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FIFTY YEARS.

A Historical Discourse relating

To the First Presbyterian Church of Belvidere, N. J.,

By the Seventh Pastor,

WILLIAM A. HOLLIDAY.

March 2, 1884.

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Historical Discourse.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

Belvidere, N. J.

BELVIDERE, MARCH 4, 1884.

Rev. Wm. A. Holliday :

DEAR SIR—The Elders of the Church, of which you are pastor, held an informal meeting this evening and unanimously agreed to request a copy of your exceedingly interesting history of our Church, delivered last Sabbath, for publication. We trust you will furnish it so we can have it published at an early day.

Truly yours,

J. G. SHIPMAN,
S. SHERRERD,
JOSIAH KETCHAM,
A. B. SEARLES,
A. McCAMMON.

—————(o)—————

Dear Brethren of the Session:

The manuscript of the Historical Discourse to which your communication refers I cheerfully place herewith at your disposal.

With cordial regard yours,

WM. A. HOLLIDAY.

Belvidere, March 7th, 1884.

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To the First Presbyterian Church of Belvidere, N. J.,

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Is. 46:9. Remember the former things.

The former things yield instruction and minister to profit. In order to gain good from them, in order so to have them in mind as profitably to remember them, it is necessary for those of a later day to inquire concerning them. The value of history resides in its conveying to us the facts of former times.

I have been induced to attempt a historical sketch of this church because, for one thing, I have been asked to do so. Our Presbytery feels the importance of securing historical material relating to its churches while this is extant. A committee has the work in charge; and that committee has applied to me to write the history of this congregation. Another reason is the fact that the present is the fiftieth year since the organization of the church, which naturally suggests some survey of the past.

This beautiful region, the most northerly and westerly of our State, once embraced within the territory of the Delaware Indians, was settled as it appears independently in the main of the occupation by the whites of the country east of the Morris mountains and contiguous to the city and harbor of New York. Two streams of population here met and mingled. One was from the northward. It comprised the Dutch and Huguenot tide which flowed from the Hudson (at Esopus) across to the Delaware and thence southward. It comprised also a New England element which moved over the border from New York, having previously come to Orange County by way of Long Island. The other stream was from the South. It also included men of diverse nationalities. There were a good many Germans. There were more of that stock known as Scotch-Irish and of Scotch. There was here too another branch of that New England migration by way of Long Island, arriving in this instance directly from Hunterdon County. While in one locality one, and in another another element would predominate, and while in some places distinctions were perpetuated longer than elsewhere, still with their differences these various strains had so much in common that they soon began to blend; and it is only by survival of family names or by historic record that we know the original sources of the now homogeneous population of Sussex and Warren Counties.

The tract of land on which Belvidere stands was bought from the Indians by Penn. That portion north of the Pequest was acquired about 1770 by Major Robert Hoops. That south passed to Robert Morris; from him to the Croxalls; and from them to the Walls. Just prior to the

end of the first quarter of this century, there were several stores here, a saw mill, and a grist mill. Considerable was done in the way of freighting on the river in what were known as Durham boats. But the place was but a hamlet. Squire Searles is authority for the statement that in 1820 there were but twenty-eight houses here; of which only about a quarter were on this side the creek. What accelerated and stimulated the growth of the place was not a natural cause, such as the improvement of its fine water power, but a political. It was in 1824 that by act of the Legislature the County of Warren was set off from Sussex. The question of the location of the County seat was submitted to the citizens of the county at an election held in April 1825; and Belvidere was successful, having a majority vote over Hope, Washington, Oxford Furnace, Hackettstown, Bridgeville and one other proposed site. The selection of Belvidere was determined probably by the offer of Garret D. Wall to give ground for the public buildings and a public square, and to give a thousand dollars toward the buildings. With the fixing of the County seat here the village began to enlarge. Among the names added to the residents shortly are those of Sherrerd, Morris, Warner, Kennedy, Clark, Johnston, Stewart and others. Those of Robeson, Maxwell, and others come later.

Those who settled this region, like the settlers of our country in general, were religious people. They were not only religious but Protestant, and not only Protestant but largely Presbyterian. The Scotch and Scotch-Irish stock, the one of greatest influence, was especially strong in the lower half of what is now the County of Warren. Here congregations were early gathered. They were cared for by the Presbytery of New Brunswick. The earliest record goes back to 1739. "There came before the Presbytery," say its Minutes, "a supplication for supplies of preaching in Mr. Barber's neighborhood near Musconekunk." Later mention is made of "Mr. Green's" (neighborhood). Then the places denoted come to be known as Mansfield Woodhouse (now Washington), Lower Greenwich (now simply Greenwich), and upper Green-

wich, or Greenwich on the Delaware, or Axford's, or Oxford's. This latter, the present Oxford or old Oxford church, embraced in its territory all this neighborhood. The recollections of a number still living include attendance upon services at Oxford when it was the only church in the vicinity. Down to the close of the first third of this century the Presbyterians of Belvidere in particular worshiped at Oxford and belonged there.

From the time that Belvidere was made the county seat causes were at work that must effect a change. As we have seen, it became a larger and more important place, more of a centre. Even then, though not so largely as in our day of railroads, life, business, social, and religious as well, tended to concentration. The Presbyterians who came in here had no ancestral attachment to Oxford. They saw that here was a point which bade fair to become important, which ought to be occupied. There was here legitimate work for a church and for a Presbyterian church. Oxford could not do it. All experience shows that the people of a village or town will not go in any large number, or for any length of time, to a place of worship outside their own borders or at an inconvenient remove. We may lament the effect of this sometimes in the weakening of an old and historic church; but wise men do not struggle against currents they cannot reverse. Churches exist for people, and not people for churches, and the churches must be planted where the people are.

The incipient working of these things appeared first in the establishment of a regular preaching service in Belvidere. In 1826 at a time when the Oxford congregation was without a stated ministry a Mr. Ashbridge who, was just through his theological studies at Princeton, came and spent several weeks with it. Amid other labors he preached a number of times in Belvidere and visited every family in the place. The meetings gathered in a room in the Croxall mansion which had been designed as a ball-room. Thenceforward this service was maintained, Sabbath afternoon or evening, as part of the duty of the Oxford minister. A little later it was held in the Court House. Among those upon whom as supplies of the Ox-

ford church it fell to conduct it for a time was Sylvester Graham, afterward known as a lecturer on health and temperance, an advocate of the vegetarian diet, and giver of his name to unbolted or coarsely bolted flour.

