

HISTORY
OF THE
First Presbyterian Church
OF
MATAWAN, N. J.

Delivered January 3d, 1892

BY W. C. ALEXANDER,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

From Rev. Alex. H. Young D.D.

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"What hath God wrought."—NUMBERS 23, 23.

"That ye may tell it to the generation following."—PSALM 48, 13.

When the peace of Westphalia was declared, in 1648, religious freedom was asserted for nations, but it did not venture to liberate the individual conscience. Superstition, and bigotry and a wide-spread state craft retained the opinions and authorities incorporated with their history, and enforced, if not in a great degree created, their geographical relations.

The limits of thought were greatly enlarged when commerce took itself to the paths of the ocean. It was, however, on the new continent of North America that the true protestant principle was for the first time carried into practise. In the southern portion the faith of Rome was planted and enforced with the utmost severity. In the portion now known as the United States that system was never established. Discovered by protestant mariners, it was from the beginning set apart as a land of religious freedom. Fanatical intolerance compelled many an honest peasant, not only on the continent, but also in Great Britain, to leave the land of their birth for the Master's sake. A righteous toleration led them, of whatever faith they might be, to make America the land of their adoption.

It was during the oppressive reign of the Stuart dynasty in England—and as respects the continent, from the formation of the two antagonistic leagues that led to the thirty years war, until the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—that the earliest and most important settlements on the American coast were made. There is a certain spontaneous order about these settlements which will give a basis for classification. History gives five groups of colonies. Virginia, New York

and Massachusetts were the earliest, planted in 1607, 1613 and 1620 respectively. The first by Episcopalians, the second by Dutch Reformed, and the third by Congregationalists. A fourth group had its beginning in South Carolina. These colonists were mingled Presbyterians and Episcopalians. The fifth group was that of the Quaker settlements in Pennsylvania and adjoining parts of New Jersey, constituted by William Penn in 1682.

Presbyterianism came into this country by various ways, chiefly by two, as connected with Congregational settlements and by emigration from Scotland and Ireland. They were strengthened by Dutch settlers and Huguenot refugees. Without support of government, and in some instances in the face of its opposition, the Presbyterian churches, from the latter years of the seventeenth century, quietly but rapidly increased in numbers, especially in the Middle States, with a tendency to centralize on the Delaware, around Philadelphia.

The great revival which spread over the country about the middle of last century brought together and fused into one the scattered evangelical elements. Its greatest effects were manifested in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches. The Presbyterian Church which had previously been feeble and scattered, emerging from chaos and oppression, beheld itself, in the result of the revival, a numerous and fully organized brotherhood, with its own colleges for the education of its ministers and general intellectual culture. These facts thus hastily glanced at, give us a knowledge of the causes which led to the introduction of Presbyterianism into the land, the way in which it came and the centres from which it and other beliefs radiated. It was no doubt due to these agencies that Presbyterianism found an early and strong foothold in what was then known as the Jerseys, and has ever since been a plant of such vigorous growth within our commonwealth.

It is a matter of profound regret to the student of Church history, that, what would undoubtedly be to us a subject of great interest comes down to us, if at all, as traditions rather than recorded facts. As a result of this, our knowledge of the early growth of the church is sadly meager, and what we do have, so limited, as to make it more of an aggravation than pleasure.

Mr. James Steen, an elder in the church at Shrewsbury, informs me that Rev. D. V. McLean is authority for a statement that the Presbyterian church at Middletown was built as early as 1695. The amalgamated Dutch, Irish, Scotch Presbyterians, and Congregationalists were not sufficiently strong to have separate churches, and when in 1749 it became possible to incorporate, they still were united, for the charter was to "The Presbyterian Churches of Monmouth County." In 1734, by act of the Synod of Philadelphia, "The people of Shrewsbury were on petition set off as a separate congregation and attached to the Presbytery of East Jersey." In 1712 the Baptist church at Middletown had trouble to keep its members from crossing the road and communing with the Presbyterians. But in 1746 the Episcopal missionary, Rev. Mr. Thompson, was using for service the house "*that had formerly been a meeting house.*" The Episcopal church, for which an origin has been claimed as ancient as 1701, had only begun to be built in 1745. The Presbyterian had given way to the Dutch and was virtually dead so far as Middletown village was concerned. Whether this has reference to this place or not we cannot say, but that the Gospel of God's Son was preached in this vicinity at a very early date in the history of the land, there can be no reasonable room to doubt. In the records of the Presbytery of New Brunswick we read that on October 11, 1739, Mr. Blair was given certificate of liberation from Shrewsbury and the places adjacent. On April 1, 1740

supplication was received from Middletown and Shrewsbury for supplies. A Mr. McCray was appointed to preach the second Sabbath in April at Middletown; Tuesday at Shrewsbury, and Wednesday at Shark River.

