process of time, the growth of the city to the west and north, and that also of the congregation induced the removal to our present site. The records of this undertaking read like a romance. The first building erected here, was dedicated to the service of Almighty God in December, 1827, the then Pastor, Rev. Dr. Reuben Post, preaching the sermon. It was a day of great rejoicing in the history of the church.

After many years the space again became too narrow, and in 1860, the present auditorium was

constructed above the old one, now the lecture-room. The front of the building was changed, and it was re-dedicated in December of that year. The venerable Dr. Gardiner Spring, of New York, preached the dedication sermon, the last public service he ever rendered outside his own city. In the afternoon the Rev. Dr. Charles Reed, of Richmond, Virginia, preached a sermon, and in the evening, the Rev. Dr. Jenkins, of Philadelphia, delivered the closing discourse. It was one of the whitest days in our annals.

The church edifice, as it then was, remained almost untouched for thirty-two years. It much needed renovation, which occurred in 1892. The building as it appears to-day was the result, and in November of that year it was again dedicated. The historical discourse on that occasion was delivered to a large concourse of the members and friends of the church in the city.

That sermon was subsequently published, not without a few errors, and some lack of authentic records, but in the main it may be regarded as a detailed and truthful statement of the origin and life of this Mother church of Presbyterianism in the Capital of the Republic.

It is not my present purpose to recite those details so recently exhibited, but from what has now been said the public may understand the significance of this Centennial, and the reasons of its adoption, and of this commemoration.

In 1795 the only churches of our order, near us,

were the church at Hyattsville and that in Georgetown.

The pioneers of this church first held religious meetings in the city in 1795.

This church received its title as the First church in connection with the Presbyterian General Assembly, organized in Washington, whereas it was not till 1823 that the "F Street Church" became a constituent of the same Assembly.

This church, as it is now seen, has been an evolution church, solidifying gradually from the concretions of a hundred years, and marking the beginning of Presbyterianism here, but it has never at any time gone back from its polity, doctrine or discipline. We have sometimes been represented as almost too deep a blue for the current public thought of the world, and as standing so STRAIGHT that we bend over backward. But there is nothing in all this for which we need to blush in an age so rife with frantic efforts to eliminate all trace of the supernatural from the works and word of God.

From this church has gone forth a great company to proclaim salvation throughout the circuit of the earth, devoted men and women, missionaries of the Cross, preachers, teachers, lawyers, physicians, soldiers, sailors, ministers of State, noble souls born here and born again into the everlasting kingdom of our God and of His Christ. Some are living still, some are now active in other spheres, in other churches here, and elsewhere throughout the length of Christendom.

And then the cloud of the glorified that first and last have gone up from these courts after all the toil and prayer, after the tenderness of this earthly communion, the thrilling touch of heart to heart, of ordinance and rite and privilege and opportunity, in smiles and tears—gone up through the gates of the Eternal City into the transcendant splendors of the celestial life! How many have long been gone, and some have left us only as it were but yesterday! And here we stand gazing after them into heaven, crying out with Tennyson,

“Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
The sound of a voice now still.”

The foot-stones of this church have been worn by the tread of the great figures in our history, by the diplomats of many countries, by statesmen and lawyers, by senators and judges, by presidents and by cabinets, by warriors and chieftains on land and sea, and by the American people from every city and country-side, and by travellers from foreign lands in every quarter of the globe. For a hundred years we have been in contact with the moving masses of humanity in storm and sunshine, in peace and war, and who can compute the emanation of public and private influence from this watch tower of Zion, reaching to all classes of society, touching all questions of truth and justice, of purity and honor, so deeply involving the welfare of mankind, so sternly attesting the supreme virtue of that old “faith which was once delivered to the saints.”

Now, when a hundred years have passed since they first met in the carpenter's shop, perchance a similitude of the very booth where the great Head of the church and the Savior of men spent so much of His early manhood, shall we not mark the circumstance with every demonstration of Christian joy?

“Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God”! The supreme glory of our Capital to-day, as it has been from the first, shines out in its Christian churches and the schools and multiplied eleemosynary institutions they have fostered. More than marble or bronze, more than all the parks and decorations, more than all the proud monuments of art and architecture, more than all the triumphs of mind over matter of which we are justly proud, are these temples of Religion which make our city the city of God. Stern may be their morals, exacting their theology, puritanical their ideas, but these are the forces that have evermore made the men and women of the ages, the true patriots and philanthropists of the world, heroes and heroines for God and truth and righteousness, despite the jeers and ribaldry of mocking generations.