In this same period falls the institution of a Sabbath school and a prayer meeting by the Presbyterians of the village. A longer stride in the same direction was when it was determined to build a house of worship. January 16th, 1830, a meeting, representing more than thirty families, was held, at which steps were taken to form a corporation; and seven trustees were chosen. The corporate name was "The Presbyterian Church at Belvidere." Four offers of ground were made. That of David Carlile, representing as it appears the Wall interest, of two lots on the west side of the public square, was accepted. The deed executed July 18, 1831, contains as consideration the sum of \$500. Building began in 1831 (July), and work went on till completion, late in 1834.

The building, familiar to many of you as your place of worship in earlier years, has been described to me as upon the site where we now are. It was not quite so wide, and not so deep by perhaps a quarter as this structure. It was of stone, broad-pointed and brushed so that it had a whitewashed look. A square frame tower, not completed till 1840, rose from the centre front. A higher flight of steps than the present ones led to a single door in the middle. There were two windows in the front; and at each corner were doors of entrance to a basement, the rear part of which only was for some years finished for use and employed not only for church purposes but also for a school during the week. The one main door introduced to a two story lobby. Two doors opened thence into the audience room. It had, I think, four long, pointed-topped windows on a side. A gallery ran around three sides, and the pulpit was between the doors. A solid central double block of pews faced the pulpit. The side pews ran to the wall; and in each of the two rows were two large square pews, one at the front and the other half way down the row. The house was heated by stoves; and the long horizontal pipes were provided with troughs

beneath to catch any drip from the chimneys. The total cost was in the neighborhood of \$7,000. On completion a debt of \$1,200 remained.

The church was organized November 25th, 1834. The Session met for the first time December 11, '34. The minutes of that meeting, the first in that small, neat and clear hand in which for nearly forty years the records were written, fully recount the events of a few days before. I cannot do better than transfer: "On Tuesday, the 25th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, the Presbytery of Newton met in the Presbyterian Church in Belvidere. The Presbytery had adjourned to meet in this place at the request of a number of the members of the Oxford Presbyterian Church residing in Belvidere who desired to be organized into a church to be called "The Belvidere Presbyterian Church." At a meeting of the persons above referred to on the second day of October '34 John M. Sherrerd was appointed a commissioner to prefer the said request to Presbytery, which he did at their stated meeting on the first Tuesday of October at Greenwich. In accordance with this request the Presbytery met at Belvidere,* and immediately upon constituting proceeded to the organization of the church. The moderator of the Presbytery, Rev. Isaac N. Candee, Rev. George Junkin, D. D., and Rev. John Gray, were appointed by Presbytery to conduct the organization, which they did by receiving upon certificate of dismissal from the Presbyterian Church of Oxford the following named persons with their baptized children, to wit: George R. King, William C. Morris, Chapman Warner and John M. Sherrerd, Ruling Elders in the Oxford Presbyterian Church; and the following named private members of said church, to wit: John Kinney, Jr., Mrs. Rebecca Carlile Kinney, George Green, Mrs. Sally Ann Green, Miss Elizabeth C. Green, Mrs. Sarah Sherrerd, Mrs. Maria M. Morris, Mrs. Phebe H. King, James G. Moore, Alexander N. Easton, Mrs. Mary C. Easton, Mrs. Euphemia W. Miller, Mrs. Elizabeth Paul, Mrs. Catharine

* Rev. Mr. Gray preached; Mr. Candee presided as last moderator present. Fourteen ministers and six elders were in attendance.

Matthews, Mrs. Margaret Bartow, Neal Gallagher, Mrs. Mary Ann Gallagher, John J. Guerin, Mrs. Elizabeth C. Guerin, George W. Scranton, Miss Ellen Angle, Mrs. Lena Johnston, Miss Louisa H. Bradley, Mrs. Margaret Wilson, Amzi A. Beach, Mrs. Martha W. Beach, Mrs. Hannah Hull, Bennington F. Randolph, Mrs. Rachel Camp, Mrs. Catharine Beavers, Mrs. Priscilla C. Kennedy, Mrs. Elizabeth F. Randolph, Mrs. Mary Mixsell, Mrs. Ann Inness, Mrs. Sidney McCrea, Peter Snyder, Mrs. Elizabeth Snyder, Mrs. Mary Fisher, Mrs. Mehetabel Laning, Samuel R. Laning, Aaron C. Hoff, Peggy Fell; and by certificate of dismissal from the Easton Presbyterian Church Mrs. Mary Jane Abernethy.*

The communicants thus received having nominated and unanimously elected George R. King, William C. Morris, Chapman Warner and John M. Sherrerd late Ruling Elders in the Oxford Presbyterian Church to be Ruling Elders in this church, and they having signified their acceptance of the office, they were installed by the moderator of Presbytery Ruling Elders in the Belvidere Presbyterian Church."

The writer of this minute, the prime mover and leading spirit in the whole movement, was John Maxwell Sherrerd. Of Scotch-Irish descent, he was born September 6, 1794, in Mansfield in this county. He graduated from Princeton College in 1812, studied law with Hon. George Maxwell and afterwards with Hon. Charles Ewing; and in 1818 returned to Mansfield to practice. He was appointed first Surrogate of the new county, and moved over to Belvidere in 1826. Cheerful and genial, he was diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He had made an early confession of Christ, probably in Trenton about 1816; and was ordained elder in Oxford church in 1830. He had a profound devotion to and enlightened interest in the cause of Christ not only here but throughout the world. He was the real founder of this church; and it owes under God more to him than to any other man.

It is said that the very first Sabbath after Mr. Sherrerd

* Of these persons but two are now known to be living.

had taken up his residence here, his spirit was stirred within him by the abounding Sabbath desecration which he saw. Oxford church was then without regular services and had been since Rev. Lemuel F. Leake had left there the Fall before. Mr. S. wrote at once to Dr. A. Alexander of Princeton, and procured the coming of Mr. Ashbridge. The services of Mr. Ashbridge in Belvidere were held in Mr. Sherrerd's house. In the maintenance of preaching here, in keeping up the prayer meeting, in Sunday school work Mr. S. took the lead. So he did in building the house of worship. The foremost elder, clerk of Session, superintendent of the Sabbath school, he is the main human factor in the affairs of this church for forty years.

