

Tuttle, G. F.

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SKETCH OF REV. BARNABAS KING, D.D.,

Farrand
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The first half of this century, was marked by no event more important in its results, to the region of country of which Rockaway, Morris Co., is the centre, than the entrance of the Rev. Barnabas King upon his duties as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in that town; the moral force he exerted effecting an entire change in the character of the people coming within the sphere of his influence. Under a conviction that many members of the Historical Society of New Jersey will be pleased to have in a permanent form some memorial of a life so intimately connected with the local history of a portion of the State of which, comparatively, little is known, this brief narrative is submitted for their acceptance.

Mr. King was a native of New Marlborough, Mass., born June 2d, 1780. He graduated at Williams College, September 5th, 1794, and was licensed to preach by the Berkshire Association sometime during the autumn of 1805. On the 24th of December, 1805, he first touched the soil of New Jersey, and soon began to preach at Sparta, in Sussex County, and also occasionally at Berkshire Valley and Rockaway, in Morris County, his first sermon in the latter place having been preached on Friday evening, January 24th, 1806, at a private house, on the text, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens." (Eccles. 3:1.) Occasionally during that year he supplied the Rockaway pulpit, but in October, 1807, he made an agreement to supply that pulpit and the one at Sparta on alternate Sabbaths. His labors were so acceptable that on the 25th of September, 1808, he was called to be pastor of the church at Rockaway, the call being signed and attested by the Rev. James Richards, D.D., of Morristown, as Moderator of the Parish Meeting. On the 27th of December, 1808, he was ordained and installed pastor of the church by the Presbytery of New York. The services took place in the old church, which was not as comfortable as many a modern barn, and which had no stove to warm it. Among the great men who were present were Drs. Griffin, Hillyer, Richards, John McDowell, Perrine, the Rev. Aaron Condit and others.

Dr. McDowell, of Elizabeth, then in the third year of his ministry, preached the sermon from the words "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand." (Rev. 2:1.) Dr. Perrine, then the pastor of the Bottle Hill Church, as Madison was called, and afterwards the associate of Dr. Richards in the Auburn Theological Seminary, delivered the charge to the Pastor. As a mark of the times, it may be stated that the services were held in that rude and uncomfortable church on a very cold day, they were begun with a congregational prayer meeting at ten o'clock, and continued until three in the afternoon. There is no tradition of a single complaint, either by the clergymen or people, although it is said that the young pastor was so thoroughly chilled that when seated at the dinner table it was shaken by his trembling. It may be added that it was several times remarked by the strong men of that Presbytery there assembled, that "there was no prospect that the young pastor could live over two years." And yet he survived every man who helped to ordain him, unless Dr. McDowell be the exception. His parish included a circle of territory whose diameter was ten or twelve miles. In that territory, for several years, he was the sole minister, and he visited with the utmost regularity every family, and in addition, held such frequent public services in the church, the school house or private house, as often to amount for weeks together to ten each week. These abundant labors, accomplished by the most rigid adherence to rule in regard to his health, studies and time, were attended with extraordinary success. The growth of the church was great, and with that there was a marvelous change in society. Schools sprang up, some young men sought the culture of the College, business grew apace, the wealth of the mines was discovered and appreciated, and the refinements of an elegant social life increased. In 1848, Dr. King preached his fortieth anniversary sermon, which was published, and a copy of it was placed among the pamphlets of the Society. The greatness and value of the good man's labors are related in that discourse, with far too much modesty, in view of the results flowing from his residence in the State. In December, 1853, he pronounced his forty-fifth anniversary discourse, which he was unwilling to publish. Its felicitous text consisted in these words, "And now behold the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, ever since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness," (Joshua 14:10.) At its close, the honored man invited his people to sing that noble lyric,

“God of my childhood and my youth,
 The guide of all my days,
 I have declared thy heavenly truth,
 And told thy wondrous ways.
 Wilt thou forsake my hoary hairs,
 And leave my fainting heart?
 Who shall sustain my sinking years,
 If God my strength depart? &c.”

(Watts' Psalms, 71st, 3d'p. C. M.)

It was an occasion that was both rare and grand, and one that reflected the highest honor both on the pastor and his people. On the 24th of December, 1854, Dr. King again preached an anniversary sermon, being the forty-sixth of his pastorate, and the forty-ninth of his ministry in the one church, since he preached his first discourse in Rockaway on the 24th of January, 1806.* The text in the circumstances was very thrilling. “*The night is far spent, the day is at hand.*” (Rom. 13:12,) This discourse contained many pleasant reminiscences, but its author was unwilling to give it to the press.

On the 12th of December, 1858, the Session of the Presbyterian Church at Rockaway adopted a minute and directed a copy of it to be sent to Dr. King, its senior pastor, in view of the fact that the fiftieth anniversary of his installation, as the pastor of the church, was at hand. In this minute the Session speak in terms expressive of gratitude to God for sending such a faithful man to be their pastor, and for the abundant results of his ministry. Its second and third resolutions are in these words: “Resolved 2d, That we congratulate our venerable Pastor on the approach of so interesting an anniversary, and that we earnestly desire him on the Lord's Day previous to that occasion to preach a memorial sermon of his ministry among this people. Resolved 3d, That we fervently pray God to continue our beloved Pastor to us many years more, and that his latter days may be blessed with rich and numerous proofs of the Lord's faithfulness and love.” In accordance with this request the venerable man preached his fiftieth anniversary sermon, from the words “The Lord hath blessed thee since my coming,” (Gen. 30:30.)† The sermon was not given to the press, but was heard

* Entered in the old Rockaway Trustee Book.