On August 4, 1740, mention is made of a Rev. James Robinson being sent as a supply to Middletown, Shrewsbury and Shark River, and again in 1742.

Rev. Dr. Joseph G. Symmes, in his Historical Sketch of Monmouth Presbytery and Its Churches, is authority for saying that "Middletown Point is first mentioned as one of the preaching places of Rev. Elihu Spencer, previously to 1764, who for a number of years lived at Shrewsbury and exercised a kind of itinerancy all along the coast."

October, 1766, "A call was brought in from Shrewsbury, Shark River and Middletown Point for the pastoral services of Rev. Charles McKnight. This was taken under consideration, and on April 2, 1767, he being queried by the Presbytery whether he would accept the call aforesaid, answered in the affirmative and declared his acceptance."

It seems that on that date Mr. McKnight was installed pastor of these three charges, whether united as one organization, or as three separate churches is not said, but most probably the latter. Of this much we are assured, that at the time of Mr. McKnight's pastorate here there was a church building. Those were troublous times, when party lines were strongly drawn, and Mr. McKnight was an earnest and fearless champion of the cause of the Colonies, and as a result of his boldness in preaching during the time of the Revolutionary war he was arrested by the British soldiers, the house of worship where he preached, at Middletown, burned, and he himself dragged to New York, where he was confined—according to some accounts in the prison ship, according to others in an old warehouse, but wherever confined, suffering greatly at the

hands of his captors. A tomb in Trinity graveyard is said to mark his last resting place, but his descendants believe him to have been buried beneath the Shrewsbury church, and that the monument in New York is simply *causa honoris*.

The burning of the church building seems to have extinguished the church organization as well, for we have no mention, incidentally or otherwise, to any church work in progress here until near the close of the last century.

As an illustration of the manner in which public opinion changes we have but to mention that in 1793 the legislature of New Jersey passed a law authorizing a lottery for the purpose of rebuilding the church of Middletown Point. By this means \$1,500 was raised. But that the leaven of influence for good and opposition to such means of raising church funds had already begun to work good results we learn from the fact that when the church of Shrewsbury asked for the same privilege, in 1805, it was refused.

In the Historical Sketch above referred to, Dr. Symmes says the house so rebuilt was but rarely used by Presbyterians until 1820. Personally I am inclined to question this statement. In the records at Freehold I found this significant entry: "We, the subscribers, Trustees duly elected and chosen agreeable to law, do hereby certify that we have taken the name of the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of the Township of Middletown in the County of Monmouth.

Witness our hands and seal July 8, 1816,

DAVID GORDON,
M. VAN BRAKLE,
JAMES VAN NUYS,
DAVID SMITH,
SAMUEL PITNEY,
WILLIAM LITTLE,
JOHN SCHANCK,
——— Silversmith."

In the old Minutes of Session mention is made of the fact that in the years 1816 and 1817 Mr. Eliezer S. Barrows preached in this place, about eighteen months as Stated Supply. During this time the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered twice to those professing Christians who resided in the place.

Whether on the strength of a former organization, or waiving all irregularities, these same professors or some persons, called Rev. Eli F. Cooley and then desired a regular church organization that they might enjoy all the ordinances of the Gospel. This organization was effected August 31, 1820. After a sermon by Rev. Eli F. Cooley, prayer was offered to the Great Head of the church for his presence to guide and assist in the solemn transaction.

The following persons presented themselves for examination, with a view to unite in christian fellowship in the enjoyment of Gospel ordinances, to wit :

William Lawson,	Elizabeth Schenck,
James Van Nuyse,	Mary Walton,
Lewis Conover,	Margaret Donaldson,
Benijah Harvey,	Catharine Conover,
Danial Van Voorhees,	Anna Cotterill,
Samuel Donaldson,	Deborah Little,
William Toan,	Catharine Walton.

With this little band of fourteen, seven men and seven women, began the definite and distinct church life of which we are the continuation to-day. At a congregational meeting held September 17, 1820, William Lawson and James Van Nuyse were unanimously elected ruling elders.