On the same day in which the church was organized the Rev. Isaac N. Candee was installed pastor of it. The first pastor of this church was born at Galway, Saratoga county, New York, October 30, 1801. He graduated from Union College in 1825, and from Princeton Seminary in 1828. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Albany, June 4, 1828, and ordained by the Presbytery of Newton as an evangelist, May 12, 1829. As supply of Oxford church he preached in Belvidere from that time once a Sabbath until his entire service was engaged as pastor here. Mr. C. lived first on Water street, next door above Dilts' corner; then on Market street corner across from R. D. Wilson's; and latterly in a house on the site of the present residence of W. S. White. He conducted a classical school a good part of his residence in the place. Prior to coming here he had married Miss Shafer, of Stillwater; losing her while here, he married Miss Elizabeth C. Green. After leaving Belvidere Mr. C. went to Ohio as agent in the work of our Church. He was subsequently pastor at important points in Indiana and Illinois, and did other useful labor. Dr. Candee, as he had become, occasionally visited my father's house in Indianapolis. I remember distinctly seeing him there in 1859. My recollection is that he then wore glasses, had hair quite gray, a florid and open countenance (his face was of course smoothly shaven in those

days), a strong and cheerful voice, a facetious manner, and a pleasant laugh which was often heard. It is said of him: "He was a most genial and attractive companion, a man of sweet temper and warm emotions, and through his whole ministerial life an earnest and faithful laborer in the cause of Christ. He died in the lively exercise of Christian hope and joy notwithstanding his great physical sufferings."* Dr. C.'s death occurred June 19, 1874, at Peoria, Illinois. He used to look back to his Belvidere pastorate as the happiest period in his life.†

As with a child, the circumstances of its birth and early years have much to do with the after character and history of a church. They give the spirit and direction. If in the beginnings there are the minglings of wrong motives and the fleshly lusts, this is bound to appear. The leprosy in the wall will come out. But where the vine is really of the Lord's planting, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it." The spirit and way in which the founders of this church went about their work are cause for devout gratitude on our part. To the first pastorate, though devoid of startling incident, we may go back with lively satisfaction.

At the very first business meeting the Session considered and adopted a plan of Systematic Beneficence. The elder who devoted one-tenth of his income to the Lord thought that provision should be made by which all in the congregation might have part in the privilege and duty of giving to support and extend the Kingdom of Christ, and the other members of Session were of like mind. The subject had not then received the attention it has since; its importance was not so generally recognized as now; and principles of operation not so well settled. The action entitles this church to claim a rare and most honorable distinction among the churches of the land. It set, moreover, the standard in this church itself; and from that day to this the grace of giving is a part of gospel instruction that has been faithfully taught from this pulpit. The scheme originally adopted was in force here about

* Necrology of Princeton Seminary for 1875.

† Correspondence of "Calvin" in Philadelphia PRESBYTERIAN, 1874.

forty years, until superseded by a better. In the report to Presbytery (made April, 1835,) covering the few months since the organization the Session informs that benevolent funds have been raised to the amount of some \$330. For the six years of Mr. Candee's pastorate the total was about \$2,900; or nearly \$500 a year. The regular congregational expenditures for the same period were probably not far from \$3,500.

A week later in this same foundation-laying time it was resolved that the children of the congregation should be publicly examined in the Shorter Catechism on the first Sunday of January following. The Catechism has continued to be studied and examinations on it to be had from that day to this. This original enactment is highly significant to those who are acquainted with the agitations of the time. Those were days when a rampant revivalism went hand in hand with attacks upon the old doctrines of the Church and with undervaluation of systematic training in religious truth. They were days of "the New Measures." The men who founded and gave character to this church believed in revivals, in heaven-sent works of grace. But in their view truth is in order to holiness, and to the covenant training is attached the covenant blessing. They regarded the Catechism not as a fetish, but as "an excellent summary" of the teaching of Scripture respecting "what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man." It need not surprise us that while this church has enjoyed seasons of refreshing and rejoiced in large ingatherings, still the law of its growth has been that additions to it by confession have been constant and frequent rather than large, and have come in great part from the Sabbath school. The season of greatest interest while Mr. Candee was here was in the early part of 1840. The total number received on examination during his pastorate was twenty-four; by letter twenty. The entire number of communicants at the end of that pastorate was seventy-nine.

In the Spring of 1840 Mr. Candee accepted an appointment as agent for our Board of Foreign Missions in the West. His pastoral relation was dissolved April 29, and

he moved hence to Columbus, Ohio, and began those labors in the West of which note has already been made.

In view of the assured removal of Mr. Candee steps had been taken to secure a successor to him. At the congregational meeting at which it was voted to unite with him in his application for release a committee was appointed to visit a neighboring minister and confer with him to learn if he would be willing to entertain a call from this church. After some negotiation an understanding was reached. On the very day that Presbytery released Mr. Candee and during a recess of that body, the congregation by previous arrangement held a meeting, presided over by Mr. Candee, and made out a unanimous call. Presbytery the next day resumed its session, put the call into the hands of the minister chosen, and upon his formal acceptance proceed to install him. Rev. Geo. Junkin, D.D., presided; Rev. Richard Webster preached; and Mr. Candee gave the charge to the people. The precedent of an avoidance of long vacancies was thus set in this congregation, and has never been departed from.

The second pastorate thus begun was that of Rev. James Clark. He was born in Philadelphia, March 9, 1813, took his academic course at the University of Pennsylvania graduating in 1830. He graduated from Princeton Seminary in 1833, was ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick November 8, 1837, was pastor of the Tennent church near Freehold for two years, and then of of Upper and Lower Mount Bethel, whence he was called to Belvidere. Subsequent to his labors here he was president of Washington College, Pa., and pastor at Lewisburgh, Pa. About 1857 he removed to Philadelphia where he has resided since without pastoral charge. From time to time his hand is seen in graceful and scholarly articles in the religious press.

Mr. Clark's pastorate here lasted ten years. The church went on harmoniously and prosperously under it. There were received into membership one hundred and eighty-three persons; one hundred and one by confession; eighty-two by letter. The most in any one year was forty by confession in 1848, which was a year of revival. The

debt remaining on the building was paid off in '45 or '46. January 1, 1848, the present parsonage property was bought for \$1,600, \$1,000 being paid down.*

Toward the close of of this period an event took place, the mention of which I borrow from the narrative of another:†

“The Session now consisted of eight members, four of whom were members of the Bar. The Session was a very able one, and the church was evidently doing a good work and in the right way. If in proportion to the size of the Session and to churches elsewhere the congregation was small * * * * it was because its geographical field was small. Yet the church which had been a blessing to its families and whose progress had more than kept pace with the growth of the town, whose population at this time amounted to a thousand only, was none the less dear to its members. Most of the leading adherents of the church were among its original members, and to them it was still a beloved object of solicitude and self-denial. That there was life in the church was evident from the revival that had crowned the labors of the pastor but a short time before; and what is worthy of special observation, a delightful peace prevailed. * * * * Such was the state of the congregation when one of the county papers for July 19, 1849, contained a notice that the Rev. Edward Allen would preach the next Sabbath evening at the New Academy; and in another column a correspondence between him and four members of the congregation in which the invitation was given and accepted to put himself at the head of a movement the object of which was stated in the following language: ‘A new church organization, a new church edifice on the north side of the Pequest, and an ecclesiastical connection with the Constitutional Presbyterian Church in these United States.’ This was the first intimation which the pastor or Session had of this matter.” Fourteen persons out of a member-

* Mr. Clark, I am told, resided here first on upper Water street, where Squire Deshong now does; then on lower Water street, where Mr. Beck does; then in the house which is now the parsonage, at that time the property of Geo. R. King; then in the house, subsequently burned, where Mr. Candee had lived, on the site of W. S. White's residence; and finally in the parsonage. A widower when he removed here, he shortly married Miss Sarah A. Randolph.

