



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
22 CHURCH STREET
GOUVERNEUR, NY 13642

FPCGH-9

CENTENARY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH, GOUVERNEUR NEW YORK

1817 – 1917 A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

MAY 24, 1817

AS READ BY THE AUTHOR MISS SARAH H. A. PARKER

(Page 3) A few weeks ago we were all directed to turn our clocks forward for an hour, and this was accomplished without a jolt.

I now ask you to turn your clocks backward for this hour, and let us assume that we are in the year 1917, the centennial year of our church.

Ever since the day when a certain Mrs. Lot looked backward and became a pillar of salt, a retrospect has been highly unpopular. Looking backward is especially unpopular at this time when our slogans are “Forward,” “Onward,” “Burn your bridges.”

We trust that some of us will be overtaken by the fate of Mrs. Lot, and that nothing quite so tragic as flooding the salt market will result from this meeting. But you never can tell. Some of us may be turned into pillars of sugar, or pillars of wheat, or even pillars of coal, which, perhaps, would not be wholly a calamity.

If you are bored – many of you will be – kindly remember that this is not my story. It is simply the story gleaned from the church records. And as these little episodes occur only once in a hundred years, I trust you will be patient with a long story, and I want to thank you in advance for your courteous attention, and in return I give you my solemn promise never to repeat the offense.

There is an old Latin proverb which, freely translated, reads, “Learned and unlearned we all write.” Were the old author living in these days he doubtless would revise his proverb so that it would read, “Learned and unlearned we all write, and the more unlearned we are the more liable to become addicted to the writing habit.”

The application of this revised proverb is sufficiently obvious.

To me has been assigned the task impossible; the task of condensing into a few minutes the events of one (page 4) hundred years. In the case of an insurance company, a bank, a loan association, or of a single individual, this would be appalling. Then, too, we can never separate the church material from the church spiritual, so the larger the better part of our church record is its unwritten history, its influence.

The astronomer may accurately weigh and measure an unseen planet by its influence on other heavenly bodies, but neither scientist nor theologian can measure or weigh the influence of consecrated, Christian lives.

So I repeat that mine is the task impossible.

We can only touch upon a few of the material factors which have entered into our structure, and the part that I shall skip will be a considerable part of the church history.

Right here let me say that my work could not be performed even indifferently, were it not for the splendid frame work built by our village historian and Mrs. Harvey L. Smith. These two painstaking ladies searched tomes of records and manuscripts, many of which are now faded or lost, and sifted out a wealth of history and incident which could not be secured from any other source. In some instances I have copied verbatim from their earlier chronicles.

It would be difficult to explain just what magic or just what necromancy lurks in the completion of a century. We may properly call it the "psychological moment." Eighty, ninety, ninety-nine years are milestones which we pass with scarcely a notice. But one hundred years. Ah, that is different. That is a landmark at which we pause and consider. The great history of the whole Christian church has been written in books each covering one hundred years. We all remember how reverently we watched the dial the night the nineteenth century (page 5) passed into the twentieth. It was unlike any other night.

Dr. O. W. Holmes facetiously observes, "Little of all we value here wakes on the morn of its hundredth year, without both feeling and looking queer." In general this is true.

The individual approaches the century mark with sorrow and dismay. He feels the infirmities of age, and realizes that his days of activity and usefulness are over. He is simply standing on the shore waiting for the boatman. The Church meets the century milestone with a song of exultation, with joy in her past successes, with pleasure in her prosperity, with glorious anticipations for her future. She sees herself a splendid organization, splendidly equipped for greater endeavor and for nobler achievements.

Let us now turn the dial backward something more than a hundred years and look into a little primitive settlement literally carved out of the forest. When our first settlers left their homes and started for this northern wilderness, they left behind most of their valued possessions, but they brought with them their piety, and a stern determination that the new colony should be founded on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

From the first, religious services were held with as much regularity as circumstances would permit, and denominational lines were ignored. There were neighborhood prayer meetings, catechism lessons for the children, and community singing. Some of our pioneers were educated musicians and their voices rang through the woods and fields in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. One of the largest rooms in the settlement was Israel Porter's dancing hall and services were frequently held in this room. This building was located on the west side at the top of saw-mill hill. It had long been the desire of the Presbyterian or Congregational (page 6) element to have an organization of their own. In 1817 a circular letter addressed to the immigrants from New England, and others in the new settlements was sent to this place. This letter urged the settlers to renewed Christian activity, and dwelt at length on the study of the Bible, the training of children, and observance of the Sabbath. This little leaflet may properly be called the corner stone of the Gouverneur Presbyterian Church. It increased the demand for a Presbyterian society.