From the first, this church has been related to the larger bodies of American Presbyterianism through the Presbytery, Synod and Assembly, a church polity from which in large measure, our Republican form of Government is modeled.

Presbyterianism was brought to this country chiefly from the British Islands, where the seed-

corn of it from Geneva had been plentifully scattered for a hundred years. It early took root in most of the colonies, for it is especially the religion of tempestuous and trying times. The persecuted Christians of Europe came here to find as one has said "a church without a bishop and a State without a king." But they brought with them at the same time their personal religious predilections. Out of these the American Protestant Church has reached the massive proportions of the present hour. Presbyterianism forms no exception to this great law of selection or election as we may choose to style it.

At this moment there are two Presbyterian General Assemblies in our country, the North and the South. These are the principal bodies of our order. There are several smaller bodies bearing the Presbyterian name, which time and circumstance have differentiated from the larger cults and from each other, some of them having exerted but a limited influence on the religion of our times.

As this church is now and ever has been allied with those who are to-day represented in the Northern Assembly, we may trace its connections through all the vicissitudes of the past down to the present hour.

The session, the Presbytery, the Synod and Assembly are the four courts through which we operate and combine. The Session is the court of each individual Congregation; the Presbytery is a number of Sessions combined and the first court of

appeal, and the Synod is a number of Presbyteries combined and the second court of appeal, the Assembly is all the Synods combined and the final court of appeal, while the law-making power is lodged with the Presbyteries.

The first Presbytery was formed in Philadelphia in 1705. In 1716 the first Synod was constituted. In the next quarter of a century dissensions arose from which two Synods resulted called the "Old side," and the "New side." In 1758 they came together again. In 1788 our present Standards were adopted and the first General Assembly was constituted. In 1801 a Plan of union with the Congregationalists was adopted, out of which grew in part the divisions of the "Old school" and the "New school" and again the church was divided in 1838. This church through its Presbytery adhered to the "New school" Assembly.

By this time the question of slavery began to be seriously agitated, both in church and state. In the "Old school" assembly every effort was made to quiet the agitation. In the "New school" assembly it annually grew more violent till 1857, when the assembly met at Cleveland, Ohio. There the commissioners from twenty-seven southern Presbyteries seceded in a body and put forth a manifesto calling for a distinct and separate organization, which, in the following summer, resulted in the Knoxville Synod. At that time this church, through its Presbytery, was a constituent of the Virginia Synod. In the autumn of that year the

Synod of Virginia, the majority of whom had gone into the new body formed at Knoxville, Tennessee, met in the Assembly's church in this city, their aim being to force the churches of our Presbytery into the new alliance, or drive the pastors from their pulpits. It was at this point that the first serious trial of our church arose. Many of our congregation strongly sympathized with the new movement, but their pastor did not. There he uttered his first protest against church secession, and, though the final vote for it was overwhelming, his vote with two others only was recorded in the negative.

The excitement was intense. It continued till 1866, culminating in the Douglass lecture. Looking back upon it now we wonder at our survival. The effect of this opposition, however, was to suspend our Presbytery from all outside ecclesiastical connection for the next five years. Four years later the gathering storm of civil war burst over us and in 1862 our Presbytery "of the District of Columbia" was attached to the Synod of Philadelphia.

The "Old school" Assembly held on its way and our city churches adhering to it, formed what was known as "The Presbytery of the Potomac." On the breaking out of the war the entire body of the southern churches separated from the "Old school" Assembly and effected, at Augusta, Georgia, the Southern Assembly as it is to-day. Not long after, the Knoxville Synod was merged in it, while the Presbytery of the Potomac adhered to the northern wing of the "Old school" church.

It was a period of intense agitation throughout the country, and for eight years more the two Northern Assemblies pursued their work as a divided force. Time, however, was healing the breach between them, and in 1869 their union was completed at Pittsburg, amid scenes of thrilling interest, never to be forgotten. The Pastor of this church was honored to share as the representative of our Presbytery in those memorable proceedings. This event required a new arrangement of the higher courts, and in the following year the two Presbyteries of the District were combined under the title of "the Presbytery of Washington City," which thence forward became a constituent of the Synod of Baltimore, and of the United Northern General Assembly. This is our relation at the present moment.