† MS. of Rev. Henry Reeves.

ship of one hundred and sixty-seven were dismissed to go into the new organization.

Mr. Clark announced to the Session May 11, 1850, his election to the presidency of Washington College and his intention to accept the office. The pastoral relation was dissolved May 28th. The next Sabbath Mr. Henry Reeves was heard. He shortly received and accepted a call. His ordination and installation took place November 19, 1850, Rev. John Gray, D. D., presiding, Rev. D. X. Junkin, D. D., preaching, and Rev. John Skinner, D. D., and Rev. John H. Townley giving the charges.

Mr. Reeves was born at Bridgeton, N. J., February 5, 1823. He graduated from Princeton College in 1844 and then taught two years. He entered Princeton Seminary in 1846 and took the full three years course. He supplied several stations in Dutchess county, New York, for a year, and then came to Belvidere. Leaving Belvidere in 1858, he was principal of a Female Seminary at Chambersburgh, Pa., for six years, then of a like school in Philadelphia for four years, an editor for seven years, and stated supply at Gloucester City, N. J. He is now principal of Ivy Hall Seminary in his native place.

In a sketch by Mr. Reeves I find reference to certain repairs made in 1854. These consisted in painting, carpeting, and improving the lighting of the audience room, and in putting blinds to the building. The same account contains the following record :

“In January of this year, 1855, the congregation was providentially delivered from an impending calamity. The alarm of fire was given in the afternoon of Monday the 22d of that month, and it was discovered from the dense volumes of smoke issuing from the basement that the church building was on fire. By the energetic efforts of our citizens the flames were after a while subdued, but not until they had made such progress that by some the building was despaired of.” The fire caught from hot wood ashes; the damage was enough to hinder use of the lecture-room for several weeks. Some insurance was recovered. One result of the incident was that the trustees decided to allow the use of the building no longer for a week-day school.

While Mr. Reeves was pastor (1854) the Session districted the congregation and assigned a district to the oversight and care of each elder. He was to watch over, visit, and report upon the state of those committed to his charge. This was an effort to promote the spiritual good of the church through realization in a higher degree of the possibilities and original intention of the eldership. I doubt not good was accomplished, though the scheme seems to have lapsed after a few years. It were to be wished that in all our congregations there might be a clearer understanding of the duties, the opportunities, the responsibilities, of the elder's office as respects spiritual labor in the congregation; and a corresponding increase of activity.

The congregational expenditures in this pastorate aggregated \$7,225; and the Benevolent contributions \$4,030. There were received to the communion by examination fifty-three persons; and by letter fifty-eight; total one hundred and eleven. The largest number on examination in any one year was twenty-one in 1855. The entire number of communicants at the time of Mr. Reeves' removal was one hundred and sixty.

The minutes of Session for July 19, 1858, contain the following entry:

"The Rev. Henry Reeves stated to the Session that the salary paid to him by the congregation was inadequate to his support; that he had been troubled with a throat disease for some time; and thought that rest from public speaking was indispensable to his health; and that in the providence of God an opening for him to take charge of a Female Seminary at Chambersburgh, Pa., had been offered. * * * * Therefore he wished the congregation to unite with him in his application to Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation." The needful steps were taken; and the relation was duly dissolved August 3, 1858. A congregational meeting was called for the 21st of the same month "to proceed if it be agreeable to them to the election of a pastor."

At this meeting Rev. William Henry Kirk was chosen. Mr. Kirk was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Oct. 5, 1818. He graduated from Union College, and from Princeton

Seminary in 1849. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Raritan, May 9, 1849. He had had pastorates at Solebury, Pa., and Fishkill, N. Y. He came here from Philadelphia where he had spent a year or so without charge. He was installed October 29, 1858, by a committee of Presbytery consisting of Rev. Messrs. Hand, Bush and McNair. Since his pastorate here Mr. Kirk has resided in Orange, N. J., without pastoral charge, having during part of the time at least some business employment in New York City.

The great event in the pastorate of Mr. Kirk was the building of the present house of worship. The old church had stood a little more than twenty-five years. It was not a particularly inviting structure, although a very substantial one, and was not large enough. It seems to have been generally felt that considering the growth of the place, the means of the congregation, the disadvantage at which it was when its house was compared with others in the Presbytery, the comfort and pleasure of the people themselves, and the increased efficiency in the community that would result from possession of a more attractive sanctuary, the enterprise was a good and seasonable one. All appear to have gone into it with great heartiness. A number of large subscriptions were obtained at once, the pastor being one of the principal givers. (To him the congregation are indebted likewise for the addition to the parsonage on its north side, which he made at his own expense.) A building committee consisting of Simon F. Wyckoff, B. B. Cooper, Abraham McMurtrie, Levi S. Johnston and Dr. S. S. Clark was appointed. The congregation left the old building in the Fall of 1859, worshiping again, as in early days, in the Court House. The new edifice, including the Lecture Room, was completed the next Summer, and dedicated August 23d, the sermon on the occasion being preached by Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick of Ringoes. The original cost of this house was \$9,000; all of which was raised prior to the dedication.

It was while Mr. Kirk was pastor (1859) that our General Assembly on the proposal of our Lodiania Mission first recommended to the churches the observance of the "Week

of Prayer." This Session received the recommendation with zealous earnestness, and took action year by year on the subject till that observance had become a stated one.

A movement was made in 1864 to establish a Congregational Library, which met with good success. In this Library, which I am sorry to say is but little used now, there are many standard and excellent religious works.

The years 1860 and 1864 were marked by special interest in religion. In the former there were twenty-two, in the latter eighteen additions on confession. The additions for the entire pastorate were fifty-two on confession and thirty-four by letter; a total of eighty-six. Entire number of communicants at the end of the pastorate one hundred and eighty-two.

The Benevolent contributions amounted to \$4,655. The congregational expenditures, exclusive of the cost of the new church \$6,885.

I am sorry to be obliged to close the narrative of a period in which this church made notable advance, of a pastorate honorable alike to pastor and people, by noting the rupture of the relation; but that is no history which leaves out facts.