Just a word as to the political setting for our infant church. The war of 1812 was over and people were ready to settle down to the useful activities of life. James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States, was inaugurated in March of that year. We remember him as the author of the Monroe Doctrine which means so much to us at this time. President Monroe also visited Northern New York during this summer, and the presidential coach rumbled up and down the very roads that are now pulsating with automobiles, so our people had the privilege of seeing a real live president. The Mississippi river was practically the western boundary of the United States, and the flag that floated over our country bore fifteen stripes and fifteen stars. We had nineteen states but the present flag was not adopted until the following year.

Accordingly on May twenty-fourth, 1817, a Presbyterian or Congregational church was organized. The trustees were John Spencer, Rockwell Barnes, Richard Kimball, William Cleghorn, James Parker and William Colton.

Six names were placed upon the church roll: William Cleghorn, Elijah Hough, William Colton and his wife Hannah Colton, Johnathan Colton and his wife Betsey Colton. And I learned that the men named Cleghorn and Hough were related by marriage to the Coltons.

The first person admitted upon profession of faith (page 7) was Mrs. Elizabeth Spencer and the first children baptized were the children of Mrs. Spencer. It was not

until 1820 that the church was legally constituted a society with corporate power. During these three years there was no settled pastor, and the services were irregular.

In the year 1820 the first “meeting house” was erected, such a rough, rude building as to scarcely merit the name of house. This building must be described mostly in the negative. We do not know exactly where it stood, but probably on this lot, or perhaps nearer the watering trough. It had no seats except rough boards, no means of heating, not a luxury, not even a comfort which we deem essential today. But so eager were the people for church privileges that they came long distances over rough trails, in ox carts, and listened to long sermons, seated on these plain benches without even a back. But it was their own home church built by their own efforts, yes built by their own hands. It was the house of God and filled with the glory of the Lord.

Let your fancy travel backward a moment. Can you not hear their beautiful voices floating down the century?

“I love thy kingdom Lord!

The house of thine abode.”

In January 1821 Rev. James Murdock was engaged as stated supply and served the church faithfully for four years. Mr. Murdock was a genial, active old man and much beloved by his people. He loved to relate his amusing experiences of pioneer life. He lived on a farm on the Somerville road just beyond St. Lawrence Marble Mill. His salary was small, the little farm which he tended supplied the family with vegetables, and his excellent wife so managed the larder as to throw an air of thrift and comfort over the household. He took long horseback rides to visit his parishioners, and, in the absence of a golf links and tennis courts, he sawed (page 8) wood for muscular development. During the last year of his pastorate, 1824, the first rude structure was replaced by a more pretentious building. Through negotiations with Judge Kent, agent for Mrs. Gouverneur Morris, our present church site was deeded to the society to hold forever for church purposes. This meeting house was built at a cost of fourteen hundred dollars, and boasted no architectural beauty. It was thirty-four by thirty-nine feet in size, with a gallery around three sides. The church had no steeple but across the front was a square cornice ornamented with four small spires. This building had a checkered career. It was moved to the lot now occupied by the Starbuck barn, and later traveled across the street to the lot where stands the Gouverneur Marble Works. It was in turn a church, a town hall, an opera house, paint shop, hose house, village lockup, and marble shop. It went down in the fire of October 7th, 1877. So far as we know the funny little spires are lost forever, not even a picture remaining. Plain and cheerless as was this church, it was dear to the hearts of the worshippers. Before the building was removed the following resolution was placed upon the church records:

“Resolved, That the church will enter upon its records the expression of its gratitude to God for all the great mercies experienced by the church in this house for nearly a quarter of a century, during which time it has pleased the great head of the church at sundry times to visit this branch of Zion with the gracious effusions of his blessed spirit; and to permit additions to be made to it by profession of faith and by certificate of nearly five hundred persons.”