In May, 1822, an election was held for Ruling Elders, and Messrs. William Hires, Cornelius Carhart, and William Toan were chosen for this office, but from subsequent records

we are led to infer that no one of them was ever ordained except Mr. Hires. Mr. Hires died in August, 1831, and of him it is recorded: "He manifestly died in the faith—exclaiming, Death has no terrors, all is right, all is calm, all is as it should be."

Of the others elected at this time we cannot but think they could never have been ordained, for if they served in this capacity at all it must have been for a very short time, as there is no mention of their having attended the meeting of Session. Mr. Carhart afterward joined the M. E. church, and Mr. Toan removed to the West.

It is a fact of no little interest to note the figures contained in the first report rendered by this newly organized or, if you will, reorganized church under date of April 23, 1821. Remember this was only seven months after the church had been formed and yet they reported as follows:

Members at time of organization, . . .	14
Added on examination,	17
Added on certificate,	5
Died,	1
Total in communion,	35
Baptism—adults, 3 ; infants, 5—total,	8

In the next report the membership had increased to 41. These figures are important as showing from what we have grown.

Mr. Cooley's pastoral relation here was dissolved April 23, 1823. Then, for some reason, a number of years elapsed during which there was no settled pastor, church services being undoubtedly maintained through the ministration of Stated Supplies. In the Minutes of Session there is a record of a meeting held March 21, 1826, to which the name of Thomas Kennedy is signed as Pastor, but there is no record going to show that he ever held that relation to this church.

The Rev. Clifford S. Arms was received by the Presbytery of New Brunswick October 2, 1827, but no record is given of his installation, or the time he assumed the pastoral office here. The first meeting of Session at which his name was given as Moderator, was held April 11, 1828.

On October 29, 1831 an election for Ruling Elders was held, the choice falling upon Messrs. John C. Whitlock, Thomas Roberts and Samuel Vanderhoof, and on the next day after a sermon by Rev. Eli F. Cooley they were set apart to the office. It was during the pastorate of Mr. Arms that Mr. James McGee, so the record spells his name, was received as a member of this church upon profession of his faith in Christ. The date was April 14, 1832. Mr. Arms was dismissed October 8, 1832, and on March 5, 1833, Rev. George S. Woodhull was installed pastor of the church at Middletown Point. He died here of scarlet fever, on December 25, 1834, greatly lamented by the congregation. His remains lie in the old burying ground at Mt. Pleasant. The Rev. D. V. McLean of Freehold preached the sermon on the occasion of his burial. During his brief pastorate our second oldest living member, Miss Sarah Bedle, united with the church, January 4, 1834.

August 26, 1835, Rev. Joseph L. Shafer was installed pastor of this church and during the summer of 1838 was dismissed, but at what date I cannot say; but on May 12, 1838, a meeting of Session was held at which Rev. Mr. Shafer was moderator. Here seems to have been the shortest interregnum in the history of the church, for on June 18 of that same year, Rev. Charles Webster was called to the pastoral office here, being promised the sum of \$450.00 in half yearly payments, as his salary. I would say, however, that this meager amount was supplemented by aid from our Home Mission Board. This call having been accepted by Mr. Web-

ster he was installed November 6, 1838, and continued in the pastoral office here until April 24, 1849. Mr. Webster moved his family, consisting of a wife and four children, to this place in August of the year he received his call, coming in wagons from Old Bridge, over very sandy roads and under a burning and scorching sun. He lived for a time in the house now occupied by Mr. William Maggs.

The pastorate of Mr. Webster marks a most important period in the history of this church. He begun his work in the old church building at Mt. Pleasant, but it became very soon manifest that a move must be made to a place more centrally located. It is quite striking at times what a part apparently little things will play in bringing about great results. Going to his church services at the old church one Sabbath morning in the late winter of 1839 or early spring of 1840, Mr. Webster found only a smoky reception. The wood was green and poor, and the chimneys or stoves would not draw, and as a result the room where the worship should have been held was filled with smoke, so it was impossible to hold service. It was then and there announced that the service next Sabbath would be held in the Academy building, what is now the Middle District Public School Building, and it was so held, and the interest and audiences were large from the very beginning. In addition to the regular church service, held as above, it was the custom of the pastor to hold prayer-meetings, at the homes of the various members of the congregation. These prayer-meetings were not only well attended, but held at an hour that may rather surprise us of this day. It was at 6.30 o'clock in the morning, and in the winter time at that. We are perfectly willing to bestir ourselves thus early that we may be at our business, but would our religious zeal be equal to such a demand? But our fathers attended this early meeting, and it did them good; and in the spring of

1840, as the result of the winter's revival, there was an ingathering of twelve, among whom was that afterward excellent elder Mr. Garrett P. Conover and his wife.