† By a pleasant coincidence, too marked to be neglected, that very year was the one hundredth anniversary of the *Church's* organization. Thus two interesting facts were associated in the same services. A series of discourses was consequently prepared by the Junior Pastor, the author of this sketch, the first of which was delivered on the evening of the day that Dr. King preached his fiftieth anniversary sermon. These circumstances furnished, in fact, the substance of the paper on “The early history of Morris County,” submitted to the Society in May, 1869.

with profound interest by the large audience that crowded the old church.

Let it be added that Dr. King was spared to his people more than three years after the occasion just referred to. He sometimes preached, but oftener exhorted and always with acceptance. His mental faculties remained unimpaired, and his interest in everything pertaining to his friends, the church and the country, was as warm as in early manhood. The Monday night the news of the Bull Run disaster gave such horrible unrest to vast multitudes in the loyal States, was spent by him in sleep as trustful and sweet as an infant; and he said "Children, it cost us seven years of dreadful war to give us a nation; it will cost us years of more dreadful war to save that nation; but you need not fear as if it were not to be saved. It shall live and not die."

all In the spring of 1862 it was thought best by himself that he tender his resignation formally to the parish, but his faithful people to their honor refused to receive it, professing to him an unabated attachment. He had now been in that relation fifty-three years and several months. On the second Sabbath in March, 1862, he had performed his last official act in public, with a singular fitness, it being on the occasion of his last communion with the church, at the close of which he stretched forth his hands and with such pathos and beauty pronounced the apostolical benediction recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, twentieth and twenty-first verses, that many were moved to tears, and some even said they had never heard the words before! More than fifty-six years before he had preached for the first time in that congregation, and more than fifty-four years—from October 1807—he had been preaching there regularly, and lacked only less than a year of being their *pastor* during that long period, during that time he ministered in several instances to five generations of the same family, and in one case to six generations. * His honorable career was drawing to its

* When Dr. King began to preach in Rockaway, he boarded in the family of Moses Tuttle, Esq., the sixth child and fifth son of Colonel Joseph Tuttle, of Hanover, and his wife Abigail Ogden. Col. Tuttle and his brother Timothy settled in Hanover, in Morris County, about 1733 or 4. Col. T's second wife was Abigail Nutman, a sister of the Rev. James Nutman, the second pastor of the Hanover church. Their son, the Rev. James Tuttle, was the first pastor of the churches at Rockaway and Parcippany. Dr. King was the pastor of *Moses Tuttle*; of the daughter of Moses, *Mrs. Hannah Hoff*, widow of Charles Hoff; of her daughter *Mrs. Jane Beach*, widow of Col. Samuel Serrin Beach; of her daughter *Mrs. Delia Hazzard*, the widow of the Rev. Silas H. Hazzard; and he lived to see *Mrs. Hazzard's daughter* and *grand child* on a visit to Mrs. Beach, the venerable

close; not a dog wagged his tongue against him; the entire community regarded him with unabated veneration; and now he placed on such a public career the beautiful crowning act of that benediction.

People are wont to note coincidences, and it was noted as singular that the very day that Dr. King's resignation was laid before the parish, and declined as already stated, he became ill, and after a sickness of several days he passed from earth as peacefully as a little child passes into sleep. He rested from his labors on the 10th of April, 1862, and on the 13th his remains were consigned to the grave, in the midst of such a concourse of people as was never before gathered in that old yard. At his own request the funeral sermon was preached by his colleague in the pastorate of the church, who selected for his text on the occasion the words "By the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. 15:10.) This discourse was published, and is among the Society's pamphlets.

In his able and interesting history of the Presbyterian Church, Dr. Gillett thus describes Dr. King, of Rockaway, in language which does not seem extravagant to those who knew him. "Frail and feeble in appearance, and supposed by all to be consumptive, he was spared to the discharge of a long and useful pastorate. * * * * But while faithful to his special charge, he did not neglect the missionary field around him. With the best men of the Jersey Presbytery he bore his full share in itinerant evangelization, going from Powles Hook to the Delaware, to tell the destitute of Christ. The monuments of his success were scattered around him far and near. One of the most eminent of his cotemporaries—the Rev. Albert Barnes—remarked that he knew 'of no minister whose walk and labor and success had been so admirable as those of Mr. King of Rockaway.' His great ambition was to win souls. His one book was the Bible. As a preacher, he was simple and scriptural; and his whole course was characterized by good sense, consummate

great-grandmother, who is still living! Making six generations of one family who lived in the period of his ministry. The late Matthias Kitchel, Esq., also married *Caroline Beach*, the great-granddaughter of Moses Tuttle, and Dr. King lived to see her grand children. He ministered to five generations of Captain *Stephen Jackson's* family, viz: Capt. Stephen Jackson, his son Col. *Joseph Jackson*, his daughter *Mrs. Sarah Dubois Halsey*, and her children and grand children. The same was true in other instances. The whole constitutes a singular and perhaps not very easily paralleled statement of permanence and longevity in his pastoral office.

judgment, earnestness of purpose and devotion to his work. Usefulness he preferred to eloquence or learning. Yet his utterance was always manly, and at times fervent. One of his most critical hearers remarked 'that he never said a foolish thing.' Amid fragrant memories and the rich harvests of the usefulness he coveted, he descended to the grave in a ripe and beautiful old age. The wrinkles of more than four score years were on his brow, but there was no wrinkle on his heart. His closing hours were marked by peace and cheerful hope, and when called to depart he was ready for the summons." He lacked only two months of being eighty-two years of age.

* History of Pres. Church, I 559-61.