To-day Georgetown is part of the City of Washington, and as such, our *one* church there, is older in organization than our own. With this exception, we are the first and only Presbyterian church which started with the foundation of the Capital and has preserved its unbroken continuity for a hundred years.

During this commemoration you will hear from others the growth of Presbyterianism in our city and District. It is enough for me to say that our church has borne her part in making this Capital as the very city of God of which so many glorious things are spoken. The great churches of other orders have vied with her in the mighty mission of saving men, and their monuments, like our own,

are this day around us. We rejoice together in what has been accomplished for the cause of our common Master. Their congratulations are most welcome and most heartily reciprocated. God speed them all!

From the day of Timothy's ordination by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, down through the centuries, the principle of the Presbyterian polity and the syllabus of doctrine derived from prophets and apostles have been perpetuated. This may be traced through the Waldensians of northern Italy and other kindred bodies, and through the Huguenots of France and the Culdees of North Britain down to the time of Calvin. Then it began to assume wider proportions and exert a more potent influence. At length its creed and its government were formulated in the Westminster Assembly sitting in the Jerusalem chamber from 1643 to 1649. From that date to this, it has remained substantially unmodified. It is true that various bodies bearing the Presbyterian name as well as some others carrying the Presbyterian principle, have separated from each other on some specific point of difference. But taken together, they do at this moment, in numbers, intelligence, wealth, heart-religion and aggressive force, rival the very largest and most powerful Protestant bodies in the world.

As to doctrine, it is conceded by all modern candid writers that the Westminster confession with its catechisms is, on the whole, a

most complete, logical and scriptural formula of religious belief. It is true, the chapteron decrees, has been violently assailed both from without and from within, and yet the late attempt to revise it, with all the new light and learning of our time utterly collapsed. Nor did the earlier attempts of Polemic theology against its alleged reflection on the divine character and its binding human action in the most absolute fatalism, succeed in substituting any theodicy which more clearly posits the relation of God to the universe He has made and over which He is assumed to preside, or which more successfully obviates the thousand objections springing up to any theory which the finite mind of man has ever conceived.

In every great religion there are always two PHASES appealing to human belief. There are doctrines which concern human life and duty, and which are everywhere accepted in the general consciousness of their righteousness. This class of tenets is styled the exoteric doctrine, or those beliefs which comprise the essentials of salvation, human regeneration, righteousness of life and the divine favor both here and hereafter. These are simple and easy to be understood. But in addition to this there is a region of dogma relating to God and the universe, which it is impossible for a thinking soul to evade, and which has absorbed the profoundest intellects in every age. These are called the esoteric doctrines, and should never be imposed

upon the mass of Christian believers by any coercion other than their free assent.

Presbyterianism is still charged with holding the most repugnant views, and yet no church has been practically more free or broad or liberal. What she does insist upon is that her *teachers* shall agree as to the esoteric doctrines, but she holds no man accountable for any belief he may have outside of the plain conditions of membership and communion in the universal Catholic church of Christ. She rejects no one who accepts that class of tenets which relates to human life and conduct under the gospel dispensation, the same on which every genuine Christian body insists the world over.

Modern Presbyterianism is held chargeable with a single murder in its entire career, while thousands upon thousands of its children have been put to death in the merciless storm of papal and prelatical persecution. That murder was the inevitable result of the spirit of the times, and which by the very rashness of its victim involved the great Calvin in its execution, though he had labored to prevent it by a solemn forewarning which was recklessly disregarded. Conceive of the great Pilot of the Reformation standing on the bridge of the Gospel Ship, to guide her in safety out of the perils of that dark Papal ocean on which she was tossing like a cockshell. Athwart her course shot the barque of a single man, a self-made fugitive from every harbor in Europe. "Hold! Ahoy there! there's danger ahead!" rang out the cry from the pilot. It was unheeded,

and the man was submerged in flames, while the trembling ship passed over him! That pilot was John Calvin.

Aside from this, Presbyterianism, has no history which needs the pity or the charity of posterity. On the other hand her service in the cause of humanity as against the exactions of despotism in church and state has been pre-eminent. True the events of thirty years ago, had carried the Southern Church into a separate organization, but they were events which involved the entire population of the country in the responsibility which was then assumed. Making therefore all abatements required by the truth of history, we may claim without fear of successful contradiction, that no portion of the Protestant Church, has rendered more valuable contributions to the cause of human welfare.

Our church has everywhere stood for :

The Bible as the revealed word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

For the Divine Sovereignty and human accountability.