During the four years central in the pastorate the Civil War was raging. There appear references to it from time to time in the minutes of Session, oftenest in arrangements for special services in conformity with proclamations and requests from the President of the United States. On the subject of the Country and the duty of its citizens Mr. Kirk felt most deeply and spoke most strongly. Whether at matter or manner, some were offended and withdrew or greatly diminished their contributions to his support. "On Sabbath the 24th." (June 1866; I quote from the minutes of Session) "Mr. Kirk published to the congregation that he had been waited on by a committee of the congregation and trustees who informed him of their inability to raise the salary of one thousand dollars promised for his support; and that that sermon would be the last that he would preach to them." Mr. Kirk speedily removed from the town; and on application of the congregation, Presbytery went through the form of release August 10, 1866.

A congregational meeting was called for September 22d, "to elect a pastor if the way be clear, and it be the will of the congregation." At this meeting votes were cast for four ministers, Rev. David Tully receiving the majority. His election was made unanimous, and a call extended which fixed the salary at nine hundred dollars.

Mr. Tully was born in Scotland, August 29, 1818. Coming to this country he wrought in his early years and in this region at the same trade tradition says our Saviour did. Later he became a teacher. He graduated from Union College in 1847; and then spent two years at Princeton Seminary. He was ordained by the Second Presbytery of New York April 18, 1849. He was pastor at Princetown, New York, five years and then at Ballston, New York, eleven years with a parenthetic service as chaplain in the United States army at the time of the war. He was installed here November 27, 1866, Rev. D. K. Freeman preaching the sermon, and Rev. Messrs. Laurie and Condit giving the charges. Mr. Tully served this church six years.

The period of Mr. Tully's labors here was one of general prosperity in the country, and of considerable local activity. The war, as is well known, stimulated material production of all kinds enormously; and the places were few that did not feel the influence in some degree at least. Belvidere was no exception. At least one considerable enterprise was undertaken looking to a larger utilization of the waterpower here and establishment of profitable manufacture. People came moving into the place. There never was a time in its history when Belvidere afforded so large scope and so much material for religious activity. The population of Belvidere was one hundred more in 1870 than in 1880, a large difference for a small place.

That the new pastor, with personal qualities and gifts that need no praise from me, diligently improved the shining hour, and that God gave his blessing, is shown by the record of accessions. The years 1867, 1869, and 1872 were marked ones, the additions by confession in them being respectively twenty-one, twenty-nine, and nineteen. The total additions by confession for the pastorate were

eighty-six ; by letter seventy-six ; in whole one hundred and sixty-two. On Mr. Tully's withdrawal the whole number of communicants was two hundred. The remark may here be made that this Session has always been careful to keep the roll of communicants purged so as to show only the real membership.

During Mr. Tully's pastorate the work of discipline was not neglected, any more than it was before or has been since. This church has always sought to maintain the purity as well as the peace of the Lord's house.

It was in the latter part of this period that the present organization of the women of the church in aid of Missions was made, which keeping quietly and unostentatiously on its way has been by no means the least of the church's instrumentalities.

The money raised for Benevolence in this term amounted to \$5,548. Congregational expenditures \$10,168. The salary of the pastor was increased to \$1,200 in 1868.

May 26, 1871, died John M. Sherrerd, in fulness of years, in ripeness of Christian graces, in esteem and love of all. This church, the object of many a labor and many a self-denial to him, continued to possess his love. The last Sessional minute in Mr. Sherrerd's hand was dated April 17, 1871. The minutes of the next meeting, June 2, 1871, are written by his son, who was then chosen clerk of Session and has served as such ever since.

Mr. Tully informed Session May 17, 1872 that he proposed to resign the charge of this congregation to accept a call to the First Presbyterian church of Oswego, N. Y. Presbytery met here June 3d, and dissolved the relation to take effect June 9th. Mr. Tully has continued at Oswego in successful labor to this time.

While Mr. Tully was pastor here, great things were taking place in the country and the Church at large. After negotiations extending through several years, in 1870, the two bodies known as the Old and New School Presbyterian Churches united on the basis of the "standards pure and simple." The reconstruction of synods and presbyteries followed. In the Presbytery of Newton there was but a single instance of Old and New School congregations

existent in the same place. And that was in Belvidere. When the Presbytery met here June 3, 1872, to dismiss Mr. Tully, it was not strange that it should occur to the brethren who had favored union on the grand scale that it was desirable on the smaller here. The case seemed clear. If there ever had been reasons, theological and constitutional, for the existence of a New School church here, they were valid no longer. A little compact town of less than two thousand population, with but scanty territory tributary to it, with a waning prospect of growth, certainly did not need two churches of the same order. To unite them would be to render the burden of support lighter, and would end a state of things likely to hinder our proper denominational influence and our effectiveness in the cause of Christ in this town and in the region round about. These views were urged upon the Session of this church and resulted in the following letter :

BELVIDERE, June 10, 1872.

To the Pastor and Elders of the Second Presbyterian Church of Belvidere :

DEAR BRETHREN.—The church which we represent is now without a pastor.

The ministers connected with the Presbytery of Newton who were present at its recent meeting in this place were unanimous in urging upon our consideration the propriety of uniting the two Presbyterian churches in Belvidere under one pastor. Our own feelings influence us in the same direction, and in order to ascertain your views upon the subject we feel constrained to address this letter to you to inquire whether you are willing upon any terms whatever to negotiate for a union of the two churches above named.

An early reply will greatly oblige,

yours in Christian bonds,

ADRIAN LOTT,	} <i>Elders of the First Presbyterian Church of Belvidere.</i>
J. G. SHIPMAN,	
S. SHERRERD,	
A. B. SEARLES.	

In a conference which ensued of the elders of the two churches, the members of the Session of this church

learned that there were no terms upon which the other party in the matter was willing to negotiate for union.

Nothing resulting from these overtures, a meeting of the congregation was called for September 14th. At this meeting Rev. Fullerton Reck Harbaugh was elected pastor.

Mr. Harbaugh was born at Middletown, Maryland, April 22, 1829. He graduated from Princeton College in 1851, and spent two years at Princeton Seminary. He was ordained October 26, 1853 by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and installed pastor at Red Bank, N. J. In 1854 he was called to Burlington, N. J., in 1858 to Hackettstown, and in 1861 to Philadelphia, where he was residing when called hither. He was installed here December 4, 1872, the sermon being preached by Dr. Knighton, and the charges given by Revs. E. C. Cline and J. M. Anderson; Rev. Thomas A. Sanson, moderator of Presbytery, presiding.