When Mr. Webster became pastor here the number of communicants, as near as I can gather, was 92; so that this addition, with others that soon followed, increased the membership to over 100. It then began to be apparent that the growing congregation must have a permanent church home. With this thought in mind, and to arouse the people to the task before them, the pastor preached one Sabbath from the text: "For the people had a mind to work." They certainly did have, for, as is usually the case, one devoted woman, Mrs. Prof. Phillips, threw her heart, head and hands into the work of raising money to build a new church. Mrs. Phillips interested the young ladies of the church, and at a date, just when I have been unable to ascertain exactly, but no doubt during the year 1840—it was in July—held a fair in the second story of the Academy building, which was unusually successful, and resulted in securing several hundred dollars. The men of the church were also aroused, and turned their attention to a new enterprise, then supposed to speedily return big profits to its projectors. It was the cultivation of Mulberry trees for the feeding of silk cocoon. Considerable money was spent in the purchase of buds, which were cultivated in fields hired for the purpose on the farm of the Misses Kouvenhoven beyond Holmdel. But though the buds were fine and grew well the venture proved a sad failure, not only failing to benefit the new church enterprise, but well nigh ruining the men who had been drawn into it. The people then went to work and gave as they were able, to raise the needed funds by subscription, and so far succeeded that on July 17, 1841, the corner-stone of the new edifice was laid, and it was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God on January 6, 1842. On that

occasion Rev. D. V. McLean preached the sermon from Ps. 84, 1 and 2. On the evening of the day of dedication Rev. Halsey Vandorn, then pastor at Tennent, preached, according to announcement, not one sermon, but two, with a brief intermission between them. The first from the text "The conies are but a feeble folk," (Prov. 30, 26) and "Run, speak to this young man." (Jer. 5, 1.)

I have been anxious to know just how much the church building cost, and think we have this from a record in the Trustee's book where the amount is given at \$3,010.66. This, I take it, was simply for the building, for in the early part of the year 1843, I find that the debt for lot and interest thereon amounted to about \$695.00. Though no record is in existence to show the amounts given by various individuals, this much is recorded, that the pastor, though receiving the meager salary of \$500.00, and he did not get all that, gave the sum of \$100.00 toward the new church building. This was the amount the Trustees were behind at the time of the occupancy of the new building, so they seemed to have entered upon their worship here practically free from debt. The first few years of their being here were years of struggle, and serious effort, to carry their organization along financially. The Trustees met from time to time, had statement after statement made to them, to the effect that they were behind in the payment of this or that obligation, and then with a courage which we cannot but commend, they resolved this, and resolved that, until the Minute Book of the Trustees is filled for pages with Whereases and Resolves. Among these we read under date of June 2, 1842, as follows:

"Whereas, the Old Church is now under execution and levement in the hands of the Sheriff for debt, the proceedings of which have been long delayed at the request of the Trustees in the hope that some way might be provided to pay the

same ; and, *Whereas*, there is great objection with many of the congregation to do anything toward putting up a new fence until the executions against the church are satisfied ; Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Trustees be authorized to inform the Sheriff that he need wait no longer than his pleasure, as we know of no way of raising the money to discharge the debt."

In a statement made to the Trustees, or by the Trustees to the Congregation, on October 27, 1844, we find this item : "There is a judgment against the congregation in favor of Rev. Jos. L. Shafer, the balance of which after applying the proceeds of the sale of the old church is believed to be about \$60.00." On May 15, 1845, this judgment was satisfied by the payment of money, raised especially for the purpose. It thus appears that the old church was sold under execution of judgment given by the Trustees to Rev. Jos. L. Shafer for salary due him at the close of his pastorate. But when the sale took place and to whom it was sold and for what amount I have not been able to ascertain. I am under the impression personally that this sale was effected through an amicable understanding between the Trustees and Rev. Mr. Shafer, in order to perfect the title to the church building, as the right and title in the ground upon which it stood was not at all clear.

After the close of his pastorate, Mr. Webster continued to reside here until his death, which occurred December 28, 1862. His remains are interred in Rose Hill cemetery. During these later years of his life he filled the place of agent for the A. B. Society in two or more counties in New Jersey, and one county in New York State.