For the covenant of Grace, executed by Christ, the only Savior, and the Holy Spirit the only sanctifier of men.

For the Christian Sabbath, as the great land-mark of Christian time, the legitimate successor of the Patriarchal and Jewish Sabbaths.

We stand also for the two sacraments : Baptism by the sprinkling of water as a seal of God's covenant to believers and their children. The Lord's

Supper as a simple memorial, a bond of union a pledge of fidelity and a means of grace.

For the parity of the clergy and the broadest evangelical fellowship.

For the right and necessity of universal and through popular education.

For the free research and investigation of human thought.

For free speech and private judgment, regulated by law.

For individual conscience and the liberty of the press.

For civil government, "of the people, for the people and by the people" in both sexes.

For the cause of temperance the world over.

For purity in politics and public morals.

For the uplifting and reformation of human society in all its grades of existence.

For the spread of evangelism throughout the earth.

For the dawn of that millennial day when all the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

It was from this platform that Frederick Douglass, the foremost orator of the colored race in his days, delivered his great lecture on the Assassination of Lincoln, when there was no other roof in this city to shelter him.

Presbyterianism is a representative government like that of our Republic, in many features of which, as I have said, they are similar. It is the

inspiration of patriotism and the firm pillar of all righteous administration. From the beginning it has ballasted our modern civilization in all the great emergencies of national vicissitude.

Presbyterianism in America has stood as the foremost breakwater of evangelism against the flood-tide of European sediment and speculation, and wider still, against the stream of more ancient and more distant conceptions of human destiny, and never, so long as the sun shines or the storms thunder, shall her protest be wanting against the nebulous and uncertain theories which would destroy every vestige of the supernatural from off the face of the earth.

Such is the service rendered by Presbyterianism to our country and the world. This old church has been in it for a hundred years, keeping equal pace with the Capital itself. May we not look back on it to-day with joy and wonder and with special thanksgiving to Almighty God! "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God."

From this watch-tower of Zion, we have looked out upon the marvellous spectacle of the nineteenth century, a century of world wonders in the corridors of time. What an era in the life-time of our beloved church! Our government came here in 1800. The Union was then but a narrow strip along the Atlantic coast. To-day it stretches across the fairest portion of the continent, spanned by Arctic snow and Southern gulf! Then three millions, now sixty-five millions of people, dwell-

ing and delving amid marvels of nature beyond the imagination of man. What a tutelage in countless branches of enterprises developing conditions of life unknown to the fathers of the Republic, where transit and tidings out-speed the fleetest time and make the globe one neighborhood, where the great professions have advanced far beyond the lines of former triumphs, and professions before unheard of, are filling the mighty scale of human achievements. Science is reaping fresh harvests from the limitless fields of nature. Literature and philosophy expatiate with a temerity of freedom, beyond the romantic wisdom of the ancients; wealth and labor are rearing unrivalled monuments of civilization, where seats of learning and homes of beneficence transcend the fabled shrines and oracles of the past, where the problems of social and political economy are pressing for solution in such a school of human freedom as the sun never before looked down upon, where human life itself has been magnified and intensified in all directions, where the moral forces of a pure religion rooted in God's Bible, are clarifying and uplifting human society as never before in any generation, and where the omnipotent spirit of the ever-living God is breathing through the chaos of humanity, as once before "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!"

In this century the watchmen on this rampart of our Zion with all Americans have seen and felt the storm and ravage of foreign and civil war. In our

very midst two Presidents of the Republic have been slain by the red hand of the assassin. Great tragedies have been enacted here which have gone thrilling into every corner of the earth. Poets have sung with all the fervor of our patriotism ; orators have thundered in our Senate ; men of affairs have created a new world of physical conditions ; our national charter has survived the most terrific convulsions ; "The Star Spangled Banner," still unsoiled, gleams in every ray and floats on every breeze. We have seen the shackles fall from four millions of bondmen, and the rescue of our commerce from the wolf-dogs of the sea ; we have seen our national credit redeemed and our Union cemented and consecrated by the blood and sacrifice of two millions of our citizens ; we have seen the mastery of steam and lightning over time and space ; we have seen our educational system unfolding from the primitive school-house to the grand university ; we have seen the immeasurable power of the press untrammelled by any censorship ; we have seen the Samaritan of christian beneficence binding up the bruised body of unfortunate humanity and bearing it away to some hostlery of relief ; we have seen our young and puissant Republic rising to the foremost seat among the great powers of the world ; we have seen the annual festivals and local expositions of a proud and prospered people crowned by the nation's centennial, and, later, still by that world's exhibition in the White City by the Lake. And still to-day is another in process in a fair city of the

South ; and, above all, we have seen that angel which hath the everlasting Gospel to preach to all people, making, in his wondrous flight, the whole circuit of the earth. How august has been the American arena, in the center of which we have stood ! What grand figures have moved across our stage ! What thrilling scenes have stirred all hearts with the comedy and the threnody of American life ! May we not in truth exclaim, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, Oh City of God."