As hinted above, just before this time that tide of activity and prosperity which had set in some years previous had already begun decidedly to ebb. The prospect that Belvidere would become a much larger town and an important manufacturing place was vanishing. The people who had come in began to go out. At one meeting of Session (Dec. 31, 1872) are recorded the names of twenty-nine persons to whom letters of dismissal had been given.

It was about the beginning of Mr. Harbaugh's labors that the congregational prayer meeting was set for Friday evening. In the early days a prayer meeting was held on Saturday evening, which was discontinued after some years, but resumed in 1850. In 1836 a meeting from house to house was started on Monday evening. By and by a custom once quite prevalent of having two evening meetings, one more of the nature of a preaching service and called the "Lecture," the other known simply as the "Prayer Meeting," was introduced here. (There was also here for a time a "Young Men's or Young People's Meeting," which was afterwards united with the general prayer meeting.) Experience showing that the result of having two meetings a week was that both were small, few people being able to attend both, it was deemed wise, as it has been very

generally elsewhere, to have but the one weekly meeting. I may remark here that while our prayer meeting is by no means what I would like to have it, yet I know no church where in proportion to the number of communicants the attendance at this meeting is larger and more regular.

In the earliest time the Sunday school in town (I speak of it thus to distinguish it from one across the river which was conducted by members of this church) was superintended by Mr. Halstead. He was succeeded by Mr. Sherrerd, whose interest in Sunday schools went back to his student days when he was sent from Trenton as a member of a committee from the First Church of that city to examine the workings of a Sunday school lately begun in Philadelphia. With some interruption Mr. Sherrerd served almost till his death. He was followed by Mr. J. G. Shipman in a brief term. Mr. Harbaugh was then chosen; and was in his turn succeeded by Mr. Shipman, who continued in the office five or six years.

Mr. Harbaugh had been called to the church by a small majority, another minister receiving very nearly as many votes. As often happens under such circumstances, the congregation was left in a divided state. Mr. Harbaugh, finding by experience that there was no prospect of the division being healed under his ministry, and having received the high compliment of an invitation to return to his first charge, becoming more important by reason of sharing in the great development of the New Jersey coast, resigned this pastorate, Presbytery dissolving the relation February 19, 1874. He continues to serve the church at Red Bank.

Under Mr. Harbaugh the additions were three by examination; and six by letter; total nine. The whole number of communicants at the close of his pastorate was one hundred and seventy-eight. The contributions to Benevolence from April 1872 to April 1874 were \$1,875; congregational expenditures were \$5,250.

The seventh pastor of this church (Rev. William Alexander Holliday) preached to the congregation a couple of Sabbaths in April of 1874, and was called by a meeting held May 16. He was received into the Presbytery of

Newton, June 9, and was installed June 25, the sermon being preached by Rev. Dr. H. J. VanDyke, of Brooklyn, and the charges given by Revs. H. B. Townsend and Thomas McCauley.

He was born at Paris, Kentucky, December 30, 1841, graduated from Princeton College in 1862, and from Princeton Seminary in 1865. He was ordained by the Presbytery of North River, November 26, 1866, and installed pastor of the Bethlehem Church, of Orange County, New York, one of the oldest in that region. He served it for six years, and then spent most of two years, 1872 and 1873, in Europe in travel and study.

In this pastorate, improvement of an outward and material kind bulks largely. Early in it the Lecture Room was made more inviting and comfortable by paint and cushions. A good deal has been done to the parsonage, mainly at private expense. The chief work of this sort, however, as all know, has been the repair and renovation of the main edifice. In the twenty and odd years which had elapsed since its erection it had fallen into serious disrepair. In a sermon preached November 13, 1881, the pastor pointed out what ought to be done, and urged the undertaking of it. It proved that the people had a mind to the work. A meeting was at once held and committees appointed on Repairs and on Funds. The work on the outside began in a short time. Pending the work on the inside, services were held in the Lecture Room, dating from December 25, 1881. The audience room was ready for use by March 17, 1882. On that date a meeting was held at which the accounts were audited and the report subjoined was made, which shows fully what had been done:

To the Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church, Belvidere. Report of the Committee on Repairs.

Your Committee was appointed, as it understood, for the purpose of determining what repairs were needed to be made to your house of worship; and of having such repairs made, provided the means were forthcoming, to meet the cost of them. As it was soon known that money enough had been subscribed by you to cover all reasonable

expenses, the Committee was at liberty to begin its work.

The main points to which our attention was directed were the spire, the roof, and the interior of the church.

As respects the spire, it was known to need extensive repairs. The most obvious necessity was to make it tight to the weather. We sought by such examination as we could make and by consultation with our local builders, to ascertain its condition and decide upon the best thing to be done. We finally had specifications drawn up for shingling or slating the spire and boarding the tower. The best estimate we could get as to the cost of the work was \$650; although when we offered it at contract no bids were received. The lateness of the season no doubt had much to do with this result. Your Committee itself which after three weeks of effort had made so little progress, did not know but work would have to be delayed and your expectations and hopes be disappointed. At this juncture however the Committee determined to take all risks and do the work itself, employing Mr. James Irvine, of Philadelphia, by the day. Upon his examination of the spire, Mr. Irvine, who is a professional steeplebuilder, reported that it would be necessary thoroughly to nail and brace the inside to give it sufficient strength. By our direction this was done and a cover of slate then put on. For the corners or flashings we used lead instead of tin, resulting in an increase of cost of about seventy dollars. We thoroughly repaired the bell-deck, and put in new and approved blinds above it. We have done every thing to put the whole spire and tower in first-class order, save renewing the weatherboarding of the tower. This renewal will involve a cost of perhaps fifty dollars, and is something that should be done at no distant day. Until it is done, there will always be in severe storms some liability to slight leakage, which while it can do no special hurt it is best to avoid. The total cost of what has been done to the spire including materials, work and subsistence of men, has been about \$540. With the additional work recommended above there is no reason, apart from accident by fire or lightning, why this part of the building should not stand the wear of many years to come without further pre-

tection. It is not only strong and safe, but we only state the common judgment when we say it was never so much an ornament to our town and never appeared so shapely and beautiful as now.

As to the roof, the Committee contracted with Mr. Daniel Perry of our town, and one of your number, for a tin one at six dollars and a half a square. We have watched it with great care since it has been on, and say without hesitation, after the severe test to which recent storms have subjected it, that we have good material, well put together, a most satisfactory piece of work every way. In order properly to ventilate the loft a door has been cut through into the tower. The roof has been painted once, but should soon be painted again. After that it will need little attention, beyond occasional examination, for several years.