On November 24, 1849, the congregation gave a unanimous call to Rev. John M. Rogers, and having accepted

the same, Mr. Rogers begun his ministry here at once, being installed early in the year 1850.

His pastorate, the longest in the history of the Church, was terminated July 1, 1867, although he continued to supply the pulpit until January 1, 1868. This long pastorate, the recollection of which is abundantly familiar to the older members of the congregation, marked an era of growth and development, such as the church never before experienced, and placed it upon the substantial basis upon which it rests to-day. It was a natural outgrowth from the seed planted by the generation and workers who had gone before. Early in this pastorate, in the year 1852, an effort was made to secure a home for the pastor, and in the following year, it was effected by the building of the house, now occupied by your pastor. Just at the close of Mr. Roger's pastorate the church was enlarged and improved at an outlay of nearly \$4,000.00 (\$3,830.) After the completed improvements the church was reopened for regular service the first Sunday in February, 1868. This score of years in the history of our church was not marked by any peculiar manifestation of the Spirit's presence, but it was a time when there was that growth which is the mark of a deep and abiding life, a building up of those things which would remain, a time to be remembered by those whose privilege it was to live therein. Mr. Rogers, as we all know, lives with his beloved wife in Princeton in honored age, not pastor of an actual parish, and yet an active laborer in a strange field, the protestant chaplain of the State Prison at Trenton, N. J.

On the 8th of December, 1868, a call was made out for the pastoral services of the Rev. James Otis Denniston, then a member of the Reformed classis of Poughkeepsie. He was installed pastor here on 28th day of January, 1869, and was released from the pastorate January 3, 1871. In February,

1870, there was an ingathering of fourteen members at the same time, among whom were two of our faithful elders of to-day, and others still with us, while some have gone over to the other side, one of them but a few days ago. Mr. Denniston is now pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Cooperstown, N. Y.

The next pastor of this church was, he of blessed memory, Rev. J. H. Kaufman. He was called March 25, 1871, and installed October 23 of the same year. As many of you so well remember he was here in his place on Sabbath (morning) October 26, 1873, as usual, he had given out that hymn ending with the verse:—

“Soon the delightful day will come,
When my dear Lord will call me home,
And I shall see his face.”

After the congregation had sung this hymn he was making, what is usually known as the long prayer, in which his voice began to falter, and when the prayer was ended, he was found leaning on the pulpit, was then helped to his chair, taken home, and on the following day was privileged to go over and see the face of his dear Lord.

It is stated upon the authority of Rev. Edwin M. Long in his “Illustrated History of Hymns and their Authors,” that the Rev. Mr. Shafer, who was pastor here at one time, fell dead in his pulpit from apoplexy as he concluded *the same line of the same hymn* which Mr. Kaufman read just before he was stricken. Can I do better than to re-read the Minute prepared at that time by the Session as summing up the work of this one, of whom a classmate in the Seminary has said in speaking to the writer, “He was a good fellow.”

“Whereas, in the providence of God, our beloved pastor, Rev J. H. Kaufman, has been suddenly removed from his

sacred office by death, and this Session desire to record their testimony and the Church they represent, to his exemplary life and devotion to the cause of Christ, during his ministry among us; Therefore

Resolved, In the death of Rev. J. H. Kaufman this Session and congregation are called to lament the decease of a beloved pastor, whose life was an illustration of the power of the Gospel to purify the heart, to stimulate to holy zeal and christain activity, and whose labors were blessed of God in the edification and spiritual growth of this people ;

Resolved, That we bear testimony to his fidelity as a minister of the word ; to his warm heart and sympathetic nature, which ever made his presence welcome and blessed at the bedside of the sick and dying ; to his systematic visitation of his people and pressing upon them in love the fulfilment of their religious obligations ; to his indefatigable efforts in awakening the charities of the church, and greatly increasing its benefactions for missionary and other religious purposes and energy in every good word and work ;

Resolved, That in the death of our beloved pastor, falling at the altar and with almost his last breath invoking blessings upon his people, we feel that his death was ordered of God for some wise purpose, and though unknown to us, will yet be sanctified to those over whom he ministered, and that the eldership of this church are admonished by this sudden providence to be more consecrated in heart in the service of the Master, who is thereby saying, Be ye also ready ;

Resolved, That the sympathy and condolence of this Session be tendered to the widow and children of the deceased, with their prayers that they may be strengthened and sustained of God in this their great affliction."