In 1825 the church held a “protracted meeting.” Through the work of the noted evangelist, Rev. Charles G. Finney, a great revival was experienced and about eighty persons were received into this church. A goodly number also united with the Baptist church.

Rev. Mr. Murdock was succeeded in 1825 by Rev. (page 9) Richard C. Hand who was installed in September 1826, and remained the faithful pastor for about seven years, or until January 1833. The church was then without a regular pastor for five years but was supplied by Revs. Jonathan Hovey, Mr. John Bucknell, and Robert F. Lawrence. These men served short periods and there were no services the greater part of these five years.

In 1835 the church was impoverished by the removal of several families, among them the Jonathan Colton and the Smith families. These people joined a colony from Northampton, Mass., and emigrated to Princeton, Ill. This colony was organized by Massachusetts people for mutual co-operation in promoting the cause of Christ and education in the virgin prairies of Illinois. After a long and tedious journey they located in Princeton and became the nucleus of the first Congregational church which was named the Hampshire Colony Church, organized October 20th, 1835.

The later history of these immigrants is interesting and it is not a digression to follow them to their western home. The Coltons were a family of clergymen distinguished in church and educational work. Edwin G. Smith, a little lad of fourteen years when they left this place, later became the Rev. Edwin G. Smith, a graduate of the first class of Knox College, Galesburg, Ill., and for many years prominent in evangelical and educational work in the west. You are all, in a way, acquainted with this Smith family, better acquainted than most of you realize, for the only son Edwin G. Smith, Junior, became a pioneer in the Rocky Ford melon industry. Several years ago it was my pleasure to visit Mr. Smith in his western home, and I found him a veritable “Prince Charming,” eighty-two years young, and in full mental and physical vigor. He wanted me to tell him everything that had happened in the almost seventy years he had been away from his native village, which was something of a strain on my resources. My time with him (page 10) was short but he insisted on taking me to see this Hampshire Colony Church. So you see our church was instrumental, it would be more modest to say one of the instruments in founding the first Congregational church of the great state of Illinois.

In October, 1838, Rev. Simeon Bicknell, a Dartmouth graduate, was ordained as pastor of the church. He remained until January, 1842, when he was succeeded by Rev. John Orr who began his service in February 1842. Mr. Orr remained until August 1843 but was never ordained.

The pictures sketched in these old records are evidently faithful likenesses, with no attempt at gloss or retouching, and there are no bouquets. A note in the record says: "Mr. Orr was a native of Maine, a graduate of Bowdoin College, of Bangor Theological Seminary; a man of good education, a deep original thinker, strong and instructive sermonizer, rather ultra Calvinistic in doctrine, pure and blameless in morals, but not popular as a man or minister, phlegmatic in manners, and seemingly without passions either good or bad."

And now the church has rounded out a quarter of a century.

"Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men." (Psa107.31)

About this time events crowded fast and it is difficult to keep history in its proper order.

For a long time, perhaps twenty years, there had been a division in the church, and this breach continued to widen in spite of the conscientious efforts of both parties to come to an amicable understanding.

It is not necessary to enter into the details of this disturbance. A number asked for letters of dismissal that they might form a second Congregational church. These letter could not be granted. Month after month (page 11) committees labored with the disaffected brothers and sisters to convince them of their error and to urge them to remain with the parent church. Dear old Deacon Wright was the pastor's faithful coadjutor and prayed and expostulated in season and out of season to bring about a reconciliation. But all to no avail. To use a legal phrase, it seemed to be a case of "Incompatibility of Disposition."

I wish I could give you sketches of the various characters as they are revealed in these records, but time will not permit. We must sketch character collectively and not deal with particular individuals.

We are apt to think of those people as stern, hard, austere, unyielding, perhaps bigoted. We must remember they were born in a different century: they were pioneers and suffered the hardships and privations of pioneer life. I find them uncompromising with wrong, but gentle, patient, and forgiving with the wrong-doer; always striving for peace; not peace at any price, but the priceless peace of being right. Church discipline never resorted to until prayer, admonition, and counsel had failed; and even then the erring member was always given the privilege of returning to the fold.