Your Committee could learn on inquiry of no designers and decorative painters of repute near at hand. A design with specifications and estimates was procured from Mr. William Healy, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, after he had viewed the house and studied its arrangements and proportions. We unanimously approved his design and found his figures reasonable. We accordingly contracted with him. You have his work around and above you. The cost has been seven hundred and twenty-five dollars. The scaffolding was at our expense fifty-five dollars; and we also incurred a cost of about seventy-five dollars for cutting out and filling up the cracks in the walls and ceiling preparatory to painting.

Believing it to be an improvement, we have taken off the pew doors. The barricade or breastwork in front of the pews has also been removed. The partition between the central and side blocks of seats has been cut down. The cost of the latter item, about sixty dollars, has been defrayed in large part by special contribution. Most of it came from the gentleman to whose suggestion we are indebted for the idea of the excellent improvement. (Mr. A. McCammon.)

A seventy-two inch Frink reflector has been put up; the lighting of the pulpit provided for; the side lamps made more ornamental; lights provided for the vestibule; and

a large lamp hung outside the main door. The cost of lighting, no part of which has been borne by the congregation, has been about two hundred dollars or perhaps a little more.

Your Committee was directed by vote of the congregation to have the organ brought down from the gallery to the main floor if feasible. The change has been made on the generous offer of Mr. D. C. Blair to bear the expense, which has amounted to some two hundred and twenty-five dollars. From this transfer we anticipate the happiest results.

The carpet on the main floor has been paid for out of the general fund. There were three hundred and thirty-six yards, amounting to two hundred and sixty-six dollars. It has been made by the ladies and put down by volunteers, on carpet paper given by members of the congregation.

The ladies of the congregation took the cushioning of the seats in uniform style into their own hands; and have accomplished it with their customary energy and thoroughness. Their expenditure for the purpose has been four hundred and eleven dollars, and they have turned over a balance of twenty-one dollars and eighty-one cents to the general fund.

The young ladies kindly undertook the refurnishing of the pulpit, raising the money by a musical entertainment. The cost has been about \$50.

We sum up the total improvement of your property at \$3,057. All bills have been paid.

J. G. SHIPMAN,
SAMUEL S. CLARK,
D. W. KLEINHANS,
A. McCAMMON,
N. R. CURRIE,
WM. A. HOLLIDAY,

} *Committee.*

On the following Sabbath the house was reoccupied for divine service, the first sermon being preached by Rev. Dr. W. C. Roberts.

About the time the present pastor came, the conviction began to prevail with the Session that the plan of Systematic Beneficence which had been in use here from the organization of the church was no longer satisfactory. It

was that of circulating an annual subscription to a "Sacred Fund," the proceeds of which were divided among various causes by a Board of Managers. Its main defects as shown by experience were that it required some one constantly to push it; it divorced giving from the house of God; it did not bring the giver into close and intelligent relation with the specific forms of evangelistic work; and it did not afford opportunities of giving frequent enough to conduce to advance in the grace of liberality. Having considered the matter the Session superseded that plan (Dec. 9, 1874) by adoption of that of "Weekly Offerings to Specified Spiritual Causes," a plan which at once simple and scriptural, is liable to fewer objections and unites more advantages than any other of which I know. With some modification (the allotting of the fourth Sunday in each month to our own needs) it has been in force ever since, as I trust it will continue to be. The Benevolent funds contributed up to April, 1883, have amounted to \$8,080. The congregational expenditures, exclusive of cost of repairs to the church have been \$15,783 to same date.

The total Benevolent contributions from the organization of the church have been \$31,088. The total ordinary congregational expenditures have been \$54,011. Adding to this sum for cost of buildings and repairs about \$18,000, we have a total for congregational purposes of about \$73,000. The whole amount for all purposes raised in the congregation from the organization aggregates not less than \$104,000.

The additions on examination in this pastorate up to the present time have been forty-six; by letter fifty-nine. Total additions one hundred and five. Most on examination in any years were thirteen in 1876, and ten in 1878. That the number on examination falls relatively considerably below the figures of other pastorates is apparent. But the same thing is true of the number received by letter. It may be noted as bearing on the matter that for the first third of its history this church, being the single Presbyterian one, had the undivided benefit of all increase in the Presbyterian strength

here ; which has not been the case since 1850. Then, as already pointed out, the last dozen years as compared with the dozen preceding them, have been years of decrease in the population of the place. And finally, in looking over our congregation it will be seen that there are at present comparatively few that remain to be brought into the communion. There are periods in the lives of churches sometimes when it is necessary to wait for children to "come to years of discretion ;" and until material is thus provided, there can in the nature of the case be but small growth of the church in numbers.

The church was organized with forty-seven communicants. In the fifty years of its existence there have been added by examination three hundred and sixty-five persons ; and by letter three hundred and thirty-eight ; a total of seven hundred and three. The present number of communicants is one hundred and eighty-four.

Matters worthy to be noted as belonging to the present pastorate are : The uniting of the Sabbath evening services of this and the Second Church, on the proposition of the latter, during the winter of 1876-'77, when both pastors were in enfeebled health ; the service of the pastor as superintendent of the Sabbath school from January, 1879 to the present time ; the presentation to the pastor and his wife of a purse of \$150 on the fifteenth anniversary of their marriage ; the great Temperance revival of the Spring of 1883 ; and the loss by death of a zealous and devoted friend and member of the church in the person of Mrs. Ann S. McGee, December 1, 1883.

To the general history belongs the succession in the eldership. Of the original elders Chapman Warner was dismissed to Lexington, Kentucky, July 1, 1841, and William C. Morris to Jersey City, January, 1850. George R. King died December, 1851 ; he left the church a legacy of \$1,200 which was applied in part to payment of remaining debt on the parsonage and some other small obligations, and the balance to various improvements and expenses running through several years. The death of John M. Sherrerd has already been chronicled as occurring May 26, 1871. Alexander N. Easton was elected elder Feb-

ruary 22, 1841, and served till his death, January 25, 1875. David M. Stiger was elected October, 1841, and dismissed to Morristown, May, 1847. Phineas B. Kennedy, Elias Buttz, William Hemingway and Henry McMiller were elected September, 1848. Of these Mr. Hemingway was dismissed to Knowlton, April, 1849; Mr. McMiller in October, 1852; Mr. Buttz to Avon, Michigan, March, 1855; and Mr. Kennedy died in May, 1868. Simon F. Wyckoff, Adrian Lott and Jehiel G. Shipman were elected in April, 1853. Mr. Wyckoff died in 1869, and Mr. Lott, September, 1881. John Welling was elected December, 1865; he died in 1868. Adam B. Searles, Samuel Sherrerd and Edward Vanuxem were elected April, 1870; Mr. Vanuxem was retired on his own request in May, 1872. Josiah Ketcham and Aaron McCammon were elected in November, 1881. Adam B. Searles, John W. Wyckoff and John J. Kline were elected Deacons, May, 1868.