The next pastor was Rev. James M. Anderson, called

March 25, 1874, and installed June 30 of the same year, who labored here, with marked acceptance, until December, 1881. Mr. Anderson is now the acceptable pastor of the Presbyterian church of Bismark, North Dakota, and to his indefatigable efforts more than to any other one man is due the fact that that gigantic modern thief, The Louisiana Lottery, did not get a legalized foothold in the new state of North Dakota. During Mr. Anderson's pastorate the lecture room of our church was built in 1876 at a cost of \$2,000.00 for building, and \$500 for furniture.

The Rev. William H. Ford was elected pastor of this church April 21, 1882, was installed July 17 of that year, and closed his pastorate May 1, 1883. At the last Communion held under Rev. Mr. Ford, twenty-seven members were received into the church upon profession of their faith in Christ. This is the largest number ever received at one time in the history of the church. Mr. Ford removed to Brooklyn to accept a call from the Middle Reformed Church of that city, and though not now pastor of that particular church, is still laboring in connection with that body.

Rev. Robert J. Kent was called October 30, 1883, installed December 11, of that year. The pastoral relation was dissolved June 18, 1888. Mr. Kent, as we all know, is now the pastor of the Lewis Avenue Congregational Church, Brooklyn, New York, where his labors have been wonderfully blessed in every way.

The present pastor was called December 20, 1888, began his labors here the first Sabbath in February, 1889, and was installed pastor April 23 of that year.

In thus hastily passing over what we may call the pastoral history of the church we have said nothing, after the time of Rev. Mr. Arms, of that other important office, the ruling eldership. It appears to me from a careful perusal of

the records of this church that it has been peculiarly favored in this respect. Through the early history of the church in its struggling and formative times we find a regularity in attendance upon meetings of Session, and a readiness to do the duties of the office, that to me is most highly commendable, and worthy of continual imitation.

Of those who have filled this office in this church, the following is a list, and although some of them have been mentioned before, we repeat their names, to have our list complete in one place, and to know the length of their several terms of office. The first elders elected at the time of forming the church were William Lawson, who was dismissed in 1822, and James Van Nuyse, dismissed in 1836, after filling the office sixteen years. William Hires was elected, or ordained we will say, in May 1822, and died in August 1831. On October 29, 1831, Messrs. John C. Whitlock, Thomas Roberts, and Samuel Vanderhoof were ordained to this office; Mr. Whitlock was dismissed in 1848, having served seventeen years; Mr. Roberts died in 1850, having served nearly nineteen years, and Mr. Vanderhoof taking umbrage at the removal of the church building to its present site, connected himself with the Methodist church in 1841. In June, 1842, Messrs. Garrett P. Conover, Elihu Baker, and John Walton were ordained as elders; Mr. Conover filled the office till his death in 1873, holding the office thirty-one years. Mr. Baker removed to Chicago in 1854, after serving twelve years. Mr. Walton died in 1844, after but two years of service. The next ordination was January 13, 1850, when William Parker and Benj. Griggs were set apart to the office. Mr. Parker was dismissed in 1854. Mr. Griggs died in office in April 1887, having filled his place for thirty-seven years. Mr. William L. Terhune was ordained March 12, 1853, and still his bow abides in strength in his thirty-ninth year of service. May 15,

church. In reading over the records of its past we have failed to find any thrilling revival movements. I do not mean to say the Spirit has not been here. He has, but there has never been a movement that has stirred everything to its foundation, and influenced the whole community. We need to be aroused, awakened, quickened, and how shall it be effected.

This work of running back over the past will not have availed us anything if we do not get some beneficial results in the future. I am not sure but it would be to our advantage to put our hands to some material exertion, for after such effort great spiritual good has been known to come. I am very sure our house of worship, while roomy, might be made far more attractive. What say you to an effort in this line? You who sit in the pews know what improvement could be made in them. I am not a believer in the doctrine that because some other one before me has been uncomfortable, that therefore I am to be the same when I can remedy the matter. Then we should have more attractiveness in our worship. How long shall we have to wait for that new organ? Why not get it this year and at once? The best way to do anything is to do it. These are plain, practical things right here at home, but they are the things we should do, and must do, if we are to show that we are to have a life to live in the future. Shall we? The answer to this question is for you to make. I am a believer in the idea that great spiritual profit would follow. Let this truth be the mainspring of our action. *Quoniam diu vixisse denegatur, aliquid faciamus quo possimus ostendere nos vixisse.* "Since we cannot live long, let us work a work by which we may show that we *have* lived."

MATAWAN, N. J., January 2, 1892.