Beautiful characters are revealed in this controversy. A certain number saw it their duty to secede from the parent church and they carried out their convictions. The result of these years of struggle was that a second Congregational church was organized in 1843, taking from this church twenty-seven members, and a number from Richville. When the division finally culminated the following resolution was placed upon the church record:

“Resolved, That when any of those persons shall see the error of their ways, and be ready and willing to confess and forsake their errors, and shall desire to return to the church, the doors of the church and the hearts of its members are open to receive them.”

(page 12) This second Congregation society bought the lot where the Methodist church now stands, and erected a plain edifice which they occupied until 1862, when the organization was dissolved and most of the members returned to the parent fold. The Methodist society bought this building and occupied it for a few years, when it was removed to the rear of the Elliot store, Park street. It was used a short time as an opera house, was next purchased by the Catholics, and was burned in the fire of January 1875. It may not be out of place to relate a little incident connected with that fire. On this cold January morning amid the roar and din of a great conflagration, a beautiful sight struck the spectators. The large white cross, tipped with gold, was almost the last thing to take fire, and, as the flames curled about the extended arms, they lingered lovingly awhile, as if loath to destroy this emblem of the Christian’s hope. A reverent onlooker was heard to murmur: “In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o’er the wrecks of time.”

The church next extended a call to Rev. B. B. Beckwith who commenced his labors in the fall of 1843, and was installed February 14th, 1844. The installation sermon was preached by Rev. Beriah Hotchkin, of Potsdam, from the text found in second Corinthians IV:4, “The light of the glorious gospel of Christ.”

Mr. Beckwith’s pastorate covered a period of twenty-three years, years fruitful in both spiritual and material prosperity. In many respects Mr. Beckwith presented striking contrast to his predecessor, Mr. Orr. He certainly was not “phlegmatic.” The tails of his frock coat could often be seen whiskering around a corner sometime after the man had disappeared. Mr. Beckwith was – well – he may be described briefly as a live wire. Brisk, quick, energetic, a man who made friends, (whisper it softly) he made enemies too; public spirited (page 17) and active in the secular affairs of the village. The church had no parsonage and Mr. Beckwith bought the west half of the square bounded by Main, Sterling, Beckwith and Depot streets. On this lot he built a house which is now a part of the Frank Freeman house. His pastorate was strenuous for both pastor and people. The country passed through two wars, “The Mexican” and the “War of Rebellion;” when the war cloud is over the land the people

are unreasonable, turbulent, and difficult to manage. We see proof of this at the present time. He lived to see peace restored to his country and to his people.

In 1843 a new "Meeting House" was raised and finished in 1844, the one most of remember as the "Old Church." Our forefathers made a distinction between their building which was a meeting house, and their organization which was a church, but I have been careless about observing this distinction. However this was a meeting house, sixty by forty feet, with a seven foot projection for lobby and belfry. It cost about thirty-five hundred dollars.

The Gothic or Romanesque in church architecture was slow in reaching these wilds, and this meeting house was, perhaps, the squarest building ever designed. Please permit a grammatical indiscretion and let me call it the most squarest building. You entered a square lobby or vestibule from which two doors opened into a square audience room containing forty-four rectangular pews with square doors that fastened with wooden buttons. Near both entrances were square platforms on which stood big square stoves which were supposed to heat the building but sometimes failed of their mission. Across the rear was a square gallery, in which was a wonderful pipe organ, also square. The windows were square and contained two hundred and forty square panes of clear glass. There were green blinds through which the sun shone and painted square bars on walls (page 18) and floor. In front of the pulpit was a square mahogany table. The platform and pulpit were square, and on either side of the pulpit were square columns which held books or lamps. The minister's haircloth sofa had a square mahogany back. High above this sofa was a big square shelf evidently designed as an ornament. The collection plates were square boxes fastened on long wooden handles. When my memory begins, the floor was covered with a green carpet marked off in black squares.

Previous to the dedication the following resolutions were recorded:

"Resolved, That Thursday, the twenty-ninth day of August, 1844, be fixed upon and set apart as the day on which the new meeting house shall be solemnly dedicated to the worship of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

"Resolved, That the church be directed to send notices of the intended dedication to the several congregations in this village in order that all who wish may have opportunity to attend."