Nor less have been the movements abroad in this same great period, too many and too mighty to be numbered here. Diplomacy, intrigue, oppression, rivalry, jealousy and bloody war among the nations, revolution, outbreak, the strong against the weak, patriot hope deferred, blood mingled with tears, the map of nations changed, hermit doors thrown open, empires passed away, Russian serfdom gone, the German States solidified in the heart of Europe, Italy unified, the Pope no longer a temporal sovereign, France a Republic, Spain and Austria falling in the scale, Turkey the nest of a butchering religion, and the rape of woman, deluding the mightiest kingdoms of Christendom, Japan accepting occidental civilization, and but yesterday shaking the foundations of the oldest empire on the face of the globe, India a dependency of the British Crown—that unnatural mother England, I grieve to say, whose lust for power tramples on everything too weak to resist her arrogance, Africa so long a shrouded continent thrown open at last to the

rapacity of European gunnery and craft, and far-off Liberia—infant daughter of American philanthropy, struggling upward to influence and power amid gigantic difficulties—violent tumults and bloody insurrections in the Central and South American states, many Islands of the sea reclaiming from barbarism and seeking some stable form of popular government, the ceaseless cabals of the Jesuites, the Mormon imposture, the strange mystery of modern spiritualism, the fanaticism and falsity of second Adventism, the fading away of the Indian aborigines, the violence and desperation of Nihilism and Anarchism, the revival of religious scepticism; hand in hand with falsetto German scholarship, spreading the mildew of agnosticism and unbelief through all the senses of a materialistic generation; the renewal of old theories of morality and religious faith, long since exploded; the Mammon god, and title worship, luxury, idleness, enervation; American womanhood sold out to the effete lordlings of the old world at the price of millions; the monstrous liquor octopus with tentacles buried in the heart of humanity, and sucking away the very life-blood of the nations. All these things sapping out the very vigor and virility of human society, and the never-ceasing conflict of human thought and opinion, kindling contentions everywhere, both in church and state. But thanks be to God, in it all and over it all we see the ceaseless preaching of the doctrines of the Nazarene, that divine and God-sent teacher of the human race,

Redeemer and Savior of mankind, once dead and buried, but now risen and ascended to the glory from which He came to be head over all things to the church the fulness of Him who filleth all in all, and whose saving grace this pulpit has never ceased to proclaim without reservation, omission or revision through all the century.

Of all these things, this church has been a witness, and of some of them has been a part. How vast the panorama and the spectacle. Out of this clock-tower of time no false alarm has ever issued. None have ever been misled who have sought counsel here. Let us rejoice together on this day of rejoicing. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God." The nineteenth century is closing. What shall the twentieth reveal? We know the past of our beloved church—what shall its future be?

I shall not live to see it. The day of my life is waning—my sun must soon go down. The workmen cease, but the work of God goes on. Conscious that I have performed my little task so feebly—grateful that this church has borne me up so long, I must soon resign my part to those whom God in his great and merciful providence has so recently drawn into His ministration here. In all my personal experience in connection with this church nothing has been more grateful, nothing more hopeful, nothing for which I more earnestly and more devoutly thank my God and your God, than the coming to us just at this crisis, of a minister whom God has so qualified and sealed for preaching

the everlasting gospel to all people. I am sure my younger yoke-fellow here most heartily joins me in this. It seems to me like a vision let down from heaven to cheer us as we close the present century and enter on the vast career of the coming years. It is to me, personally, the final sunburst of my evening sky, and I feel like saying with old Simeon, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!"

In closing this reveiw I thank God for all his mercies, private and public, and for the privilege to look out once more upon this magnificent city and upon an undivided country, a marvellous people and an aggressive, ever vital, ever recuperative Christianity, over whose future prospects I see frowning to-day, but one dark cloud. Amen.