The original trustees were John Kinney, Jr., George Hiles, John M. Sherrerd, George R. King, Jeremy Mackey, Jared Sexton and Dr. George Green. Many others have since shared the responsibility of caring for the temporalities of the church. The finances have been well administered. With exception of the balance on the first house of worship the church has never been allowed to be very heavily in debt, nor for a very long time.

The sexton is an important man in the sanctuary. Aaron Hoff, Philip Larew, John Shay, John Coleman, John Suydam, Jacob Myers, and Joseph M. Cole—the latter for about eighteen years continuously—have served the church in this office prior to the present sexton, J. Clark Cole. The original plot of the cemetery of our town was deeded to the trustees of this church in 1835 by William P. Robeson and J. P. B. Maxwell.*

The singing in the church was for a long time led by choristers who also for some years at least taught a con-

* Judge William P. Robeson presided over the congregational meeting held on the site of the church, July 1831, at which the foundation stakes were driven and the first spadeful of earth thrown out (by John Kinney, Jr.) in erection of the first edifice. He was the father of Hon. George M. Robeson. Hon. J. P. B. Maxwell was Judge Robeson's brother-in-law. Mr. Maxwell graduated from Princeton College, and studied law under Chief Justice Hornblower. He was a liberal and useful member of this church, much admired and held in high esteem. He was elected to Congress in 1836 and again in 1840. Died in 1845. His wife was the first person buried in the cemetery.

gregational singing school and received a salary for their services. In connection with the singing occur in the records the names of a Mr. Frazee, A. N. Easton, John Hilton, Benjamin Loder, J. B. Woodward and Newton Easton. A melodeon was introduced about 1850. The organ we now use was built for the church in 1867 at a cost of \$1,425 by Charles Hinzelman, of Allentown, Pa. Miss Lydia H. Bray, E. G. Wire, Charles Stearns, and Mr. Wire again have been the organists. The church has been greatly indebted to a number of its members for volunteer service as singers in its choir. The first hymn book used was Watts'. Later, "Psalms and Hymns" published by Presbyterian Board, was adopted. This in time was replaced by the "Presbyterian Hymnal" (of O. S. Church.) The present book, "Spiritual Songs for Church and Choir," was introduced in 1882. In the prayer meeting and Sabbath school Mrs. William P. Salmon (Alice M. Ribble) has been for many years the chorister, in which office, as in that of teacher of the Infant Class, she has rendered the church faithful and invaluable service.

Three persons: James G. Moore, one of the original members, now dead; William K. Tully, of Jacksonville, Fla.; and J. H. Gulick, of Hancock, N. H., have gone directly into the ministry from this church. Several others, among whom are John Mitchell, J. B. Woodward, George A. Ries, and H. H. Wikoff, now ministers, were once members here; but entered the ministry from other churches to which they had been dismissed.

These are "the former things" so far as this church is concerned. As I have gathered them together I have been impressed with certain facts and truths the recognition of which is fitted to instruct and profit.

For one thing the revelation of change in the community as shown by fifty years in the history of this church has been to me almost startling. The general notion of Belvidere is, I think, that as compared with many other communities things are here quite stable and permanent. Some joke us about living in a sleepy place, a place of enduring Sabbath rest, a sort of fossilized or petrified place. But read the names of the people who went into

this church at the organization, only fifty years ago. How many are represented here now? Of a good number of them many in this audience never heard before. Then look at the seven hundred who in fifty years have been received. Where are they now? Many died of course, but most moved away. What a coming and going in fifty years! When we look at it as a whole, Belvidere society most resembles, not the rock (and even that wears away), but the sandbar that is never long the same. Here too the world that now is approves itself as a changing scene.

The study of this history illustrates and enforces the truth that a particular church, like a family, has a character. This character is something antecedent to the qualities and dispositions of those who at any given time compose the church. Children born into a family do not so much affect the family as it affects them. So those who come into and grow up in a church are moulded and shaped by the forces moral and spiritual that were there before them. A church brings forth sons and daughters after its own likeness and in its own image. This church to-day is in the main what the people who founded it made it. And you have no cause to be ashamed of their work and its perpetuated results. I do not say this has been a perfect church. Why in this imperfect world should we look for perfect churches any more than for perfect ministers or perfect members? They who gave character to this church were godly men who in no narrow spirit and with no unsanctified aim were seeking to build up Christ's cause in the community. They acted on the principle that the great thing is to be and to do, and not to seem. It is yours not only to follow them in labor, but to cherish and manifest the same spirit that was in them.

We may well be impressed by the aggregate result of contributions for religious purposes continued year after year. Our congregation is not large. We have not been counted in the enumeration of the strong churches of our State. The money raised in a single year has not seemed much. And yet in fifty years the aggregate is over a hundred thousand dollars. The church during its existence has given for the cause of Christ beyond its own

bounds more than thirty thousand dollars. It has precious investments and is a stockholder to this amount of money in the grand enterprises in our own land and beyond the seas by which the Church of the living God is subduing the world to Christ. And this amount is representative not only of an enlightened and spiritual view of duty and privilege, and of fidelity and love to the Lord Jesus, but also of patient continuance in well-doing. Let no individual, let no church, withhold gifts to the spread of the gospel because the gift is small. The years fly quickly by, and the small gifts repeated year by year will swell to large amounts the treasure laid up in the skies.

And finally, while we pore over the written pages of the records and gather up the sum and substance of what is there in white and black, the thought to me is an overwhelming one of the invisible record that all these years has been making in the minds and hearts and lives of men. The great and central thing is that here for fifty years, in the word preached and the ordinances administered, the adorable Lord Jesus Christ has been held up before sinners as the only, the all sufficient, the gracious Saviour, and before saints as the one example of all godly graces and all manly virtues. What the real effect has been we know but in part. We rejoice to believe that Christ has been truly received by and formed in many souls here. The Lord knoweth them that are his. We have reason to fear that some have heard the gospel only to reject it. For the full disclosure we must wait. The record will not always be invisible. It shall be known and read of all when this church together with all the things of earth shall have passed away; in that eternal world where to remember "the former things," the things of time, will be immortal joy or poignant woe.

In present review of the past, in now and here remembering the former things, it behooves this church to be humbly thankful to God for the favor that he has bestowed in all these years. Over and above this, the best profit from remembering the former things is the encouragement to go on in the endeavor by God's help to make the days to come worthy of and an advance upon the past.

Pray and labor that the great Head of the Church may give his blessing here more and more abundantly in the graces and fruits of the Spirit. Peace to thee, beloved Zion! May they prosper that love thee!