Pastor Beckwith preached the dedicatory sermon from Exodus 20.24b. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

For a long time a change in church government had been under consideration. In February, 1863, a motion was passed that "the church become fully Presbyterian by electing a board of ruling elders." Accordingly seven elders were elected by ballot and were ordained on Sabbath afternoon, May seventeenth, 1863. Their names were George Rodger, Melville Thrall, Samuel Wright, James Brodie, Simeon Parmelee,

Joseph Howes and George Lockie. Rev. John Waugh presided and was assisted in the service by Revs. B. B. Beckwith, Stephen Johnson and Joseph Lowney.

Soon after this Mr. Beckwith began to feel the infirmities of age and the weakness of ill health, and several times asked to have the pastoral relation dissolved, but the people were loath to lose their loved pastor, the man who had led them faithfully for nearly a quarter of a century. Finally, in 1865, his resignation was accepted, though he continued to serve the church for another year or until a call was extended to Rev. N. J. Conklin, of Utica, N.Y. Mr. Conklin began his labor in March, 1866, and was ordained and installed on July 19th of the same year. Rev. Dr. Greenwall, of Baton, Penn., the pastor's father-in-law, delivered the installation sermon. This same year the society built a new parsonage just east of the church. This was a pretty, comfortable home and housed the different ministers until the present one took its place.

And fifty years of church life have passed.

“Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” (Psa107.31)

The ministry of Mr. Conklin will be remembered by a large number of the present membership. He was a man of strong faith, a genial friend, a faithful pastor, and the church grew and prospered under his guidance. During his ministry the church was enlarged by a rear extension and the addition of twenty pews; the old stoves were exchanged for a furnace, the lighting was changed, and some other improvements were made, but the general squareness remained unaltered. The doors of the pews were removed and the funny little slams which announced the arrival of a family and their settlement in their very own places were heard no more. The removal of these doors made a great impression upon the children of that time, and henceforward being in church was less like being caught in a trap.

Mr. Conklin resigned his charge in 1879, and was succeeded by Rev. Dr. Tyron Edwards, a grandson of Rev. Jonathan Edwards.

Dr. Edwards was born in 1809, the year that gave the world so many men and women of exceptional talents. (page 20) Indeed a veritable halo seems to encircle the birth roll of that year. Dr. Edwards had passed the three score and ten milestone when he came to us, and the radiance of “the end of the journey” shone in his face. He was a man of great erudition, a writer of ability, and a gracious and godly man, a man who commanded respect and esteem from all. His pastorate, covering a period of six years, was a time of steady growth and uplift, but was not marked by any extraordinary events. One of his favorite expressions was that “grass does not grow by eruption.” When sickness caused his retirement he left a church united and prosperous.

For a little more than a year we were without a regular pastor and the pulpit was supplied partly by candidates and partly by Rev. J. A. Canfield, of Antwerp. The true facts of the case are, (this is just between ourselves) the church was waiting for their boy (Rev. William Skinner) to grow up. In time he did grow up and came to us in June, 1887, fresh from college, and full of youthful ardor and enthusiasm. Rev. J. H. Beattie came from the old home town to establish his boy in life work, and presided at the services of ordination and installation which were held July 19th of the same year. The boy has continued to grow up with the other boys and girls of his charge. He has laid away the fathers and mothers; he has married the young people, baptized their babies, and, just a little later, has officiated at the weddings of these same babies, and helped to set them up in homes of their own. Great changes have come in his time. "Old things have passed away and all things have become new." (2Cor.5.17) The people had long realized that the church was shabby and had thought about a new building. It is a Presbyterian characteristic to move slowly. But the boy quoted from Ezra, "Let it be done with speed." "So they did speedily." (Ezra6.12-13) and early in his pastorate the splendid new church was (page 21) commenced. Perhaps it is sufficient eulogy to say that thirty years have passed and the boy is with us yet. "And when we have done with these life-lasting toys, Dear Father, take care of Thy children, the boys."

The old church was formally closed with a historic sermon by the pastor and the work of demolition commenced at once. Let us turn back to the history of Israel for a moment.

"Furthermore the king said unto all the congregation, my son whom alone God hath chosen is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the place is not for man but for the Lord God. Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones and stones to be set, glistening stones and of divers collors, and all manner of precious stone, and marble stones in abundance. – (I Chron.29.1-2)

On May fourth, 1892, ground was broken for the new church and we passed the seventy-five year milestone.

"Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men." (Psa107.31)

Our new church needs little description. It is a magnificent pile of Gouverneur marble with interior finish of chestnut, and seats eleven hundred persons. It is a substantial, convenient, luxurious, and graceful building, the old squares having given place to arches, curves and circles. Its cost was, approximately fifty thousand dollars, and the whole debt was lifted in 1902.

As the vast audience passed out into the beautiful October night, the attentive ear could hear the “heaven of heavens praising Him,” and the “stars of night” chanting:

“Here shall highest praise be offered,
Here shall meekest prayer be poured,
Here with body, soul, and spirit,
God Incarnate be adored.”

In 1904 the church property was enriched and beautified by a new parsonage, the gift of Mrs. Myra Dean and her daughters. The old building was removed to the east side of John street, and is now the Fox house.

The new parsonage is a modern convenient house built of brick, with trimmings of Gouverneur marble, and is a fitting companion to the church.

The last year of the century opened with a Pentecost of souls, when by special services and special efforts over eighty new converts were added to the church.

And we reach the one-hundred year milestone.

“Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” (Psa107.31)

The present church membership is five hundred and fifty. We have now as church member Mr. Sabin Parker, a son of James Parker one of the first trustees; Mrs. Celia Pike, a granddaughter of the first member, William Cleghorn, and several descendants of the first pastor Rev. James Murdock.

In three cases the office of elder has passed from father to son.

The church has been remarkable in many ways, especially (page 23) for long terms of service. Pastor Beckwith served twenty-three years. Mr. Skinner has completed his thirtieth year. Mr. William Miller was sexton for upwards of twenty years, and William West was the faithful church housekeeper for twenty-five years.

Mrs. Erwin Barnes was received into the church June third, 1836, (83 years ago). However Mrs. Barnes was away for a few years so that her membership has not been continuous for that time.

Mrs. Chloe Hill united with the church in 1854; Miss Christie Hill and Mrs. John Rodger united in 1857. These are continuous memberships, and many names have been on the church roll for the full half century. Elder James Brodie prepared and took charge of the communion table for over thirty years. John Rodger sang bass in the choir nearly the whole of his life. Mrs. Sheldon commenced to play the church organ when she was a little girl, so very little that she had to slide off the bench to reach the pedals, and has only lately resigned her position.

It is with mingled emotions that I close these old books with their records quaint, pathetic, and humorous, unconsciously humorous. I must give you one example of the latter. In the list of church resources for one year I find this entry: "Wood is commonly got by voluntary donations." That would be a poor solution of the fuel question this year.

The later events of church history are known personally to you all. Indeed you are the makers of the late history. When these events shall have receded into the dim past, and are mellowed by time, the historian of the second centennial will present them in detail.

But listen, I hear the old sexton calling (Rev. William Skinner?). Let us go with him to the bell tower and he shall finish the story.

Yes, friends, I am a very old man, very old, and they call me garrulous, but I have seen great sights and great (page 24) changes in my time and I like to talk about them. Once the ox-cart crawled at my feet. Now the air plane flies overhead. The news that traveled by stage coach is now flashed to us by wireless. It is almost time to ring out the last hour of the century and before I do this I want you to look out of the windows of my little eyrie and let me tell you of some of the things that are in sight. I miss some of the old beloved landmarks. They had to be sacrificed in the march of progress. To the north I look upon a busy street built in the modern way of brick, stone, concrete, and glass. To the east are the homes of my people with schools and pleasure grounds. To the west are the industries. I can see the masts of derricks, and noisy mills grinding and sawing night and day. These quarries always remind me of Mr. Samuel Wright, one of our first elders, and a faithful follower of the Master. He owned the farm which is now the property of the St. Lawrence Marble Co. He worked hard but the land was thin and poor, and he could not make a living, so he sold out and moved west. A few years later one hole in that farm sold for eighty thousand dollars, and out of that very hole was quarried the marble for this beautiful church of ours. He gave liberally of his scanty means and I have often hoped that, from the windows of his celestial home, he could look down and see the church his old farm yielded. It is a coincidence that this property was owned by the first pastor, one of the first elders, and finally produced the church.

To the south I see a busy river, a river that turns many wheels of industry, a river that quarries and grinds, and lights and heats. Just beyond this river is God's-acre where so many of my people are resting. Their names have just been transferred from the records here to the stones over there. Be patient with an old man. I want to tell you about some of them. There lies Parson Beckwith, and near him six of his first family (page 25) of elders. There is Harvey D. Smith, (who was usually called Harvey D.) who came here in 1824 and for forty years was the trusted advisor in every difficulty, and the liberal donor whenever money was needed. He was clerk of the church for twenty-five years, on every committee, a delegate to the

“anniversaries,” and to every convention. Then there is Mrs. Harvey D. Smith who was acknowledged to be the sweetest woman who ever blest this community; her peaceful face framed in a halo of gray curls was a benediction; she looked well to the ways of her own family; she graced every wedding, and smoothed every dying pillow; she was Lady Bountiful to all who needed help. She gathered the children around her and gave them lessons in useful domestic arts and in right living. She was never sick and never grew old. But on her 85th birthday the pearly gates swung open and she passed through.

There is Rev. Stephen Johnson, one of the early missionaries to Asia. Just think of the moral courage it took to start on such a trip, and the physical courage too. Why, at that time, Asia was not much better mapped and charted than the planet Mars today.

There is Myson Cushman whose yea was yea and whose nay was nay, and when he had made up his mind that a thing was right an earthquake could not shake him; and when convinced of wrong would make all possible haste to confess and forsake his error.

And Mrs. Thrall who knew the Bible from cover to cover and practiced its teachings, too, in her daily life.

And Robert Ormiston, a giant among men, who used to swing up the aisle with a big gray Scotch plaid draped over his massive shoulders.

And a whole family of Hills whose strength and steadfastness of the Scottish hills from whence they came; and they were connected with the Rodgers and Rutherfords of equal strength and steadfastness.

(page 26) And Father Cone who was just enough of a pessimist to hold a tight rein on the optimists and keep them from running away.

And George Lockie with his genial Scotch smile and rich Scotch humor; with a cordial hand clasp for every one, and this hand clasp always included an invitation to dinner, a night's lodging, with song and story thrown in for good measure.

I also see a company of soldiers who learned Christian patriotism from this desk, and went out to practice it at the call of their country, and fell gloriously in the defense of the rights of men.

And another company who talked very little but headed every subscription and let their money speak for them.

And still another army, unknown to fame; our Savior described them in his story of the poor widow and her two mites; an army always faithful in the small things of life. And in the final analysis it is the uncommissioned army, the rank and file, the solid column that does the work.

But I must not talk longer, and a beatific smile lighted up his worn features. It is time to ring out the last chime of the century, and a merry peal it shall be too. There is no sadness in completing a cycle of achievement, in rounding out a century of honor and attainment. This peal raises us to a higher level, to a broader horizon. This a peal of victory, a peal of triumph.

“So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.” (Psa107.30)

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” (Psa107.31)

Yes friends, we are now standing on the brink of a new century; the hour is impressive. Beyond us lies the future with its boundless possibilities. Unnumbered and untried avenues of usefulness stretch out before us. We are only in the infancy of world building.

I see nations engaged in a fearful struggle. I see thrones and governments tottering. I see crime, cruelty, carnage, confusion, chaos. This is to be a century of reconstruction and regeneration. All this is in the foreground.

As my eye tries to fathom the indistinguishable distance, I wonder, and wonder. Yes, I am only human. I can not help wondering, -

“Where, where will be the birds that sing

A hundred years to come?

The flowers that now in beauty spring

A hundred years to come?

The rosy lips, the lofty brow,

The hearts that beat so gaily now

Oh, where will be love’s beaming eye,

Joy’s pleasant smile and sorrow’s sigh,

A hundred years to come?

Who’ll press for gold this crowded street

A hundred years to come?

Who’ll tread these aisles with eager feet

A hundred years to come?

Pale trembling age and fiery youth

And childhood with its heart of truth
The rich and poor on land and sea
Where will the mighty millions be,
A hundred years to come?

And back from the dim distance comes this answer,-

We all within our graves shall sleep
A hundred years to come;
No living soul for us will weep
A hundred years to come;
But – other men our lands will till
And others then these streets will fill,
While other birds will sing as gay
And, bright the sun shine as today,
A hundred years to come.”

Gouverneur, New York October, 1917